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## BOYS AND EDUCATION IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: EMERGING VULNERABILITIES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTING CHANGES IN GENDER NORMS

*This article presents a review of global data on boys' education in the Global South and recent findings on the influence of boys' educational attainment on their attitudes and behaviors in terms of gender equality. The article also presents three examples—from Brazil, the Balkans, and India—on evaluated, school-based approaches for engaging boys and girls in reducing gender-based violence and promoting greater support for gender equality. Recommendations are provided for how to integrate such processes into the public education system in such a way that provides benefits for both boys and girls in a relational approach.*

*Keywords: boy's education, gender attitudes, India, Brazil, the Balkans*

“When I was little, I didn’t have the chance to study. Well I guess I did but I wasted it. You know, when you’re a guy in my neighborhood, you don’t want to worry about anything like that. You just wanna goof off. My mother would yell at me to go to school but I’d run off. And there was no man around the house to run after me. [His father died when he was young.] Today, now that I’m older, shit, I’m gonna study. Without an education, it’s already hard enough to find

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work.” (Anderson, 21, African-Brazilian, resident of a favela in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

The focus on educational vulnerabilities in the Global South in the past 30 years has largely been on those facing girls. And with good reason: girls in most Global South settings were far more likely to be out of school than their brothers and male peers and to complete fewer years of education if they were enrolled. But the last 30 years have seen tremendous strides in girls’ educational attainment, such that the World Bank in its most recent, 2012 World Development Report (World Bank, 2011) declares that globally, gender parity has been achieved at the primary level.

While there is much to celebrate in this affirmation, disparities remain: for girls in some settings (mostly in several West and North African settings and parts of South Asia), for boys in others, and for the poorest boys and girls in nearly all Global South settings. At the same time, in middle income countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, parts of Asia, and parts of sub-Saharan Africa, educational trends begin to look like those of the Global North. When gender parity has finally been achieved in education, the trend is now that boys are faring worse in many countries at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, in terms of enrollment, rates of repetition, and scores on standardized tests.

In addition, these new educational attainment data from the Global South confirm that both boys and girls are spending more time in the school setting, which means that the ways that gender norms are lived and constructed in the school setting become ever more important. The United Nations Secretary-General’s Report on Violence against Children (Pinheiro, 2006) affirms that “children spend more time in the care of adults in places of learning than they do anywhere else outside of their homes.” Unfortunately, schools can too often be spaces where boys are exposed to rigid, violent, and hypermasculine norms—and the ensuing bullying, homophobic or otherwise, that come from those—and girls to sexual harassment and other forms of violence and discrimination.

Thus, if the “gender” question for education in the Global South was previously about who was able to study—and girls’ disadvantages relative to boys’—a key question for educational policy is now the gendered nature of the classroom, the need to understand how gender rigidities and disparities affect both low-income boys and girls, and how to create safe, violence-free learning environments where boys and girls have equal opportunities.

Acknowledging the importance of the school system as a locus for the production of gender norms, Promundo, a Brazilian NGO, has been working in partnership with the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and CARE International to create evidence-based group education and school-based campaigns to promote gender equality, and engaging both boys and girls in the process. Evaluation results of these efforts from Brazil, India, and the Balkans suggest that structured, participatory, and consistently applied group education that promotes a critical reflection and conscious-raising about gender norms, together with youth-led, school-based campaigns, can lead to measurable changes in these norms with positive outcomes for girls and boys (in terms of bullying reduction, reduction of dating violence, improved sexual health outcomes, and reduced classroom violence). Different indicators and results have been found in each setting but changes in gender-related attitudes have been measured in quasi-experimental designs in all three settings.

This article analyzes these trends in educational attainment in the Global South, describes the interventions and the results obtained, and offers insights for embedding such processes in the public education sector.

