

# Reframing Men and Boys in Policy for Gender Equality

Conceptual Guidance and an Agenda for Change

EMERGE Framing Paper

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Engendering Men  
Evidence on Routes to Gender Equality

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# Acronyms

CSO	civil society organisation
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EMERGE	Engendering Men: Evidence on Routes to Gender Equality
FGM–C	female genital mutilation – cutting
GAD	gender and development
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
KMG	Kembatti Mentti Gezzima (NGO in Ethiopia)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
PNAISH	National Healthcare Policy for Men (in Brazil)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal (also known as Global Goal for Sustainable Development)
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas
WID	women in development

# Glossary of technical terms, with ‘health warnings’

**‘Gender relational’** refers to seeing problems of gender inequality or injustice as *relational* between different kinds of males and females, *interacting* or within specific socioeconomic and political contexts (Butler 1990). It is the logical corollary of the recognition that *gender is socially constructed*, rather than ‘gender roles’ being determined by essential/biological differences between sexes (e.g. Hollway 1984).

*Health warning:* Approaches to work with (or policies which address) both women and men may or may not take a *gender relational* approach. Whether or not they do depends on if they treat gender *as* relational, rather than merely address both sexes, i.e. with the focus on relations, not categories.

**‘Gender transformative’** means what it says, i.e. a policy, a process or a strategy that actually helps to transform power relations between men and women, addressing the drivers of inequality.

*Health warning:* ‘Gender transformative’ is also used in the male engagement sector to refer to a ‘category’ of interventions which *aim* to transform gender relations, whether or not they have this result at any meaningful level. This can be misleading, as an aim does not guarantee its intended outcome.

**‘Patriarchy’** is a term used to describe social orders – or systems of organising societies, generally acknowledged to have been prevalent over several millennia – in which men dominate over women. This includes male dominance in politics, social relations, the economy and culture, typically through hierarchical masculinised power relations. Importantly, this is replicated at the level of ‘the family’ where males – especially ‘the father’ – have traditionally held power over women, children, property and resources (Johnson 1997). Male centredness, privilege and supremacy are all ‘flip-sides’ of the marginalisation, discrimination and subordination of women and ‘lesser’ males (younger males, disabled men, men with alternative sexual orientations, trans-men etc.).

*Health warning:* Being a contested and ‘structural’ concept, also complicated by other logics of social differentiation (see ‘intersectionality’ below), it is important to recognise that some accounts of ‘patriarchy’ appear blunt, monolithic or deterministic. Recent uses of the term suggest seeing it in more dynamic terms of evolving social orders (e.g. Edström 2015), i.e. patriarchal dynamics have changed their form across historical periods and regions, but retain many basic characteristics in modern forms.

**‘Intersectionality’** means that intersecting social identities (overlapping, at the level of individuals) – or hierarchies of social differentiation/stratification – work together in interrelated systems of privilege and oppression, based on gender, race, class, caste, sexuality, ability, religion etc. (Mohanty 1991; Nash 2008). These interact simultaneously on multiple levels, which can help us understand how different forms of oppression, such as misogyny, racism, class-based elitism, homophobia etc. interrelate and act together.

*Health warning:* An ‘intersectional’ analysis or strategy is not the same as a ‘multidimensional’ one, as the latter refers to multiple dimensions of the same reality, or problem. For instance, a change – like the legalisation of abortion – can have social, economic and political dimensions of benefits and challenges for women. These may *also* impact differently on people at varying intersectional positions (and identities). Whilst real processes are multidimensional, they involve individuals and groups at different intersections of structure (or social organisation/stratification).

**‘Hegemonic masculinity’** is a term used to refer to particular culturally privileged ways of being or acting in what is seen as masculine – or ‘manly’ – ways. It is part of a wider recognition that multiple ways of enacting masculinity (i.e. multiple ‘masculinities’) interrelate *hierarchically* within broader social, economic and political systems (Connell 1995). Theorists emphasise how such masculinities evolve and how they provide incentives (and sanctions) for people and their ways of performing, in ways conforming to hegemonic masculine standards (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). This highlights the interests some men can have in challenging such hierarchies, as they often also harm some men.

*Health warning:* ‘Hegemonic masculinity’ is a term sometimes used in programming and policy circles to refer to domineering or brutal ways of men establishing control over women through violence, but this is by no means generally agreed (*ibid.*), even if potentially relevant in certain specific contexts.

# 1 Introduction

Gender inequality remains a critical challenge and threatens to severely undermine progress towards the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>1</sup> On average and globally, women only earned in 2015 what men earned almost a decade earlier and they accounted for only 18 per cent of ministers in government by 2015.<sup>2</sup> However, women spend two to ten times more time on caring for children or older persons than do men (World Bank 2012). It is also estimated that 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence at some point in their lives.<sup>3</sup>

This continued challenge is recognised in the policies and commitments of various development agencies. For example, the UK government's new development strategy (DFID and HM Treasury 2015) emphasises mainstreaming the empowerment of women and girls under its strategic objective of 'tackling extreme poverty and helping the world's most vulnerable', also seen as linked to stability, security and opportunities for all. The SDGs also recognise these challenges, with a stand-alone goal for gender equality (SDG 5) having seven of its nine targets specifically addressing women's disadvantage.

However, whilst many gender equality policies and programmes only target and work with women and girls, compelling evidence and experience shows that engaging men and boys in these processes is crucial for lasting change. Drawing on global evidence from the Department for International Development (DFID)-funded EMERGE programme,<sup>4</sup> this paper explains why better engaging men and boys is crucial, the implications for reframing policy design and implementation, and provides key recommendations for policy.

## 1.1 Why engage men and boys in gender equality initiatives?

At least three strong reasons speak to the urgent need for factoring in and engaging men and boys in gender equality initiatives:

### ✓ **Gender equality means addressing unequal gender relations**

Gender identities are constructed through the social interactions and relationships we encounter from birth onwards, with identities and roles assigned to men, women, boys and girls in ways that interact (in relation to each other and to various functions of families, communities, institutions and states). This social construction has tended to systematically discriminate against women and girls, whilst privileging men and boys. Expectations are internalised by individuals (whether male or female), and men and boys are often under social pressure to demonstrate 'masculine' traits of toughness and strength. These roles and identities are played out in – and reinforced by – families, communities and institutions.

Addressing the inequalities between genders requires first understanding these dynamic relations and then addressing their drivers. Seeing gender in relational terms thus means focusing on the power relations between males and females. These relations explain and sustain much of the female disadvantage that needs to be redressed.

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<sup>1</sup> Formally known as the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2015/report-highlights/> (accessed 1 March 2016).

<sup>3</sup> See [www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures#sthash.0D7VbWMa.dpuf](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures#sthash.0D7VbWMa.dpuf) (accessed 1 March 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Engendering Men: Evidence on Routes to Gender Equality (EMERGE) is a research and learning project aiming to identify and critically explore lessons on the role of men and boys in work aiming to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

✓ **Engaging men and boys can enable positive outcomes for women and girls**

It remains important to devote sufficient resources to working with women and girls for their own empowerment and for them to address the causes of their disadvantage. Yet, as gender is relational, working with men and boys is clearly also important in order to challenge their investment in deep-rooted structural and institutionalised inequalities and inequitable social norms, as well as for improving the dynamics of actual relationships between males and females. For example, initiatives to address sexual and gender-based violence have demonstrated the enormous value of work with men and boys to challenge harmful norms and practices that fuel this violence.

