



# Guidance for identifying and sharing Practice-Based Knowledge on engaging men and transforming masculinities to prevent violence against women and girls

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This guidance note describes the steps taken to invite and engage with practitioners, discuss different programmes and interventions, and bring to the fore a positive approach to reviewing lessons and impact of the work with men and boys at various levels worldwide.

AUGUST 2025

# Acknowledgements

This report was written by Magaly Marques and the Global Secretariat of MenEngage Alliance. Spanish and French translations by Paco Bordy. Design and layout by Zanobia Javed, cover design by Tom Hornbrook. Thank you to UN Women for funding the first phase of this initiative and this report. For more information about MenEngage Alliance’s work to end men’s violence against women and girls, please visit: [www.menengage.org](http://www.menengage.org)

## Suggested Citation

MenEngage (2025) Guidance for Identifying and Sharing Practice-Based Knowledge on engaging men and transforming masculinities to prevent violence against women and girls Washington, DC: MenEngage

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# Introduction

This document aims to share the steps, key considerations and processes of a collective learning exercise conducted by MenEngage Alliance in 2023, together with its members and partners. As part of MenEngage Alliance's learning and knowledge-building strategy, this exercise was initiated to undertake a practitioners-led collective review of the work with men and boys to prevent violence against women (VAW), violence against children (VAC) and gender-based violence (GBV).

This guidance note describes the steps taken to invite and engage with practitioners, discuss different programmes and interventions, and bring to the fore a positive approach to reviewing lessons and impact of the work with men and boys at various levels worldwide. We believe what we have learned so far will guide us in asking the right questions as we progress with this work. We hope to continue learning from participants and practitioners, and we look forward to their guidance as we revise and improve on how to organise and strengthen this approach to learning and knowledge-building.

Since the mid-1990s, hundreds of interventions to respond to and prevent VAW, VAC and GBV have been studied (Maruo et al. 2023), and published reviews have highlighted what is known to work and the limitations of the existing evidence. These reviews have contributed to a better understanding of what constitutes VAW and VAC and why and how they are serious forms of GBV

and injustice. These studies have also helped introduce new categories and ways to organise the various approaches to responding to and preventing GBV in all its forms and settings (Ellsberg et al. 2014). In the last two decades, studies have slowly included interventions with men and boys in transforming patriarchal masculinities.

One lesson that is emerging from the practitioners' observations, particularly those from low and middle income geographies, is that such studies are designed and conducted, predominantly, using euro-centric and academic methods and concepts which seem to struggle to interact more realistically and fruitfully with the postcolonial accounts and complexities (Harding 1993, 311-319).

In recent years there have been emerging discourses around decolonisation unpacking the way issues of VAW, VAC and GBV are framed, prevention and response interventions imposed on communities, and the existence of hierarchical approaches to knowledge ownership and evidence building (Lokot et al. 2024).

Yet, as the problem persists, we observe that 'the practice-based knowledge of local-level organisations is not reaching global prevention actors [which] has led to a disconnect between global evidence, practice-based knowledge, and the design and implementation of programmes' (The Prevention Collaborative 2021).

This document aims to contribute to envisioning and establishing processes led by practitioners from the field of men and masculinities in various contexts to meaningfully expand the field of VAW, VAC and GBV prevention with a focus on practice-based knowledge. Below we share the steps taken during this phase of our initiative to bring practitioners' knowledge forward, and collectively discuss and organise information to understand better what works and whether there is potential for greater impact in these practices.

While this has been a recent and short-term exercise, it has opened up a path for digging up critical questions and considerations about how initiatives and programmes have been designed and delivered, how they resonate with participants and intended beneficiaries, whether and how they are evaluated and how they may be improved upon and become more effective in ensuring sustainable transformation to realise equality and justice.

This guidance note is envisioned as a living document. It was developed by MenEngage Alliance, in partnership with UN Women, from lessons emerging from this exercise. As the MenEngage Learning Collaborative (CoLab) work moves forward, its database will expand and this guidance note will be updated periodically to incorporate new insights, information, evidence and knowledge.

We believe this resource will be useful in creating processes that can help bridge the gap between the limited existing evidence and some critical knowledge observed by practitioners working with men and boys that can be instrumental to the VAWG prevention

field. Practitioners and advocates in the field may find this document useful to improve their strategic thinking about knowledge and evidence building, documentation of their interventions and to begin assessing whether and how different types of interventions may be adapted to different contexts to strengthen practitioners' led evidence building on "What Works" when it comes to the efforts to work with men and boys in prevention and ending of GBV.