### NEW GENDERED REALITIES IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND ENROLLMENT

The latest data on education trends from the World Bank's World Development Report 2012 confirm that trends in the Global South are proceeding along similar lines as the Global North (World Bank, 2011). With some important exceptions, girls are both outperforming boys and staying in school for more years at the secondary level and tertiary level in most upper and middle income countries. Some of these trends already show up at the primary level. As one example, boys are more likely to repeat primary grades than girls in 90 out of 113 countries for which data are available (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010). For countries with the greatest gender differences in grade repetition, the percentage of boys repeating grades is at least 1.5 times that of girls. For children who have ever attended school, the years of attainment of girls on average is now greater or equal to that of boys for the Global South (Grant & Berman, 2010). In Latin America and Southeast Asia, this translates into an average of a half year greater school attendance for girls than for boys (Grant & Berman). Furthermore, research is also finding across settings that factors other than gender are explaining school underperformance—most notably social class and local contextual factors that serve to keep boys in school or push them out (and girls). In particular, in the Global South, World Bank data find that ethnicity and poverty are key factors in aggregate enrollment rates, with historically marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities, fearing the worst. But data confirm that even among the most marginalized groups, access to education has improved. Thus, as more children are in school, attention must now move from the macro-structural issues that keep children out of school to the dynamics of the classroom and the family and the community that determine if children excel in and stay in school, which in turn interact with gender norms in the classroom, home and community, as described below (World Bank).

Several explanations have been proposed for boys' higher drop-out rates in middle income countries, most of these from the Caribbean, one of the few Global South settings where boys' educational challenges have been the subject of significant research. These explanations include the preponderance of female teachers (which may imply that classroom styles are more geared toward women's and girls' styles of learning and interaction); a lack of male role models in the home for boys to emulate for school achievement; and the fact that being recognized as a man in some settings means defining oneself as anti-academic or anti-school (Barker, 2005; Chevannes, 2006).

Various studies suggest that the different ways boys and girls are socialized contributes to the situation. Girls are mostly encouraged to stay in or near the home, while boys are encouraged and urged to spend time away from or outside their homes. Time use studies from various settings in the Caribbean and parts of Latin America confirm that girls are more likely to work in the home or be in the home, while boys are more likely to work outside the home or to be outside the home, as the example of Anderson cited above suggests. In low-income urban settings, girls are more likely to be at home taking care of younger siblings or carrying out do-

mestic chores, while boys are more likely to be hanging out on the streets, playing or working, activities which may be harder to reconcile with formal schooling (Barker, 2005).

In other settings, research has focused on the lack of incentives and the costs of school drop-out. Research from Brazil and Jamaica finds that boys in low-income urban settings perceive the limited return on education and frequently drop-out to work in manual labor, construction and other kinds of employment (what the World Bank calls the “brawn” jobs) that do not require higher education or even complete secondary education (Barker, 2005; Chevannes, 2006).

In highlighting boys’ educational vulnerabilities, however, it is important that we not oversimplify the implications of the findings. We should not simply shift our focus from girls to boys. Disaggregating educational data by gender tells us part of the story in terms of educational deficits but not all of it. Large segments of the poorest children in the Global South continue to be excluded from school. Even when they enroll in school they may repeat or drop out due to the low quality of teaching, overcrowded classroom conditions, and limited support at the household for their education. Without simultaneously addressing issues related to education quality in the Global South, including increasing the number of well-trained and remunerated teachers, and ensuring that education resources prioritize the most vulnerable and underserved, schools and classrooms will continue to be over-crowded and drop-out and repetition rates, especially for the poorest children, will remain high. These issues are especially acute in those parts of the world that are still experiencing a large “youth wave” — that is a large youth population relative to the rest of the population (for example in nearly all of Africa, parts of the Middle East and parts of South Asia).

All of these issues interact in gendered ways as well. For example, the most vulnerable girls may drop of school for lack of school fees, or may be subject to sexual harassment or exploitation on the way to and from school, or in some cases may exchange sex for school fees or income. Low-income boys may also drop out from overcrowded schools to work part-time or, as mentioned earlier, may perceive that education does not guarantee employment in settings in which large youth cohorts are seeking employment opportunities at the same time.