✓ **Patriarchy has negative effects for men and boys, and for societies at large**

Whilst the health of both women and men has gradually improved in global terms, excess male mortality<sup>5</sup> and morbidity has been a persistent problem over many decades, with the gender gap in health widening in recent decades (Rajaratnam *et al.* 2010). By 2010, women were outliving men by an average of almost six years, on the whole (Baker *et al.* 2014). Much of this 'reverse gender disadvantage' in health and wellbeing is explained by social pressures and the destructive behaviours of some men, which in part are shaped by rigid gender norms. Such behaviours include high levels of alcohol and substance abuse, violent crime and unprotected sex with multiple partners.

The outcomes of these practices are further compounded by men's poorly socialised health-seeking behaviours, the relative lack of male-friendly health services or training of health professionals in many countries (Stern 2015a). This has direct and indirect impacts on households and communities, with devastating impacts on men's own wellbeing. It also contributes to high levels of national spending on health, national justice systems and law and order.

☠ **Some risks of not engaging, and of engaging badly**

The risks from *not* engaging with masculinities, men and boys in strategies for gender equality are multiple and serious. For example, it is now clear that preventive strategies to reduce the incidence of violence and health problems for many women and girls remain compromised by a single-sex focus.

Addressing the structural drivers of women's disadvantage and disempowerment also requires factoring in different types of men's vested interests and potential contributions to reform. That is, it requires strategically engaging with some men as change-makers and as gatekeepers, as well as factoring in certain men as obstacles and opponents.

Furthermore, the social and financial costs of continued neglect of men's health and wellbeing imply significant ongoing costs to societies.<sup>6</sup> Non-engagement also presents obstacles to men buying in to new political settlements for women's equality, and risks fuelling male backlash.

There are nevertheless also certain risks from engaging men and boys in gender strategies, *if this is not done well*; for example, if it is done uncritically or done without holding men to account in the process. A too narrow focus on 'men's problems' in their own right may carry a risk of 'male centredness' and taking the focus off the underlying problem of unequal gender relations. Men's and boys' problems need to be addressed, but in relation – and in appropriate proportion – to those of women and girls.

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<sup>5</sup> These differences take into account (i.e. 'control for') mortality as a direct result of violent conflicts, i.e. the gap would be even greater if those deaths were included.

<sup>6</sup> For example, men's premature mortality and morbidity cost the United States economy an estimated average US\$479 billion annually (Baker *et al.* 2014).



There is also a potential risk that work and policies focused on benefiting women and girls could face competition from ‘work with males’. This is in part a strategic risk, which demands a closer focus on how equality can practically be achieved, but it is important that sufficient resources are made available for gender equality and that support for effective work by and with women is not simply substituted with ‘men’s work’.

Furthermore, seeing men’s engagement as a primary requirement to any strategy for solving women’s disadvantages could lead to programming or policy that reinforced a male protectionist approach.

There are several additional risks of engaging men and boys superficially, since redressing gender inequities also requires accountability on the part of men (and women) for ending systemic gender-based discrimination, and thus also male privileges.

## **1.2 The aims this paper**

It is increasingly recognised that men and boys do need to be engaged in work and policy that is focused on gender in development, but ‘how to do so best’ has remained somewhat elusive for several reasons:

- There are many resilient, fundamental misunderstandings of what gender means, with ideas caught up in binary thinking that positions all men and women simplistically as homogenous categories of people in competition or conflict with each other.
- Consequently, there is often a lack of clarity on the actual and potential roles of men and boys in changing gender relations; and most policy framings and related theories of how to bring about change towards greater gender equality (‘theories of change’) are fundamentally inadequate.

This paper on framing and conceptual guidance on the engagement of men and boys in policy for gender equality is based on the outcomes of a recent international EMERGE workshop, held at IDS in October 2015, and draws on a major EMERGE review of evidence (Edström *et al.* 2015a), a set of eight EMERGE case studies of practice and three unpublished discussion papers by EMERGE consortium partners. Rather than an academic paper or a systemic review, we present a policy framework based on the programme’s evidence and collaborations.

We aim to shift (or revise) analytical frames to bring the problems into sharper focus, by ‘reframing’ the issue of men’s and boys’ roles in gender relations and work for gender equality. This can guide better solutions in both policy and practice, helping to ensure sustained positive change in the lives of women and girls, men and boys and all harmed by gender inequalities.

We focus on transforming imbalances and hierarchies of power that are constructed around gender and other interconnected social inequalities. Whilst considering gender relations in the analytical frame, we do not mean to privilege men and boys over redressing the disadvantages typically faced by women and girls. Rather, we aim to make all genders, and relations between them, more central to resolving this.

Our vision is of a better approach to men, boys and masculinities in policy on gender equality for the future, i.e. a broader reframing of policy in gender and development to include men and boys within a relational perspective, enabling pathways of change to intervene in (and disrupt) the personal, political and structural relationships that maintain power inequalities and hold back progressive social transformation. Such a reframing entails a more holistic and transformative approach to gender equality, in which:

- it will be possible for strategies toward gender equality to make visible the complex intersections and dynamics of power, privilege and discrimination in the lives of all women, men, girls and boys;
- strategies for change will recognise men's and women's capacities to work together as agents of change to address the root causes of gender inequality, building relationships of accountability in inclusive and contextualised ways; and
- gender equality initiatives will work with external trends that shape gender relations, and recognise the changing and evolving nature of oppression.

The following sections set out the problem, and a way forward. Section 2 details the current challenges in prevalent framings of policy and practice, followed by some lessons on principles for how framings of gender need to change. Section 3 provides an 'agenda for change', first offering recommendations to improve the framing programmatic strategies, and concluding with a set of brief directions at the higher policy level.

## 2 What problem? We'll need new frames to see it!

Whilst some progress has been made to engage men and boys in work on gender equality, challenges remain. Many of these come back to how we conceive of 'gender' and 'women's empowerment' in terms of how the problem and solutions are framed. Section 2.1 starts with some reflections on the 'state of the field' in relation to current framings of gender equality aims, then Section 2.2 highlights key lessons from the EMERGE programme which help us reframe routes to gender equality in policy and practice.

### 2.1 Current challenges in policy for changing gender relations

A first step in addressing the challenge of how best to engage with men, boys and masculinities in gender equality initiatives is to reflect briefly on how gender inequalities and changes in gender relations have been understood within development over recent years. Policy developments in the 1990s were built on the idea of 'gender and development' (GAD), critiquing earlier approaches – often referred to as 'women in development' (WID) – for failing to pay sufficient attention to systemic differential power relations between women and men, whilst also often excluding any attention to men or boys. GAD shifted from a framing of understanding women's problems as based on their biological sex to an understanding of them as based on gender, meaning relations between women and men, their social construction within broader relations of power, and how women have been systematically subordinated in such relations.

Increasingly, women were cast not as passive recipients of development aid, but rather as active agents of change, whose *empowerment* should be a central goal of development policy. Most literature and institutions that are concerned with women's roles in development now incorporate significant elements of a GAD perspective. However, the practical framing of gender inequality within development – and the solutions to such problems (such as sexual and gender-based violence, harmful practices like female genital mutilation, or women's economic marginalisation) – have in recent years tended to focus more on women and girls as stereotyped individuals, i.e. as being vulnerable or victimised (or, alternatively as heroic individual agents of change<sup>7</sup>) rather than on gendered social relations, on men and boys, or on the structural dynamics of gendered power relations.