# About MenEngage Alliance and Our work

MenEngage Alliance is an international social change network comprising over 1100 member organisations across 92 countries, working through 54 countries and six regional networks. We are a vibrant coalition of members ranging from grassroots community organisations to actors operating at national and international levels, including committed individual experts, activists and researchers.

Areas of work include gender-based violence prevention, advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), redistributing unpaid care work, climate justice, feminist peace and systems change, LGBTIQ+ rights, and youth engagement and leadership. MenEngage Alliance adopts an intersectional feminist lens to understanding the political, economic, social and technological forces that fuel and sustain violence, abuse, exploitation and the absence of care in the world today, and to question and transform patriarchal masculinities.

MenEngage Alliance is a learning network where members' rich experience, knowledge and resources live. MenEngage Alliance strives to build a field of practitioners, researchers, policy-makers, funding partners and other important stakeholders, working together to develop gender transformative and accountable programmes, policies and narratives to engage men and boys and transform patriarchal masculinities to advance gender equality. MenEngage Global Alliance has become a pivotal mechanism to anchor, support and

bring together the work of members and partners around the world to facilitate joint actions to engage men and boys and transform patriarchal masculinities, among key actors in the field. All of this is facilitated under our learning and knowledge-building strategy through our learning collaborative (CoLab).

The MenEngage Learning Collaborative (CoLab) brings together members and partners to share, discuss and strengthen understanding about transforming patriarchal masculinities and working with men and boys for gender equality. The CoLab peer-learning sessions are monthly sessions where members engage with each other and partners and share their work and lessons learned in campaigns, advocacy, curricula and studies that address masculinities for gender equality. This learning space facilitates access to resources and seeks to improve understanding of promising practices from around the world.

We approached this process as an opportunity for members to engage with one another in a topic-specific way via three distinct processes (findings/learnings consolidated here, as a separate complementary document):

1. Mapping of members currently working on VAWG/GBV prevention utilising an online survey;
2. Sharing practices via the CoLab peer-led sessions; and
3. Launching a mini campaign on #HowToTalkToMen, which focused on violence.

# About Practice-Based Knowledge

We understand practice-based knowledge as the cumulative information and learning acquired through years of practice involving methodologies, adaptations, innovation, reflection, and revision of program approaches and materials. It includes insights gained from observations, direct experience and active listening, as well as programme monitoring. While practices and tweaking implementation approaches are important sources of information and knowledge, they are not always documented, used, or included in the field's learning process, particularly in low and middle income settings. Documenting the steps and changes made in an intervention throughout its implementation is key to strengthening knowledge derived from practice. Sharing and applying practice-based knowledge requires creating opportunities for practitioners and stakeholders to jointly observe and reflect on the programme's intended and unintended consequences, as well as analyse and synthesise data through participatory dialogue with multiple stakeholders inside and outside the organisation. It also involves developing practical steps to apply learning in programmes themselves (The Prevention Collaborative, n.d.).

This knowledge tends to not be as [appreciated as academic knowledge and is often deemed not scientific or evidence-based](#). Nonetheless, rigorous evidence in social sciences usually comes from studying practices and applying mixed methods to on-the-ground programming that has shown promising results or produced insights

into what could work more effectively. MenEngage Alliance believes that practice-based knowledge comes from the work of practitioners who are familiar with the communities in which they work, and who are trusted by the people in those communities.

Their work often results in initiatives and programmes that have the potential to be effective, transformational and sustainable. Practice-based knowledge can lead to improved practices, and adapted programmes can become more effective.

## Why practice-based knowledge for VAWG/GBV prevention?

MenEngage Alliance is founded on the critical questioning of assumptions and theories about gender, and ways to advance equality and justice.

MenEngage Alliance is committed to learning from practice, from peers, and from the methods and approaches that have been adapted from various contexts and experiences.

Documenting practices and learning processes is necessary when addressing persistent, systemic social justice problems. Our experience has proven successful in expanding collective spaces for review and discussion of knowledge that is contextualised, which then results in taking non-academic knowledge seriously. Furthermore, by creating spaces for members and partners to share their expertise and experience, and making resources available to

others in the field, we aim to facilitate revision and adaptations of practices and to ongoingly build a knowledge base to support the field.