Another issue is how boys and girls are “living” gender in schools, meaning how teacher styles may favor one sex over the other or channel youth into gender-stereotyped subjects; whether male teachers sexually harass or sexually abuse girls (or boys); and whether teachers encourage or discourage gendered forms of violence carried out by boys; or whether teachers are able to deal with boys’ and girls’ different kinds of disruptive behavior in constructive rather than overly punitive ways.

The gendered nature of schools can be seen clearly in various forms of violence that students are subject to in the school setting. Surveys carried out by ICRW in India found that two-thirds of boys ages 12-14 in a cluster of low-income schools in India said they experienced at least one form of violence in the last three months at school (Achyut et al., 2011). Physical violence and emotional violence were common, affecting 61% and 49% of boys, respectively. Although fewer girls than boys reported experiencing any form of violence (42%), the rates for physical and emotional violence were still high (38% and 26%, respectively). For boys, the main perpetrators were male classmates followed by older boys, male teachers, and female

classmates. For girls, the most common perpetrators were female classmates, male and female teachers, and male classmates.

In household samples carried out in Croatia as part of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) data from Croatia found that 29% of men said they suffered violence from a teacher at school as children, 77% percent said they were bullied or harassed in their school or neighborhood growing up, and 64% said they touched, harassed, or said sexually derogatory things to girls when they were growing up (Barker et al., 2011). Similar trends—of high victimization from violence by classmates and teachers—have been found in numerous other studies in the Global South.

As boys and girls begin spending more time in school, the school setting is thus becoming more important as a locus for socialization, including socialization around gender norms. This requires us to pay attention to the quality and conditions of education and opens up opportunities for including gender equality and violence prevention as explicit components in the educational curricula.

### WHY BOYS' EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT MATTERS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Apart from the obvious human capital and human rights aspects of inadequate education, boys' high drop-out rates have direct implications for other indicators of well-being, including those that relate to boys' and men's relationship with women and girls. Data from a recent multi-country household survey—called the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) (Barker et al., 2011), carried out in seven middle and low-income countries (India, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Rwanda, Croatia, and Bosnia) find that educational attainment was a key factor associated with men's attitudes toward gender roles. Men with lower education attainment, particularly those with less than completed secondary education, had more rigid attitudes, were more likely to have used intimate partner violence (IPV), were less likely to participate in the daily care of children (for those who were fathers), were less likely to have been tested for HIV, and were in some settings more likely to have paid for sex with a sex worker. They were also less likely to support policies related to gender equality and more likely to have homophobic attitudes. In adding up the findings, the conclusion that emerges is that having completed some or all of secondary education, even when controlling for income or socioeconomic status, was one of the key factors that consistently and across countries explained men's more gender equitable attitudes and practices.

Furthermore, in terms of men's own well-being, IMAGES data find that men who had higher educational attainment (again meaning they had completed secondary education or had some secondary education) were less likely to report alcohol abuse, depression, delinquency, having been imprisoned, and experiencing or using violence in the community. Indeed, for nearly every indicator of gender equality and well-being, men with higher levels of education were more likely to accept gender equality and to live it in their daily lives and to be healthier. The IMAGES sample represents mostly low- and middle-income populations in each of the countries sampled, thus the results are relevant precisely for those boys and men most likely to drop out of school or face educational disadvantages (Barker et al., 2011).

What is it about secondary education that contributes to gender equality? What is it that happens at the secondary level that contributes to boys' more gender eq-

uitable attitudes? Explanations are no doubt multiple. At one level, men's and boys' higher levels of secondary education in middle- and low-income countries is a sign of other forms of social capital. Countries that can offer adequate services and conditions that increase the likelihood of secondary school completion, and low- and middle-income families that are able to support their sons to complete school may be those that are more gender-equitable to being with. In addition, secondary classrooms are usually smaller in size, which reduces teacher stress and probably is more conducive to building in students the critical thinking skills associated with justice-based reasoning and more gender-equitable attitudes. Boys who reach secondary school probably also have had a longer period of interaction with girls as equals in the classroom over longer periods. The community practices of schools in which rules are reinforced and collective solutions to problems or needs are constructed, no doubt also contributes to a greater awareness and practice in social justice and fairness that spills over into notions of gender equality. And finally, teachers at the secondary level often have higher levels of education themselves, which it makes it more likely that they will promote and support gender equality. Probably all of these factors are at play.