Such framings can readily be seen in policy agendas and narratives at the multilateral level (e.g. United Nations' Population Fund (UNFPA) policies, UN Security Council Resolutions on gendered violence in conflict, or the framings of gender goals under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or the new SDGs) – not to mention in the fairly recent naming of 'UN Women' as an agency –, as well as in much gender policy documentation of bilateral agencies, like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or DFID. More positively, a broader range of issues for attention in gender equality have found their way into recent development policy discourse and frameworks (such as the SDGs), including issues such as unequal political and public participation, women's economic empowerment and unequal burden of (often unpaid) care work. Nevertheless, as long as policies, frameworks and targets remain elaborated in terms of individual or abstract women and girls<sup>8</sup> – and since gender relations between women and men are thus not clearly in the frame – we will need to reframe gender to work on relations, and structural inequalities, specifically including the role of (and, indeed, obstructions by some) men and boys. We explore the problems with these framings below.

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<sup>7</sup> See for example *The Girl Effect* on [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e8xgF0JtVg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e8xgF0JtVg) (accessed 1 March 2016).

<sup>8</sup> For example, seven of the nine targets under SDG 5 are elaborated in terms of women and girls, whilst two have universal and neutral framings, and no mention is made of men or boys (c. 50 per cent of gendered individuals worldwide).

Looking at the DFID Strategic Vision for Women and Girls, as well as a collection of theories of change and business cases drawn up by DFID and civil society partners (ActionAid *et al.* n.d.; DFID 2011, 2012, 2013, n.d.; Voices for Change 2013), we can see both opportunities and challenges in current policy frameworks for working towards gender equality.

One strength of these frameworks and ‘theories of change’ (*ibid.*) is that they tend to acknowledge that change is needed at multiple ‘systemic levels’, sectors or domains for intervention, which allows for a more sophisticated approach than working only on individuals’ behaviour or service provision, for example. Some also acknowledge interactions between different streams of interventions, outputs and outcomes etc., which can allow for capturing complex interactions across sectors or levels. They can also summarise quite complex material accessibly into short documents (with inevitable resulting imperfections and simplifications). In doing so, they sometimes also provide useful broader guidance by including principles, explicitly stating a number of assumptions underpinning the theories of change, or suggesting different ways of assessing specific contexts, which are appropriately underlined as crucial in understanding gender relations. In these respects, these frameworks helpfully recognise and communicate the point that gender inequalities are structurally rooted. On the other hand, these strategies, frameworks and theories also come with certain challenges, which need to be considered. Three key issues are outlined below:

**☠ Men and boys are almost invisible in frameworks and theories of change, or relegated to appearing as ‘barriers’ to women’s empowerment**

First, the actual and potential roles of men and boys are almost invisible in these frameworks and theories of change, or ‘male dominance’ is relegated to figure as elements of the ‘problem’, or ‘barriers’, in the broader environment (with the suggested implication that males are merely/mainly problematic). The rare exception to this is when males appear as potential participants in community dialogues or ‘working with men and boys to change social norms’. Furthermore, the framing of working on gender equality is sometimes reduced to ‘protecting’ women and girls, or enabling their development, in ways which do not challenge underlying problems of unequal patriarchal power relations.

**☠ Drawing linear cause–effect routes of change to tackle ‘barriers’ misses opportunities to build on positive features, and suggests streams in parallel ‘silos’**

Second, the theories of change are predicated on the notion that it is mainly through tackling ‘barriers’ head-on that a problem like the subordination of women can best get solved. Although a close focus on barriers to progress (such as in the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence) is obviously crucial, it is not sufficient and it can mean that complementary or alternative strategies are missed; for example, ones that might build on strategic openings of relatively little resistance, or build on positive forces for equitable social change. By leaving males as implicit problematic barriers to gender equality, opportunities to engage various men or boys as different types of change agents are lost. Furthermore, the typical pathways from interventions to outcomes can in some cases suggest parallel work in ‘silos’, with little interaction between them. As men and boys are all but invisible within these streams, perceiving and planning for their roles along the pathways or in any such cross-silo interactions is doubly challenging.

**☠ Presented as all-encompassing, frameworks and theories typically do not factor in external trends and institutions, which also impact on outcomes**

Third, the theories of change come across as ‘totalising’ or all-encompassing, particularly in the way that they typically do not factor in other broader changes or external trends in societies, which also impact on the gender equality outcomes and goals (often more significantly than does deliberate policy or interventions). A related challenge is the way that ‘social norms’ tend to get framed when referring to very broad concepts like ‘male dominance’ embedded in beliefs and values etc., and as disconnected from the institutions, services and politics. In addition, these institutions are also affected by external trends, again

typically not factored in. Whilst young, urban educated men may hold increasingly progressive ideas about gender equality, it is essential to account for concurrent trends of patriarchal backlash. By leaving the multiple, complex (sometimes conflicted) and shifting roles of men invisible in theories of change and policy frameworks, strategies remain vulnerable to the winds of fortune.

## **2.2 Lessons on how to reframe gender from work with men and boys**

The aim of reframing work on gender equality is to achieve better policies to support effective ways of working with men and boys in alliance with women and girls for gender justice. A range of lessons has emerged from evidence on the dynamics of men's and boys' roles in work on gender equality. In order to more effectively support change for gender equality the following principles need to inform analysis and strategies:

### **✓ Get the right frames to see the problem – Gender is relational, it is socially constructed through interactions between men, women, girls and boys**

The first lesson is that gender equality goals need to be reframed in relational terms, rather than be elaborated as only being about women and girls, i.e. as gender inequalities and injustices *are* relational and structurally embedded, they are not simply about women and girls – nor indeed men and boys – in isolation. They are about women's, men's, girls' and boys' relations with each other in families, communities and institutions, in which they interact with societal processes and beliefs on gender roles. In practice, this would mean that males, females and gender relations are visible at every level or stage of a theory of change; for example, their relational investments, interests and ideologies at the level of context and barriers to progress, strategies for implementation which engage specific groups of males and females relationally and for clear purposes, as well as the tracking of outcomes and impacts in ways which capture the social justice and gender equality objectives of relevant men, women, boys and girls.

This does not mean meeting everyone's need with equal urgency, as the relational problem can also involve – for example – divesting certain men of their privileges, whilst a plausible account of how this comes about becomes all the more crucial. Research from EMERGE has highlighted the importance of working with men and boys to increase their recognition of the often invisible unpaid care roles of women, and to engage men in redistributing this work. The MenCare campaign in Latin America seeks to promote men's roles as equitable, non-violent fathers and caregivers by helping to break down social norms around gender roles and engaging men as allies in supporting women's social and economic equality (Santos 2015).

### **✓ Gender is 'intersectional', as we have multiple identities and investments across different axes of power, and across movements for justice**

Gender inequality operates with other hierarchically organised inequalities of power such as those based on class, race, sexuality and ability. Differentials in work and poverty, for example, get expressed in relation to horizontal inequalities between men and women of different class, race or caste, affecting labour force participation and pay. For meaningful changes in the relationships between different types of men and women, their identities cannot be constructed merely within two abstract homogenous groups.

Importantly, it has been shown that linking gender to other issues of social injustice and a critical analysis of the intersections between inequalities, power and privilege, can facilitate men working more effectively with women for gender equality. In Bangladesh, work by Nijera Kori with male and female landless rights group members to understand the ways in which gender hierarchies operate together with class hierarchies was a crucial component of leadership development for women and consciousness-raising for men. This has built their commitment to addressing gender inequalities in personal as well as in political spheres together, and has enabled solidarities between men and women in social mobilisation

approaches which link struggles for gender and economic justice (Greig, Shahrokh and Preetha 2015). An important implication for policy and practice is that by working with men who are already involved in social justice activism (and have an analysis of oppression) gender justice can be brought into their activism and alliances can be forged with women's groups and struggles.