Addressing the recalcitrant problem of VAWG requires a myriad of methods. That VAWG persists and has even escalated in many ways despite long-standing investments and efforts to eradicate it, is proof of the urgent need to revisit current understanding, knowledge and know-how about prevention of VAWG. Evidence from rigorous research is valuable to the field, but tested programs are implemented and replicated in multiple ways, and each variation can provide much-needed insights into what works beyond what was planned or intended. One key area of interest among members and partners of MenEngage Alliance, among many other actors in the field, is harvesting knowledge related to practices of interrupting the cycle of GBV that comes from power dynamics.

GBV exists in the context of patriarchal gender norms and power structures, and it is perpetuated by colonial methods and values. Ending and preventing GBV requires challenging the existing knowledge hierarchy that excludes or puts down much of the practice-based knowledge within the field. While there are more than two decades of practice work with men and boys for gender equality and VAWG and GBV prevention, a strong evidence base is still lacking. This is partially due to the lack of initiatives that harvest and share practice-based knowledge within the field.

Organisations and individuals working in various contexts to transform

patriarchal masculinities to prevent GBV lack resources (financial, human and technical) to document and disseminate their experience. Further, programming and action research with men and boys is still primarily focused on changes at the individual and interpersonal levels, with a significant lack of work focused on the structural drivers of GBV.

Violence implies power dynamics that involve forms of oppression and resistance. GBV persists as a practice largely because of its wide acceptance, which includes narratives that explain how violence happens but do not challenge the logic behind it. The history and practice of gender violence have crystallised into a culture and forms of knowledge that perpetuate the myth that gender violence is ‘natural’ or ‘normal’. Or that it is ‘justifiable’ because the gender power dynamics, oppression (and resistance) are believed to be natural too.

Our theory of change counters the social norms that govern structural inequalities, and are shaped by historical and contemporary trends and practices. Many institutions embody and maintain these inequalities, and transforming this knowledge structure requires long-term strategies. Unpacking the existing theories and practices, and how they have become rigid structures requires discipline and investment to address the root causes of GBV. Practice-based knowledge related to transforming masculinities requires recognising and building on the context-specific issues, expertise, and capacities that can effectively bring a nuanced understanding of the problem and ways to prevent it. This exercise recognises the owners of the knowledge and expertise and can build critical knowledge through the

questioning and challenging of accepted, dominant narratives around what counts as evidence, and who owns the knowledge and why.

In the efforts to end and prevent GBV, particularly when working with men and boys, the interventions must intentionally be gender transformative, feminist informed and human rights-based — from design to implementation to evaluation— if impact is to occur. This means that the field of gender transformative work with men and boys will need to reflect more intentionally and intensively on whether and how some of the key concepts that have shaped the field to date have also limited its capacity to go beyond the individual level to address structural understandings of and strategies to achieve gender justice (MenEngage Global Alliance 2020).

## Who may find this guidance note useful to their work?

In 2023 MenEngage Alliance, in partnership with UN Women, hosted the first round of peer-learning sessions on ending and preventing VAWG and GBV. This first phase focused on members of the Alliance that are rooted in various local contexts and work on a variety of approaches to engaging men and boys to end and prevent GBV and advance gender and social justice.

The steps taken to harvest, review, share and discuss practices of engaging men and boys to prevent violence against women and girls are described here. This guidance note is intended as a tool for strategic planners and developers, programme designers, implementers and evaluators, and those studying this topic and field of practice

more broadly. This note could also be useful for policy makers developing policy frameworks on evidence and knowledge building in ending and preventing GBV in all its forms and settings, particularly through working with men and boys.

Finally, it may also interest donors or policy agencies interested in supporting transformative work with men and boys, along with women/girls and gender non-conforming individuals, for gender equality and justice.

Programmes and interventions that are not well funded nor evaluated, often struggle to continue to reach communities and tend to not be documented at all. We hope to motivate our colleagues and peers to conduct similar exercises and to document and share their practices.

## This note highlights the process used for:

- Bringing practitioners together to tell their stories of change and impact, and share their practices, lessons and knowledge.
- Reviewing initiatives with men and boys that resulted in learnings and valuable insights.
- Harvesting, sharing, questioning and discussing practices from the field.
- Applying a critical thinking lens into our work on VAWG and GBV to prevent reinforcing patriarchal patterns of violence.