These discussions about the gender equality dividends of boys' education have been virtually absent from the global discussions about gender and education. There are numerous global coalitions calling attention to girls' educational vulnerabilities in the Global South but few of these have acknowledged the gender equality dividend of higher levels of educational attainment for boys. Such initiatives for the most part have failed to fully incorporate the finding that keeping boys in schools for longer can push gender equality even faster while also addressing the needs of the most vulnerable boys—just as keeping girls in school longer brings its own set of positive spin-off, including greater sexual autonomy, lower and later fertility, better income prospects, and delayed marriage (in countries where early marriage is an issue) (World Bank, 2011).

And, if secondary education in and of itself already brings benefits in terms of gender equality, this suggests that we may be able to maximize the "gender equality dividend" by using the school curriculum and the school setting to promote rights-based and justice-based education in which young people become the protagonists in creating gender equality. This is clearly not a novel suggestion in some parts of world; family life education, sexuality education, specific school-based campaigns on substance use and human rights and respect for sexual diversity, have long been implemented in schools in various parts of the world. But what of examples that deliberately engage boys and girls in questioning gender norms and reconstructing them at the school level? Could such interventions speed up or enhance the changes in attitudes toward gender equality we already see when boys and girls have higher educational attainment? The next section will explore some initiatives that have tried precisely to do this.

#### LESSONS FROM PROGRAM H AND M IN THE SCHOOL SETTING

In 2000, Promundo and colleague organizations (Instituto Papai, ECOS and Salud y Genero, mentioned below) created an integrated process called Program H—'H' for *homens* (*men* in Portuguese) and *hombres* (*men* in Spanish). Program H seeks to promote a critical dialogue and reflection about gender norms for young men, including questioning of men's use of violence against women. While born in Latin

America, the program has since been adapted to local cultures, tested, implemented, and adapted by project partners in South and Southeast Asia, the Balkans, other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, the U.S., and several settings in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Program H partners developed three key components: (1) a field-tested curriculum that includes a manual series and an educational video for promoting attitude and behaviour change among men via a critical thinking or consciousness-raising process; (2) community campaigns, led by young people themselves, that seek to change community norms related to what it means to be men and women; and (3) a culturally relevant, validated evaluation model (the GEM Scale—Gender-Equitable Men Scale) that seeks to measure the degree to which young men and women change their attitudes as a result of the interventions.

The centrepiece of the Program H approach are group discussions carried out at least sometimes in same-sex group settings, and generally with male facilitators who serve as gender-equitable role models. Activities include role plays, brainstorming exercises, discussion sessions, and individual reflections about how boys and men are socialized, positive and negative aspects of this socialization, and the benefits of changing. First and foremost, the activities focus on creating a safe space to allow young men to question traditional views about manhood and to critically reflect on gender, gender injustices, gender rigidities, and how these link to other social injustices. These activities are informed by a belief that young men are not empty vessels for the passive reception of gender or other social norms; rather, they have the capacity to develop their own gender consciousness, or critical attitudes about gender norms. The process also seeks to encourage boys and girls to question gender stereotypes behaviors and attitudes and to engage those boys and girls who already act as “voices of resistance” to rigid gender norms (Barker, 2005). Moreover, they can develop the belief in their own ability to act (self-efficacy) in more gender equitable or gender empowered ways than prevalent social norms might generally suggest, and can influence the institutions around them through activism.