✓ **Whilst social norms influence individuals' behaviour, they are shaped by trends and embedded in evolving institutions**

Another weakness in how gender and development is commonly framed is that much of it tends to get cast in a vision of how 'social norms' are thought to simply dictate individuals' attitudes and behaviours and that changing gender relations therefore merely requires 'changing social norms' in order to influence people towards better behaviours. With roots in public health models for behaviour change communications, such approaches also often have an unclear definition of what social norms actually are or represent. Evidence from the EMERGE research finds that our understanding of gender norms needs to be expanded so that it is seen as dynamic and as reproduced through social, political and economic institutions. This means that change towards gender equality needs initiatives that work beyond individuals, and across community and institutional levels, and with different men in diverse positions of power to challenge the roots of oppression.

The awareness and education for behaviour change initiatives that make up a large proportion of work with men and boys for gender equality, although important, need to be complemented by strategies to engage with the politics of reforming institutions and political accountability (e.g. through collective action and/or community mobilisation) so as to achieve sustainability and scale. For example, lasting change has been achieved in parts of Ethiopia, where community-owned change processes to end female genital mutilation – cutting (FGM–C) have engaged religious leaders and have related to changes at the national level (including government policy and legislative reform) (Stern with Anderson 2015).

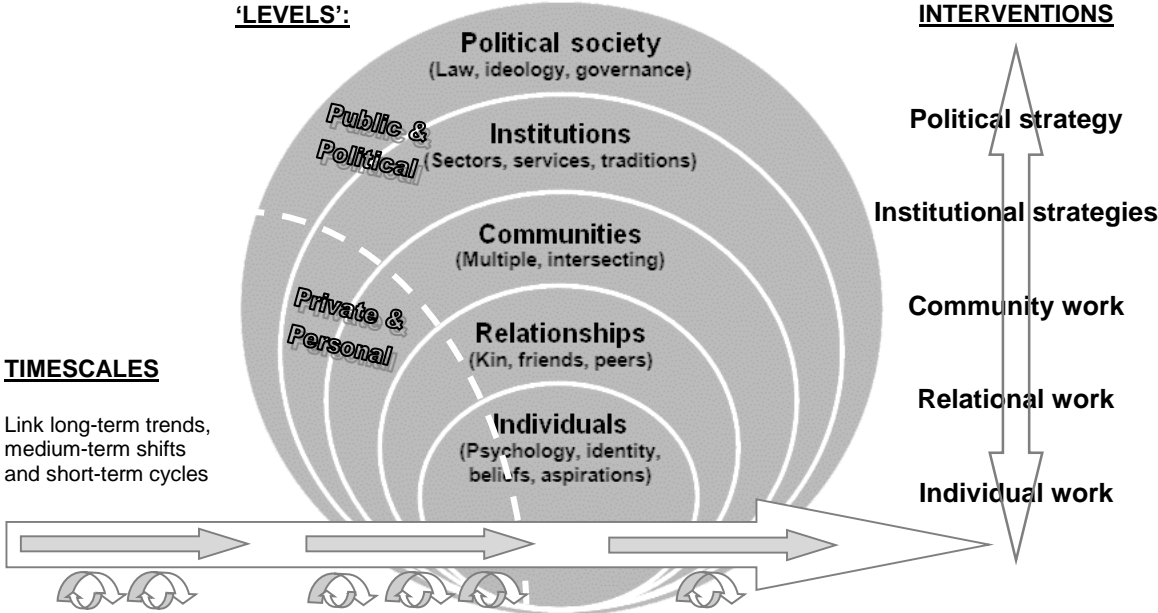
✓ **'Context' is the key for getting beyond the abstract idea of 'individuals' – linking real people in real communities to the structural within historical trajectories**

Whilst not a new insight, the evidence overwhelmingly points to the crucial importance of understanding specific contexts regarding how gender relations can change. A problem here is that 'context' is itself a complex idea and there are many ways of conceptually slicing the 'social totality' within which gender is performed in any particular context. A common approach is to apply a model of 'ecological levels' (individual, interpersonal, communal, institutional etc.). However, aside from being conceived of as *multi-level*, most also recognise that particular contexts and problems are also *multidimensional* – with social, economic and political aspects – requiring different kinds of disciplines or perspectives to help explain and predict dynamics within a setting. When it comes to framing required responses, we often also find that *multisectoral* strategies are needed for addressing issues, for example addressing gendered violence in combination with economic empowerment or political reforms etc.

There is no single correct way to analyse 'context', but what emerges strongly is that changes are complex and grow out of historical trajectories and contestations across sectors, levels, social groups and generations, with multiple dimensions to their significance and dynamics. Figure 1 provides a schematic visualisation of the familiar 'levels' in prevalent ecological models on gender, whilst illustrating the cross-cutting private/public (personal–political) dichotomy, spanning different levels and types of interventions, as well as ways to factor in 'time'. The implication of this for work on gender equality is that change needs to be grounded in local knowledge, priorities and histories, and needs to be driven through local ownership.

One Man Can is an initiative working with men to take action to end sexual and gender-based violence and harmful sexual behaviours, and to promote gender equality. It is made up of a participatory learning and community mobilisation process that engages men to reconfigure gender inequalities at personal, familial and community level. In South Africa the initiative works to make visible and address inequalities between men, recognising the history of racial inequalities in South Africa, and works to consciously build on the country's legacy of social justice activism and the agency of men and women to affect change in the struggle to address HIV/AIDS (Mokganyetji, Stern and Anderson 2015). In India, the Samajhdar Jodidar initiative has enabled men to support women in politics, as shaped by a political history of demands for inclusive governance, gender and caste quotas for women in local government alongside local histories of the Gandhian and Primary Health Care movements mobilising for social justice (Edström *et al.* 2015b). At the same time, this work is enabled through men working on their relationships with women in their private sphere to also support them in public – from their homes through to the institutions of local government. For both initiatives, the way they act within structures and cultures in context-specific ways is vital to their success.

**Figure 1 Understanding gender across contextualised 'levels' and timescales**



✓ **Factor in external trends – The world is changing, and with it gender relations; so, how are we going to ride the waves and manage the backlash?**

Gender equality efforts need to address broader changes in gender relations and practices, capitalising on positive trends whilst meaningfully challenging negative ones. Broader changes in society, such as changing labour markets, trends in conflicts or migration tend to impact on gender relations, often more significantly than explicit efforts to address gender inequalities. For example, increasing levels of education, access to globalised information and urbanisation may shift men's relationship and attitudes to gender equality more than programmes to change men – in both positive and negative directions, in terms of gender equality (Hassink *et al.* 2015). Important programmes to empower individual women economically have often met with resistance and backlash from men in their communities, influenced by broader counter-trends of increasing religious fundamentalism and conservative traditional values (*ibid.*). These trends often have a regional and global scope, as religious fundamentalism has been on the increase in several regions often in interconnected ways.

At the same time, within processes of social change, established and competing power structures can evolve through co-opting apparently progressive agendas without necessarily undermining more deeply rooted masculine ideologies. Male backlash against gains made for women in terms of gender equality can take subtle forms. Indeed, many critique certain male engagement strategies that adopt 'protectionist' approaches as representing new forms of backlash, co-opting progressive language around gender equality without challenging deep ideologies of male supremacy.