## Note on learning from practices of working with men and boys to prevent VAWG and GBV

Reaching greater impact in the work with men and boys to end and prevent GBV in all its forms and settings requires consistent and intentional critical analysis, engagement with those involved in gender-based violence, and questioning of the narratives of gender inequality and policies that do not fully uphold universal human rights which are used to justify violence.<sup>1</sup> Documenting, consolidating, and analysing lessons from practices and distilling evidence from experiences of what has or hasn't worked as planned can make a difference. To address both the evidence gap and the usual disregard for practice-based knowledge while working with men and masculinities to end VAWG, we need to document interventions to learn from them. This approach will also support the decolonisation of our current knowledge base.

MenEngage Alliance's work is based on consultative, member-led learning processes that consider different ways of looking at a problem and its possible solutions. The MenEngage Alliance CoLab peer learning space, for example, has been designed to facilitate ways to break down silos among practitioners and experts, bringing together diverse voices, experiences and stories, and strengthening our approach towards peer-to-peer learning as a community.

<sup>1</sup>[www.thelancet.com](http://www.thelancet.com) Vol 385 April 18, 2015, p.1555 'effective programmes are commonly participatory, engage multiple stakeholders, support critical discussion about gender relationships and the acceptability of violence, and support greater communication and shared decision making among family members, as well as non-violent behaviour.'

With this guidance note, we seek to share what we did, our experiences and understanding of different strategies, encourage cross-pollination of ideas and collectively address challenges in the work with men and boys to end and prevent VAWG/GBV.

The next section describes the process used to harvest, review, share, question, analyse and discuss practices from the field. It also includes considerations relevant to doing this work in a way that can strengthen our knowledge and understanding of what works or can be improved on to prevent VAWG and GBV when working with men and transforming patriarchal masculinities.

## Steps to plan, organise and facilitate learning spaces

These steps were taken to engage with practitioners, review and discuss different programmes and interventions, and begin to ask questions that might lead to their further adaptation, revision and improvement.

Any event involves planning and organising, execution and reflection, and many learning events involve facilitation. Some of the steps listed below are more generic to any initiative in any field of work. Yet, the care, empathy, and critical elements applied are recommended for bringing practitioners together to tell their stories and share their work with men and boys and to transform patriarchal masculinities.

We engaged in a year-long process of harvesting, sharing, and discussing practices from the field across various

contexts. This exercise was not perfect and may have just scattered seeds of this type of learning. Yet, we are confident that we have begun to understand how to enable a critical, constructive learning environment.

Applying a critical thinking lens to our work on VAWG and GBV to prevent reinforcing patriarchal patterns of violence required attention to detail and distancing ourselves from common one-way educational and/or academic approaches. We recommend considering the below as an exercise in which planners, organisers and facilitators learn with, and as much as, contributors and participants.

## 1. Planning:

**CONCEPT** - Start with a concept note to clarify why organising and running a [learning session or a series of sessions](#) will be the right learning approach for your project, organisation or network. We encourage you to consider conducting a series of sessions bringing together stories, lessons and voices from diverse contexts, which would better do justice to the critical learning process necessary for knowledge development. Consider bringing together a group, representing various contexts, fields and /or approaches that might be important to your initiative to brainstorm about the best format, number of sessions, participants and what results might look like. The group may include colleagues, advisors or volunteers who might help shape and run these sessions. The concept will help keep all involved in agreement about the purpose of this exercise and will serve to clarify the overall vision of

why the initiative and what it would contribute to should things go as intended. It will also help with subsequent steps.

The concept sets parameters for expectations and guides the shaping of the sessions. The core of a learning space is to bring practitioners together to tell their stories and share their practice. Therefore you want to envision, and later create, a welcoming environment that is receptive, judgement-free and encourages curiosity about the topic of the session. You also want participants and contributors to openly share not only what worked but also what didn't work (i.e. failures), and to be open to comments and critique about their work. Finally, it is important to ensure that the space is facilitated so it creates enabling conditions to foster a variety of views while staying focused on the specific topic. And that's the challenge the concept note needs to spell out. The concept should also be reviewed and reconsidered after concluding the initiative. Some form of evaluation or assessment of the overall process should consider how the initiative reflected the concept's vision. Taking note of any aspect missing in the concept, or overly prescriptive of what the initiative should look like, is as important as revising the concept for future use. Treating the concept as a template and a living document will save time and resources in the future.