Framing Program H, this concept of “gender consciousness” originates from the idea of critical consciousness developed by Paulo Freire. The process of “conscientization,” according to Freire (1970), links to the capacity of individuals to reflect on the world and to choose a given course of future action informed by and empowered by that critical reflection. This process of reflecting critically on the history of cultural conditions and class structures that support and frame experiences of gender inequality can help to promote personal growth, political awareness, and activism that in turn can create the conditions to achieve greater social and gender justice.

In nearly all the settings, young people also develop campaigns or activism in which they identify their preferred sources of information and cultural outlets in the community and craft messages—in the form of radio spots, billboards, posters, postcards, and dances—to make it “cool and hip” to be more gender-equitable. These campaigns encourage young men and women to reflect about how they act as men and women and enjoin them to respect their partners, not to use violence against women and to practice safer sex.

These concepts, initially tested in Brazil and Mexico, have since been adapted in other settings. In the case of India, for example, a community-based campaign in-



cluded comic books, street theatre, posters, and a cap and t-shirt (worn by peer promoters) with the campaign slogan, developed by young men, called "The Real Man Thinks Right." The logo shows a young man pointing to his head, as if thinking. One comic book shows a young man questioning another man who repeatedly uses violence against his wife. Campaign slogans reinforce the message that it is possible for men not to use violence against women.

As an integral part of the process, Promundo and partners have also tested strategies for engaging young women, promoting their empowerment and engaging them in a similar, systematic critical reflection about gender norms and in school-based and community-based activism. While empowerment of young men is important in its own right, community experience has also confirmed that young women influence young men's views about manhood in diverse ways. In one telling example, young men in a group session in Brazil said that if they became more sensitive, or gender-equitable, they wondered if they would convince young women in the community to go out with them. Young men argued, and young women in the group affirmed, that young women often like to go out with the "bad guys." Consequently, Promundo and partner organizations developed a group education manual, a no-words cartoon video called "Once upon a girl." And, signalling hetero-normative and heterosexist norms as a key part to deconstructing hegemonic masculinities, Promundo and partners have also sought to include the theme of sexual diversities in the process, developing specific group activities focused on homophobia, and a cartoon video called "Afraid of What?"

Impact evaluation studies of community-based application of the Program H activities in Brazil, the Balkans, Chile, India, Tanzania, and Ethiopia found changes in attitudes (more acceptance of gender equality), reduced self-reports of IPV by married young men (India), reduced sexual harassment of girls by boys (India), reduced STIs (Brazil), and increased condom rates (Brazil and Chile). All of these were quasi-experimental design studies with control groups that showed either no change or negative change or less positive change. As a result, Program H/M have been recognized by the World Bank, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO as a promising practice in promoting gender equality and have been applied in more than twenty countries.

From the beginning, Promundo and partners understood that working in short-term interventions reaching relatively small numbers of young women and men at the community level was important but insufficient. The goal then has been to implement the Program H/M processes in large-scale institutions where larger numbers and where the content—of gender justice and social justice—would become part of the institutional culture. The school setting was a logical and strategic choice.

In 2005, Promundo, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), and CARE International began working more or less simultaneously in Brazil, India and the Balkans to test the approach in school settings. While full results from the three settings have not yet been published in peer-reviewed journals, the following are emerging results.

## BRAZIL

After impact evaluation studies at the community level with Program H/M in Brazil, Promundo and partners have since implemented a combination of group

education and youth-led campaigns in public schools (reaching middle school age youth) in two states in Brazil (Rio de Janeiro state and Bahia). This has included building a process for teacher training and youth participation. In participating schools, the project consists of: (1) two cycles of 20 workshop sessions with students over a 10- week period; and (2) youth-created school campaigns to promote non-violence and reflections about gender norms. The educational sessions take place twice a week during a one-hour free period and are facilitated by two trained teachers with support from trained student promoters.

The process so far has reached more than 2100 teachers and 5000 students in two states in Brazil. The experience has affirmed that jointly designing and implementing activities with teachers and students in schools generates a greater sense of ownership of the process, and enables programs to become institutionalized in the school curriculum. Part of this work has included transforming the culture of classrooms to encourage collaborative learning that allows youth to question norms and behaviors, as well as to openly discuss sensitive issues (around sexuality and violence) with teachers and their peers.