Policies and programmes need to take account of these broader processes, and respond to regressive changes in gender relations, through considering strategies across individual, relational and wider societal levels. In Egypt, a backlash against women's rights and increased insecurity for women in public spaces, which have been linked to contestations and changes in political leadership, has seen the emergence of organic activist movements of young men and women committed to defending women's rights (Tadros 2015). Despite the complex and politically 'closed' context, changes in sexual harassment law at national level provided a new framework for demanding justice, and facilitating strategies for rights claims by citizens.

✓ **The personal is political – Men and boys must wake up to this too**

Personal politics and engagement with social justice are inseparably connected. A commitment to accountability on gender equality needs to span both private and public spheres to be personally and politically meaningful. A critical and realistic understanding of gender and social change demands that we are not naïve about male engagement being simple or applicable across the board. We must recognise that 'gender regime change' (or reform) is not in all men's interests (Greig and Edström 2008) and that many men may actively and sometimes violently resist this change (Flood 2015). Furthermore, even many men who would clearly benefit from change need to be engaged and challenged politically, in order to divest from deeply held notions of male supremacy and ideologies legitimising male privilege that have evolved over many centuries. This involves asking men not only to redefine what it means to be a man for them personally, but also to divest from certain forms of male privilege, power and status which they are accustomed to. Not all men are amenable to changing, nor are all necessarily strategic to engage. Yet, for others who are, change is still difficult and requires ongoing and deeply personal challenges. It is also important to 'engage' those who actively and violently resist notions of gender equality, but then as clear opponents rather than as potential 'converts'.

Collective processes where men engage as agents of change in addressing gender inequalities have been particularly prominent in work to address gender-based violence. In the Men's Action to Stop Violence Against Women campaign, consciousness-raising with men on patriarchal inequality and violence has led to shifts in personal commitments to gender equality, and mobilisation and public action with women to address patriarchal practices and policies (Shahrokh with Edström 2015).

Such approaches are effective for building a shared commitment to gender transformation by men and women at relationship, institutional and community levels.

Personal commitment is also critical for supporting male champions of women's leadership and gender equality, especially those in positions of power. More research is needed on the ways that such men can support the creation of more inclusive political institutions and how women and men can work effectively together institutionally. Accountability is needed both from the 'top down' and through citizen action 'bottom up'.



### 3 Agenda for change: Routes towards gender equality

This section outlines the shape of strategies and interventions recommended within a reframing of policy and practice for gender equality, that productively engages men and boys. Strategic choices and intervention options need to be situated in relation to the principles detailed in Section 2, underpinning how this change might happen.

Research within EMERGE (2015) has identified that strategies for change toward gender equality must address relations of power between men and women, as situated within their actual contexts. It has also highlighted how addressing gender inequalities with men may be more effective if tackled in combination with other inequalities, which reinforce power and privilege and compound multiple forms of discriminations.

Understanding the extent to which different strategies that work with men and boys can transform unequal power relations involves both (i) revealing their underlying theories of effecting change, and (ii) assessing the kinds of changes actually being achieved. A number of promising approaches to change can be identified from the EMERGE evidence review (Edström *et al.* 2015a). Across a range of early and prevalent approaches to gender equality work, males were sometimes considered in two somewhat limiting ways: One way involves programmes that engage men and/or boys to reduce potential male backlash by building their acceptance and understanding of activities to benefit women and girls, essentially in order to reduce conflicts and allow for women's and girls' empowerment within reproductive and productive roles (often within a framework of the household). Another way involves programmes and activities aimed at building women's capacity and empowering them in relation to men (often through combinations of economic empowerment, gender awareness and community outreach). Whilst many such programmes have had important impacts in their own right, barriers to change have also arisen in some; for example, where men are framed as 'obstacles' to be convinced and won over, or do not have a clear or active role in the approach.

Other approaches that engage more positively and deliberately with men and boys, which recognise and build on gender relations in more nuanced ways within their analysis (e.g. acknowledging that problematic gender relations also affect many men), have been shown to deliver more transformative outcomes with improving men's roles and contributions. Such strategies include, for example:

- ✓ Fostering better male–female relationships aimed at better outcomes for couples, families and individuals (rather than for women and girls only).
- ✓ Mobilising men with consciousness-raising and ongoing support so that men develop: more egalitarian relationships, more positive role modelling to other men, and collective action in support of women in public and political spaces.
- ✓ Men and women uniting on the basis of shared social justice aims, and building shared consciousness of inequalities.
- ✓ Men and boys working with, or supporting, women's work and organisations.

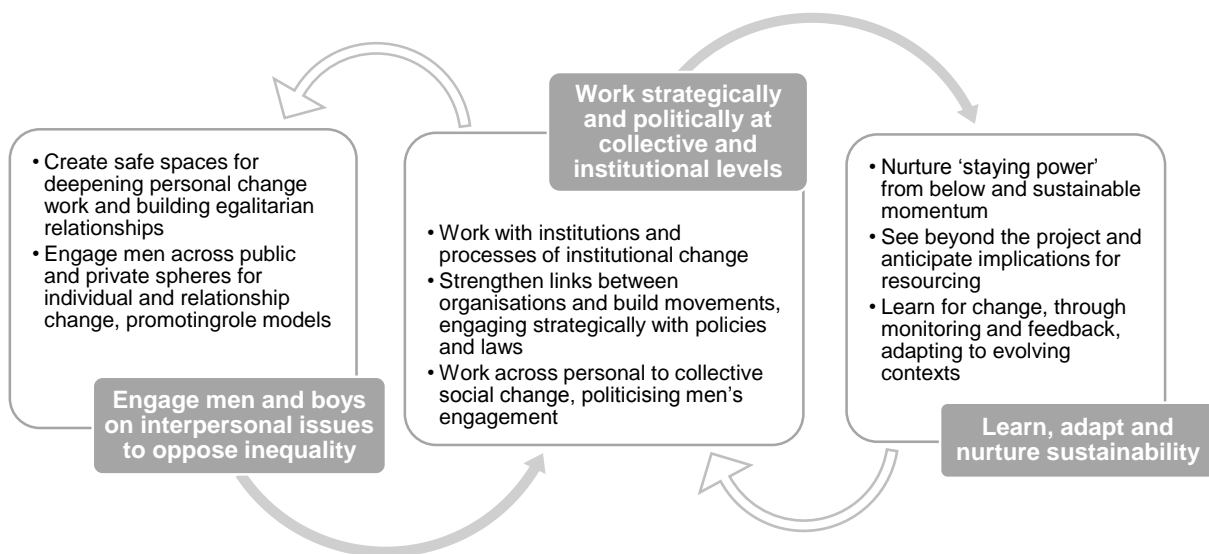
Working with boys and girls in schools and other *fora* to promote gender equality.

In the following two sections we distil some key lessons from practice and policy for gender equality. Section 3.1 highlights particular aspects of different approaches within a broader schematic pathway to change, illustrated by a range of examples from practice (EMERGE 2015). Section 3.2 draws together important implications for policymakers and suggestions for making policy processes more responsive to the need for more inclusive and transformative gender work engaging men and boys progressively.

### 3.1 Signposts toward better practice

What are the core elements of the strategies for working with men and boys to facilitate change towards gender equality? The following approaches are grounded in the reframing of men and boys within a relational and intersectional approach to achieving gender equality. They are interconnected and work together to address and dismantle unequal systems, along the lines suggested in Section 2.2. The strategies are organised as depicted in Figure 2, starting with entry points for individual men and boys to engage beyond the personal and making their work in relation to women and inequality public and political, followed by a set of approaches for strategically engaging with institutions, movements and broader systems in a contextually rooted way, finishing with some approaches to factoring in change, timescales and adaptability.

**Figure 2 Elements of good practice across contextualised ‘levels’ in real-time**



#### ***Engaging men and boys on interpersonal issues, raising consciousness of inequality:***

Promising strategies – or entry points – focus on making gender work with males both *relational* and personally *political* by, for example, working on intimate relationships whilst raising their consciousness of, and engaging with, broader inequalities.

#### ✓ **Deepening personal change work and building egalitarian relationships**

For change to happen, critical self-reflection can help to build and rebuild relationships founded on equality, when facilitated in a supportive environment. Deep personal reflection requires a shift in consciousness in individual men in order to build understandings of equality, justice and accountability. This demands strategies for challenging men to analyse their own privilege and also to surface their own trauma and vulnerabilities inflicted and reinforced through patriarchal hierarchies. Facilitating such self-reflection by men and boys in dialogue with others enables them to develop an analysis of gender inequalities, harmful masculinities and intersecting oppressions which can lead them to question their own attitudes and behaviours, as well as how those are upheld. Providing spaces and skilled guidance for mutual support through this change process has been shown to lead to solidarity with women and identification of shared interests. It has also been shown to build collective strength, promoting more equitable relations between men themselves, and with women, through role modelling and peer support.

Building effective communication and relationship-building skills is an important inroad for strengthening individual agency and self-belief, as well as for improving household decision-making and wellbeing in relationships. Whilst focused on the individuals and interpersonal

relations, it provides for an important building block for adding more structurally transformative strategies.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, the Living Peace project provides group therapy for men to reduce gender-based violence and rebuild communities in post-conflict settings. By bringing different men together (e.g. men who have been violent, husbands of rape survivors and men traumatised by conflict) to learn from each other, they reflect on gender norms, relations and power dynamics, and rehearse new behaviour in safe spaces, all of which has led to improvements in men's attitudes toward women and children, reduced violence and gender equality improving (Hassink 2015).

✓ **Approaches are needed that engage men across public and private spheres to address gender inequalities**

Lasting change will not occur unless strategies to address gender inequalities look at and address power inequalities maintained by both women and men in public and private spheres. In committing to – and practising – transformations in power relations in the private sphere, men can be seen as enacting their belief that gender roles and responsibilities can be redistributed and equity is possible. Becoming more equitable at home often involves becoming more sharing and caring, a process that also involves close consideration of decision-making power, access and control over resources and division of labour and responsibilities. In doing so, such processes can strengthen and reflect men's capacities to challenge restrictive masculine norms and expectations in themselves and others, which can also benefit men. Changes along these lines have been shown to have several benefits, including helping to break down barriers to women's participation in public and political life, and enhancing women's freedom of mobility.

For example, in rural Maharashtra in India, the Samajhdar Jodidar project works with local men's groups to provide spaces where men can begin to build more supportive relationships with their partners in the home, which involves taking on more domestic work and sharing asset ownership etc. They then go on to act as role models and community mobilisers, providing practical support for women's participation in public life and local politics. The project has led to more gender equitable beliefs and practices among local men, as well as to greater and more effective representation of women in local politics (Edström *et al.* 2015b).

***Working strategically at collective and institutional levels, in context:***

Moving beyond 'the personal' and the level of interpersonal relationships, a range of contextualised strategies can work for collective action and change, target institutions and existing processes, as well as build alliances and collaborations between movements along *intersectional* lines.

✓ **Working from personal to collective social change**

Agency (as a capacity for action based on informed reason and strategic choices) is a key component of change in work with men and boys for gender equality, but agency is collective as well as individual, and collective action is often more effective for broader change. Participatory group-building approaches enable new and shared analytic capacities that can lead to empowered actions by collectives of individuals. Where initiatives engage men and boys as empowered citizens, and power is analysed from the vantage point of inequalities in privilege and discrimination, then concerted collective action for gender equality can evolve. The transformation of such political analysis into collective action and engagement, such as demanding accountability for women's rights and gender equality, has been shown to enable sustained strategies for change, in particular on issues of sexual and gender-based violence or ending harmful practices.

For example, Kembatti Mentti Gezzima's (KMG) work in Ethiopia to end FGM–C recognises that men often have decision-making power at the household level, in the community and in legal and religious bodies. KMG works to challenge rather than reinforce this power, and it engages certain men as critical agents who can learn about the negative consequences of FGM–C and reach out to other men and boys through community activism. Religious leaders and community decision-makers are trained to provide prevention information and to implement sanctions against those who continue the practice. Whilst engaged because of the position they hold in relation to religious and cultural norms, these leaders are mostly men and their gendered relational social position is essential to the approach. KMG's work has led to an important reduction in the prevalence of FGM–C and the social norms that condone it (Stern with Anderson 2015).

#### **Moving beyond male protectionism**

Engaging men should not reinforce a sense of male supremacy by simply appealing to men as 'protectors' of, or decision-makers on behalf of, the interests of women and girls.

Men should be engaged as agents of change and hold themselves, their peers and their communities accountable for rejecting gender inequality on the grounds of dismantling oppression and claiming human rights.

Working together with women to challenge problematic gender roles and expectations amongst both men and women strengthens this accountability and also provides space for mutual learning and redefinition of gender norms.

As men and women navigate the pathways between personal change and public action it is important to recognise that this process is not linear or easy and there will be steps forward as well as set-backs. Within contexts of patriarchal resistance and backlash by family and community members who are striving to maintain established gender hierarchies, building relationships with women to express solidarity and challenge gender stereotypes is critical.

#### ✓ **Strengthening links between organisations and building movements**

Where groups seek allies and build coalitions based on mutual support and collaboration, a new kind of collective action for gender equality is achieved. Work with men and boys has shown that alliances can help build solidarities across a variety of interests to find common ground and build collective strength. Alliances between women and men have been fostered through shared analysis and understanding of the ways in which different inequalities intersect with gender oppressions to compromise equality and justice for specific groups of men, women, boys and girls. Trust can be established within such alliances through coordinated action and accountability and as a result of working together to change material circumstances and claim rights jointly.

MenCare engages with a range of other stakeholders – from grass-roots movements, to academics, government ministries and UN agencies – working on related issues of care giving, childhood development and fatherhood. In Brazil, MenCare formed an alliance with the National Network of Early Childhood which enabled a range of events and activities for fathers around health and recreation, and mobilised training for healthcare providers on men's health and fatherhood. Joining with national and international networks helped to increase the visibility of MenCare partners' work, and encouraged its continuation beyond specific funding and activity periods (Santos 2015).

#### ***Strategies for sustainability, engaging with change and for adaptive learning:***

#### ✓ **Nurturing 'staying power' from below and sustainable momentum for change**

Organisations working with pro-feminist men organising for gender equality and women's rights have learned that mobilisation and movement building is a critical strategy for driving social change, challenging institutions and demanding accountability for gender justice. Groups of men and boys – and mixed groups of men and women – which have focused on building 'constituencies for change and gender equality' can build motivation over time,

particularly amongst those most personally affected or constrained by patriarchal inequalities. When the work is focused on movement building and is truly driven from the ground, such groups can initiate strategies relatively independent of external institutions and with modest funding. Furthermore, combining long-term goals for significant changes in the broader social, economic and political context with more intermediate and tangible short-term objectives can help these groups to advance more effectively on their goals, over time.