Another confirmation of success has been increased commitment from and collaboration between education and health officials, as evidenced by their accreditation of the Program H/M teacher training portal. To facilitate the scale-up of the process and to offer ongoing support to teacher-facilitators, Promundo has created a website portal and on-line facilitated training package which has been accredited by the Ministry of Education. Teachers who go through the on-line course are awarded continuing education credits that count toward their evaluation and salary increases.

In addition to working to ensure consistent implementation of the in-school workshops, Promundo staff have engaged and provided frequent feedback to government health and education officials, including contributing to policy-level discussions in the education about youth vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and sensitizing local officials (school principals and the Secretaries of Health and Education) at the city and state level on how gender norms affect sexual and reproductive health.

Evaluation of the process in schools has consisted of pre- and post-test application of the GEM Scale, mentioned above, as well as qualitative methods. In one cluster of schools, after the workshops 100% of the students agreed with the following sentences, “when men force women to have sex they are raping them,” “women should have the same rights as men,” and “women should participate in the decisions of how to spend the family’s money.” Before the workshops, 78,6%, agreed with the first sentence, 85,7% agreed with the second, and 92,9% agreed with the third. Also, we observed a change from 57% to 7% of agreement with the idea that “women are only fulfilled when they become mothers.” In another cluster of schools, at baseline 60% of the boys agreed that “men need sex more than women,” while during the post-test this fell to 31%.

The experience has also confirmed the need to change teacher attitudes. The qualitative assessment with teachers found that teachers often see youth—male and female—as “rebels” requiring repression, in particular sexual repression. This focus on “repression” by teachers mean that they do not view young people as having sexual and reproductive rights. Thus, the training with teachers takes a rights-based approach, emphasizing that male and female youth should be able to make choices about their relationships.

In analyzing results from the workshops conducted with teachers and health professionals in the 13 states reached as part of the dissemination of the teacher training portal, we observed changes from 60% to 100% of disagreement with the affirmation “women are only fulfilled when they become mothers;” from 33% to 100% of agreement with the idea that “even in the ‘heat of the moment,’ a girl or woman can refuse sex;” from 41% to 94% of agreement with the idea “women should participate in the decision of how to spend the family’s money.”

As a result of the process teachers have shown greater attention to their ability to foster potential and creativity among students. They have also shown greater attention to students’ uniqueness and individuality and a greater sensitivity to issues of sexual diversity, a key step in reducing homophobia in the classroom and homophobic bullying.

At the same time that Promundo has been working with teachers and students in schools, we also carried out research with parents in the same communities about their attitudes toward their adolescent sons and daughters. The study found strong gender stereotypes, in particular around norms of the need to restrain the sexuality of their daughters, while boys’ sexuality was seen as “naturally out of control.” These findings confirm the need to reach parents to promote a critical reflection about gender norms, while simultaneously engaging youth via schools. These results have been shared with teachers and education officials and discussions started about how teachers can take advantage of their interactions with parents to provoke such reflections.

### THE BALKANS

Since 2007, CARE NW Balkans has coordinated the Young Men Initiative (YMI), a multi-year initiative that builds on the Program H/M experience and content, to promote more gender equitable attitudes and behaviors amongst young men and decrease both gendered (violence by young men against young women) and peer violence (violence by young men against other young men) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, and more recently in Kosovo.

An initial qualitative assessment carried out with young men across the four countries identified home and school as the two strongest social spaces influencing gender norms. Young men said that violence among male peers was the most pervasive, with most violence of this nature occurring at school, in the street, or in other public places, and some of it being homophobic in nature. Many young men said they expect their peers to join in fights to maintain allegiance to the individual or group. Violence against sexual minorities, especially gay men, was widely mentioned with general feelings that the victims deserved the violence.

Building on this assessment, YMI worked with young men aged 15-19 in five technical schools to discuss and critically reflect about masculinity, gender norms, sexuality and violence, both through educational workshops and a youth-led social marketing lifestyles campaign. The intervention design was informed by previous impact evaluation studies of Program H both in Brazil and India, which showed changes in attitudes and self-reported behaviors related to gender norms, condom use, and use of violence against female partners (in the case of India).

The centerpiece of the work has been the ‘Be a Man’ Campaign (locally called *Budi Musko*). Campaign activities and materials were presented in intervention

schools and reinforced many of the same topics addressed in the workshops, including sexual health (e.g., promoting condom use), violence prevention, and more gender-equitable male norms. Materials developed include posters, t-shirts, and brochures. Activities were open to all young men and women in the intervention schools and often used significant days (like Valentine's Day and World AIDS Day) to hold educational and entertaining activities, including quizzes, music contests, graffiti art and street fairs. Implementing youth-serving agency staff participated in the design of the program and campaign, and facilitators were trained together to help ensure consistency across the different sites. A similar package of activities was implemented in each of the five intervention schools.

Evaluation included a baseline survey with 2,567 young men in February and March 2009 and a post-intervention follow-up survey with 2,339 young men in May and June 2010. Results found that exposure to the campaign was relatively high and consistent across all intervention sites, reaching 64-83% of endline respondents. Workshop exposure was lower given that classroom time was not made available for the young men to participate (International Center for Research on Women, 2010).

In looking at results by exposure to the YMI campaign, there is a consistent pattern across all intervention sites. At endline, young men who were exposed to the campaign had significantly more equitable scores than those who were not exposed.

Overall, positive changes were seen across intervention and control sites, suggesting that the maturing of young men may be contributing to shifting attitudes and behaviors. The GEM Scale illustrates this clearly: young men in the different study arms and locations reported slightly more gender equitable attitudes. While there is a great deal of variation in terms of specific attitudes and sites where significant positive change occurs, the general pattern is that young men are more gender equitable at endline.

Qualitative feedback from young men, as well as staff from the youth-serving agency staff who participated, across all sites reinforces the effect that YMI has had on some of these norms and attitudes. Again, it must be acknowledged that the intervention did not take place in a vacuum. Specific incidents in schools and in the wider society during the course of the intervention (such as public declarations by policymakers in all the countries on the need for reducing violence in schools, continuing efforts by civil society and governments to call attention to violence against women, media attention on incidents of youth violence) must also be considered as having some effect on the young men. Furthermore, as noted previously, the young men's lives are in transition. They are changing and maturing, having sexual experiences, preparing for life after school and in flux regardless of the YMI intervention. Nonetheless, on balance, the intervention has generated interest from ministries of education and of youth in the region and is now being scaled up to include more attention to young women and expanding to Kosovo.

## INDIA

In collaboration with the local governmental bodies in three Indian states, the International Center for Research on Women, Promundo, CORO, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Ritinjali and Sangath developed and implemented intervention

materials and group education activities to foster gender equality and reduce gender-based violence among school children, in particular, from 12 to 14 years of age. Called the Gender Equality Movement in Schools (or GEMS), this initiative builds on previous work—namely, the *Yari-Dosti* (for young men) and *Sakhi-Saheli* (for young women) group education manuals based on the Program H/M manuals (Population Council, 2006). Based on this, draft modules and resources were developed, and facilitators were trained. Students were provided with “My GEMS Diary,” which included games, quizzes, stories, cartoons, and a place for self-reflection. The key element was a student-focused approach that used creative materials that helped create a participatory space for students to critically reflect explore about gender norms.

The group education sessions included participatory methodologies such as role plays, games, debates, and discussions. Sessions were held during the school day and each lasted about 45 minutes. The GEMS school campaign was a week-long series of events designed in consultation with the students and involved games, competitions, debates, and short plays.