Nijera Kori is a national social movement in Bangladesh organising landless people to claim their rights through social mobilisation. Nijera Kori works with landless men's and women's groups through consciousness-raising to better understand the intersections between gender and class oppression. As a result, men have become activists in the shared struggle for gender justice. The establishment of democratic decision-making structures across the movement and the egalitarian division of labour between men and women provides an important platform for the recognition and enhancement of women's leadership. Landless groups also perform a watchdog function, for which they gather information about the government's social services (Greig *et al.* 2015). Many other approaches to building constituencies for change specifically factor in intergenerational changes and focus on young men as new constituencies, such as the Equal Community Foundation in India, or the Great Men Value Women initiative in the UK.<sup>9</sup> Many such approaches focus on working on education with boys in and out of school (Stern 2015b).

✓ **Emphasis on processes of institutional change**

Institutional accountability for gender equality is of particular importance because, in many contexts, effective action is compromised by discriminatory gender norms upheld by male-dominated systems and structures. Formal institutional systems and services – related to health, justice, education, economics and politics – maintain gender inequalities through gendered discrimination and (often) the lack of a policy or practical response. Furthermore, informal institutions – such as who takes children to school, or what is considered culturally appropriate in communications between males or females of different ages – can contribute to these inequalities in subtle dynamic ways, even by shaping performances within formal institutions (Chappell and Waylen 2013). Such interactions between informal and formal institutions deeply influence performances and outcomes and also explain why formal change processes may not 'stick' (Mackay 2014), or how policies can get co-opted into new forms of male dominance. Male champions of women's leadership and gender equality, especially those in positions of power, can play an important role in the creation of more inclusive and gender-equal political institutions and cultures. Women's and men's collective agency within institutions can also work effectively to challenge prevailing institutional norms, as well as policies or rules, that uphold inequalities within and outside of institutions.

Importantly, this has to be in dialogue with pressure from citizens' groups (below) for accountability relationships to be built. In Brazil, for example, the National Healthcare Policy for Men (PNAISH), which developed as a result of partnerships between the Ministry of Health, civil society actors and academics working on men's health issues, has been influential in bringing a gender transformational approach to the work of the Ministry itself, as well as the broader health sector in Brazil (Spindler 2015). Focusing on the linkages between informal gendered rules of engagement and the functioning of institutions, the experience of the Supportive Partners programme in India illustrates how men and women working on their relationships in the private sphere can facilitate collaboration and more equal rules – and practices – of engagement in public spaces and in the functioning of local government (Edström *et al.* 2015b).

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<sup>9</sup> For the Equal Community Foundation, see <http://ecf.org.in/> and for the Great Men Value Women initiative, see [www.great-men.org/](http://www.great-men.org/).

The role of state institutions is complex, especially in contexts where they act in repressive and coercive ways, or where structures have been dismantled through protracted conflict. Considering gender in peace-building and reconciliation processes is another important entry point for challenging gender relations and structures of power.

✓ **Beyond the project – implications for longer-term funding**

Addressing gender inequalities is a long-term social, political and economic project. Achieving and sustaining such change is often a slow process and involves sustained effort, persistence and risk-taking for both policymakers and the citizens involved in driving change. Supporting and partnering with local organisations working for gender justice is important for building contextual legitimacy and understanding ways to navigate local power structures, and doing so over a longer time frame may be particularly important.

Connected to this is the challenge presented as a result of work with men and boys for gender equality having been constrained by framings that focus on individual behaviour change within short-term projects. Most interventions are therefore small scale and intensive, leaving the need for research into the sustainability of interventions and how such approaches could best be scaled up through policies or other means. How social change is conceptualised, however, often relates to funding realities and thus is driven by assumptions that social change can happen quickly, is linear and is predictable. Approaches to evaluation of programmes with men and boys need to take a longer-term perspective, and (if and where possible) link more creatively to longitudinal research on gender equality and on structural and institutional change.

Funding architectures need to respond to the complexity of work addressing gender equality and enable longer-term approaches that are also responsive to changes in context and which can help to ensure that processes are sustained beyond the project's duration. In shifting priorities over funding cycles, it is important to take into account existing effective work towards gender equality by women's groups and organisations and consider 'additional' new investments rather than 'redirecting' resources away from such work. In scaling up and updating efforts, it can also be worth developing and supporting work on engaging men and masculinities that is done in collaboration with – or by – such pre-existing groups. Organisations working with men should advocate for funding and recognition for gender equality work more broadly and in cooperation with women's rights organisations.

✓ **Learning for change towards gender equality**

The methods that we use to build and generate evidence must capture the complexity and nuances of problems of, and responses to, gender inequality. They need to allow us to understand more deeply how and why change happens and how to intervene to address blockages and build on opportunities, taking power and politics into account. As more attention is paid to interests and power relations in work on gender, thoughtful analysis of the local context is necessary as opposed to presenting ready-made answers. The use of qualitative and participatory evaluation approaches with adaptive and nuanced techniques for learning are therefore recommended for complementing and guiding more quantitative approaches (which are currently prioritised, but less able to capture complex and shifting dynamics). Developing such mixed-methods approaches to the evaluation of programmes with men and boys is a high priority in order to capture how changes evolve and can be sustained over time. Where possible, such evaluation approaches should ideally be linked to longitudinal research on gender equality.

### **3.2 Directions for reframing men and boys in policy**

Policymaking is a type of political process shaped by different forces, such as discourse and narratives (about how social problems operate and often about the evidence for this); by connections between actors and networks; and by their material and political interests. Policy processes tend to perpetuate certain kinds of power relations while at the same time allowing

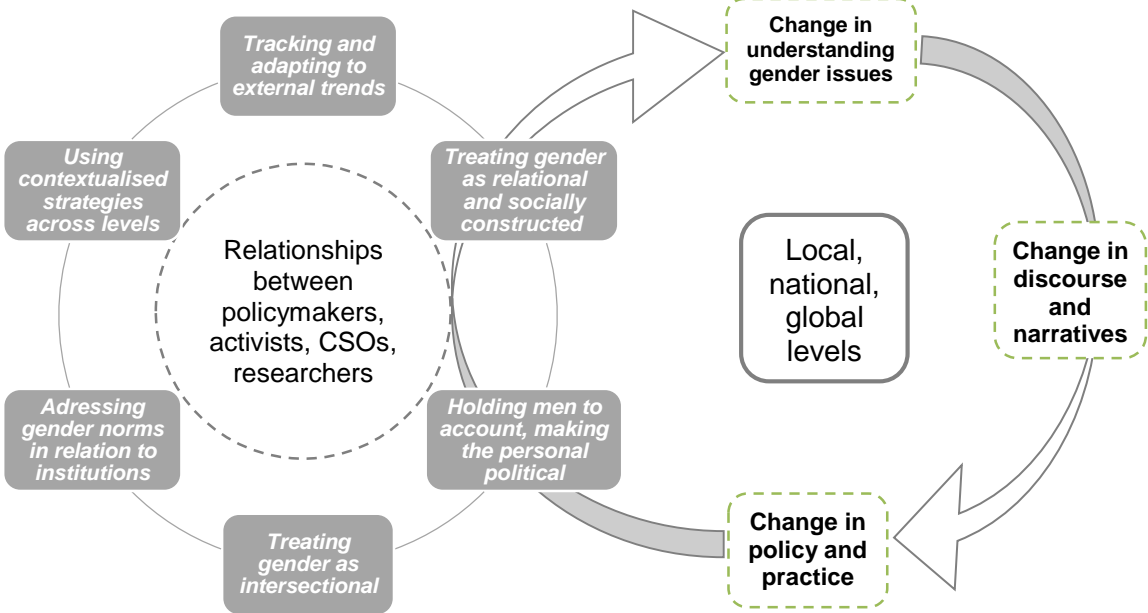
for some negotiation between contesting social concerns and ideologies. As such, various development actors, governments and other stakeholders (or interest groups) shape policy, in turn influencing gender relations in different ways. This includes through establishing or enabling the implementation of laws, policies and interventions that are both directly ‘about gender’ and other ones that are not.