In Mumbai, the process was evaluated in 45 randomly-selected schools, a third of which had education activities plus a campaign day, a second group that had only the campaign day, and a third cluster that served as a control. In the first year (in Group 1) there were separate girl and boy education sessions; the second year featured mixed groups. The campaign “day” was a two-hour programme carried out school-wide that included a range of fun and educational activities to raise awareness on gender equality issues. The total sample size across the 45 schools was nearly 3,000.

Prior to the campaign, students in each school designed posters, comic strips and stories which were key for developing interest and deepening the impact of the two-hour campaign day. One example was a contest that involved both girls and boys in a race to stitch a button, dribble a ball, and fold a shirt—giving greater value to women’s/girls’ traditional skills and making the point these are indeed skills which both girls and boys can learn. Another educational activity was a version of the “Snakes and Ladders” game where children become the pieces and got to move based on answers to questions relating to gender relations, gender equality, and ending gender-based violence.

Evaluation results indicated that both boys and girls strongly challenged sexist statements but that girls were more vocal in the second year of the program. Results also show a shift in gender norms. At the first follow-up there was a significant increase in the proportion of boys and girls with high gender equality scores in the two intervention arms compared to the control arm. The proportion of both boys and girls in the high gender equality category more than doubled in both intervention arms. There was some reported increase in the control arm but, unlike the intervention arms, this change was significantly less substantial. For girls, the group education plus campaign intervention was more effective than the campaign alone (Achyut et al., 2011).

Overall, there were fewer positive changes in the violence domain, perhaps because their responses at baseline reflected more gender equitable attitudes (i.e. less tolerance for gender-based violence) compared to those in the gender roles/privileges/restrictions domain. One item in the violence domain does stand out for girls in the group education plus campaign arm: among these girls, there was an in-

crease in nearly 20 percentage points in the proportion who disagreed with the statement, "A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together."

Other significant changes among girls included views about child marriage and increased reports that they would take action about sexual harassment.

Overall, there was more self-assessed change among those who participated in group education along with campaign activities. Students in the group education plus campaign schools were more likely to have high gender equality scores, support a higher age at marriage (21+ years) and higher education for girls, and oppose partner violence.

Experience from GEMS suggests that a series of group sessions plus a youth-led campaign can set in motion a process in which students become more aware of their own and others' behaviors. In school settings, aggressive behaviors among boys in particular are often tolerated or ignored as they are considered natural. Yet schools have an important role to play in helping students distinguish between what is "playful" and what is "violence" — an important prerequisite for ultimately reducing a range of behaviors harmful to girls and women as well as boys and men. As a result of the success and acceptance of the initiative among teachers and students, the initiative is now being scaled up in more than 250 schools in Mumbai.

## CONCLUSIONS

The field of gender equality, in the school system and elsewhere, has too long pushed toward an either/or or "pendulum" approach in which attention either has either focused on boys and men or on girls and women. Evidence and experience is increasingly showing the need for relational and synchronized approaches that acknowledge gender-related vulnerabilities and disparities in the lives of boys and girls.

To those who would say that we still have not have achieved true educational parity for girls in the Global South, the evidence of the benefits to women and girls when boys have higher education should call attention to the fact that women and girls benefit too when boys are educated, just as the evidence is clear for societies, and for boys and men, when girls and women are able to complete their studies.

Apart from the quantitative results shown here when gender equality and "gender consciousness" is made an explicit part of school-based activities with students, results also find that teachers appreciate and use the methodology. It provides them with concrete, participatory processes that youth respond to. And it leads to multiple benefits — boys are less disruptive, girls are more likely so speak out and participate in the classroom, multiple forms of school-based violence are reduced and youth become engaged in gender justice activism.

Overall, as seen from the examples here, evidence is strong that the process of participatory group education and youth-led campaigns and activism works to change gender-related attitudes among boys and girls and that higher educational attainment for boys and girls is a contributor to various forms of gender equality. The challenge in the settings described here is how to keep attention on this issue and to sustain the processes within school systems in the face of structural school deficits, funding limitations, and the "flavor of the month" approach to school curricula development.

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