Policymaking processes are typically presented as objective and neutral, in ways that are not apparently nor visibly gendered. Yet, policymaking can also play a key role in challenging normative assumptions and positions on gender, and as such is contentious and dynamic, as it is played out by gendered actors with interests and incentives rooted in existing (and sometimes competing) structures of power, both formal and informal. In reframing policy for gender equality, it is therefore important to recognise and understand how politics and policies encourage certain gender identities, norms and practices in order for an alternative narrative on gender equality to emerge.

Building coalitions and networks of actors (within and outside of policymaking institutions) with a shared vision for reframing gender equality can help to support and maintain these new narratives. Policymakers themselves need to be a part of this change, creating open and invited spaces for influence, as well as supporting new claimed spaces of engagement, where these are legitimately backed by argument and evidence. However, there has as yet been insufficient work to explore the way that men and women ‘in power’ uphold gender norms and reinforce cultures of masculinity within patriarchal institutions or, indeed, how some might better challenge these. This should be a direction for future engaged research, including research that involves policymaking processes, institutions and actors involved in gender and development policy.

Figure 3 provides a schematic visualisation of how policymakers, civil society actors, activists and researchers interact across networks (spanning local to global levels). These iterative processes shift our understandings and gradually reshape discourse and narratives about gender and social change, which in turn can help to change the way policies and strategies are framed and elaborated. If these interactions highlight principles for good practice emerging from evidence and experience, such as those described above (echoed in the dark boxes in the left-hand circle), improving policy can also better support good practice and interactions between actors.

**Figure 3 Reshaping discourse and policy through interactions across networks**



As an example, interactions between development actors, women’s movements and groups in the ‘male engagement sector’ have intensified over the last few years, and it is encouraging to note that the formal declaration which came out of the 2nd MenEngage Global Symposium,<sup>10</sup> in 2014, was far stronger in its critique of patriarchy as being central to the productive engagement of men and boys, than was the declaration produced by the 1st MenEngage Global Symposium, held in Rio de Janeiro in 2009.

Meanwhile, directions for reframing men and boys in broader policy for gender equality need to be connected to – and make men, boys and masculinity visible within – the processes of power and social change being addressed. This demands transparency and accountability for gender politics within institutions and responsive governance, premised on equal human rights for all – girls, boys, women, men and other genders.

So, what should a gender policy framework that incorporates masculinities effectively look like? There are six key directions for reframing policy to enable more positive engagement of men and boys for gender equality. Policies need to become: (a) relational and inclusive, (b) intersectional, (c) able to link the personal and political, (d) long-term and adaptive, (e) enabling sufficient ongoing financing, and (f) focused on men’s accountability, not leadership. This is summarised in Figure 4, and elaborated on further below.

**Figure 4 Key directions and recommendations for policy**

<b>Relational and inclusive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid replicating gender stereotypes, such as framing females as vulnerable or males as perpetrators</li> <li>• Systematically make visible, and interrelate, a greater range of male and female roles and contributions</li> </ul>
<b>Intersectional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link gender inequality and other social inequalities</li> <li>• Improve gender mainstreaming to focus on the most marginalised women and men</li> </ul>
<b>Linking the personal and political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a range of approaches on gender in communities and institutions. Don't just try to change individuals</li> <li>• Support alliance building and institutional work</li> </ul>
<b>Long term and adaptive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As changing gender norms is slow, support longer-term strategies that are adaptive to changing realities</li> <li>• Use longer-term means of evaluation and look for 'contribution' to change, over 'attribution' of impacts</li> </ul>
<b>Sufficient, consistent financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect good work by women's groups, but ensure enough funds for gender equality, irrespective of sex</li> <li>• Invest in collaborative planning, building relationships, networks and learning between actors</li> </ul>
<b>Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guard against male protectionism or the reinforcement of male supremacy</li> <li>• Support collaboration between women’s movements and men and boys working for gender equality</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> To access the 2nd MenEngage Global Symposium outcome declaration ‘Men and Boys for Gender Justice: Delhi Declaration and Call to Action’, see <http://menengage.org/resources/delhi-declaration-call-action/> (accessed 1 March 2016).



***In more detail, policy processes should consider the following recommendations:***

✓ **Reframe policy on gender in *relational* and inclusive terms**

Keeping a focus on women's systemic subordination and the continued need for programmes targeted at particular vulnerable gender groups, policy should avoid stereotyping formulations of female vulnerability vs. male perpetration and make visible a greater range of male and female roles and potential contributions. Instead, policy should (i) systematically make visible a greater range of male and female roles and potential contributions, and (ii) view – and frame – people of *all* genders as potential 'agents of change'.

✓ **Recognise gender in *intersectional* terms, leaving no one behind**

By doing so, policy can enable gender equality and justice work to be linked or combined with other work to address social inequalities (race relations, economic justice, sexual rights, disability etc.), creating alliances for change at a greater scale and reaching those who are most marginalised from traditional approaches, thus leaving no one behind. Policymakers can avoid silo-approaches by (i) increasing resources to support cross-issue work, beyond gender, and (ii) improve the sensitivity of 'gender mainstreaming' in other programme support, to focus on the most marginalised women and men.

✓ **Enable work with men and boys that links the *personal and political*, facilitating movement building and alliances across constituencies**

Social and political changes in gender orders are not best achieved through public health methods aimed at changing individuals, but require a range of multidisciplinary approaches and collective action strategies for gender justice. Work at community and/or institutional level is personal as well as political; for women and for men. This calls for (i) supporting critical consciousness-raising with men and accountability of duty bearers, and (ii) supporting alliance-building and institutional level work.

✓ **Move beyond the project mode toward *longer-term adaptive approaches*, engaging with broader trends and backlash**

In order to enable complex sustainable change, policy needs to make three shifts: First, strategies need to be elaborated and implemented within a longer-term perspective and be more adaptive to changing realities, such as to population movements, shifting use of technologies or new forms of male dominance. Second, approaches to evaluation need to take a longer-term view and frame strategies as 'contributing' to change, rather than demanding 'attribution' of impacts. Third, funding is needed to enable such process oriented and adaptive theories of change and approaches.

✓ **Ensure sufficient and consistent *financing for gender equality work*, over time**

Since effective processes of challenging gender orders involve collaborative planning and learning, building networks and trust, and since movements from below with multi-level strategies need to adapt over time, sufficient funding needs to be provided over the long term. In order to sustainably make a difference at scale, policymakers should (i) protect good work by women's groups, but ensure sufficient funds for gender equality, irrespective of the gender, or sex, of recipients; and (ii) invest consistently in long-term collaborative planning, building relationships, networks and learning between stakeholders.

✓ **Hold men accountable to women's call for gender justice, and to social justice**

Work with men and boys on gender equality should adopt strategies that guard against male protectionism or the reinforcement of male supremacy. This calls for (i) support to initiatives with men that engage positively with the essential work of women's movements, and (ii) support to collaborations between women's movements and men and boys working for gender equality.

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