**OBJECTIVE** - Spelling out the objectives of each learning session and checking that they align with the purpose articulated in the concept note is key to developing productive learning sessions. The specific objectives of the learning sessions must not be conflated with the overall purpose of the learning

series or initiative itself. Yet, the specific objectives must contribute to the broader purpose.

Objectives usually refer to what will come out of the sessions and typically provide answers to questions like:

- What will participants learn?
- What knowledge or information will contributors and participants gain from these sessions?
- How will organisations involved benefit from the series and sessions?
- How will the sessions advance the field?

### KEY PRINCIPLES AND VALUES -

Whether you plan to conduct learning sessions in person or virtually, it is helpful to clarify common principles that foster respect, inclusion and diversity of opinions. This includes what tech and tools are allowed and how privacy and rights will be managed. Some of the issues you to reflect on include:

- Who can or cannot participate in the sessions and why
- How will participants be involved, how will they raise or ask questions, use chat functions, make comments or share experiences, including how much time is available for interventions
- How will you take note of comments made or acknowledge them and facilitate the Q&A process
- How will you keep the space inclusive and respectful, what forms of communication or language use will be encouraged or discouraged, and how will you enforce these

agreements or rules

- How will technology features be managed, how will you use AI or what use of AI by participants will be considered acceptable
- How will you ensure the best set-up and environment for a learning session if you anticipate a multicultural and multilingual audience
- How might you consult with and include local guests who can advise on or facilitate conversations among individuals from diverse or remote areas and/or not used to formal presentations?

**BUDGET** - A key element of the planning phase is to clarify the available budget as this process may require resources to make it more meaningful. Some areas that may require budget allocations include:

- Staff time/HR costs:** This initiative requires a significant amount of preparation, execution and follow-ups and so it is important to have people in place who can do this work. This might include staff members and consultants with specific skills necessary.
- Communications costs:** This includes branding, designing, video editing and production costs, and other communications related expenses.
- Language interpretation costs:** Providing simultaneous language interpretations from professionals may turn out to be expensive because it requires teams familiar with the area of work and have skills to interpret complex analysis in multiple languages.

**d. Platform costs:** This includes any subscriptions needed for the online platforms used to host the learning initiative, particularly the online sessions. This might also include some additional services costs depending on which services one might want to have, such as automatic caption in multiple languages in the platform.

by the team, both during the planning phase as well as the implementation phase of the sessions or learning initiative

- Documenting the process (considering language, inclusivity and accessibility factors), and housing the documents where they may be accessible to all team members and relevant people within the organisation and/or networks.

## 2. Organising:

**ORGANISING TEAM** - Setting up a team responsible for organising and facilitating the sessions will help things run smoothly. It will also help in thinking through and anticipating expectations and challenges. A team is often more likely than one individual to think about the organisational process creatively and sensibly, with attention to details and sensitive issues. The organising team doesn't need to be extensive. It is advisable to engage a team with experience in setting up and running learning events that address violence and gender issues. You may want to consider:

- Availability, commitment, and agreements of the organising team members, and their ability to give notice in case they cannot comply.
- The roles and responsibilities of each one involved must be clear and shared.
- Having a backup plan in place with clarity on who will be picking up things should a team member be unable or unavailable to be there for some reason
- Clear communication about channels and platforms to be used

### Initial organising steps include:

- Date, time and length of sessions
- Agendas, main topics, scenarios
- Potential guests and facilitators for each session
- Obtaining approval (if needed) for the above before moving ahead

The organising team will be responsible for these initial steps which should be developed according to the purpose and vision for the learning series set in the concept note.

Consulting with potential participants and contributors can help avoid scheduling errors (sessions during major holidays in some regions or during summer or winter breaks). It can also provide feedback about what they consider too long or too short for a learning session, and plan to organise a meaningful session based on that.

Once approval and agreements are secured during the initial steps, the organising process moves into an outward-looking phase.

**OPEN CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST** - With dates, times, and topics agreed on, you can develop an open call for expressions of interest, which can be more or less formal, ranging from emails to listservs or a designed invite with links to registration to take part in the series. It is important to include deadlines for submitting an expression of interest or any other form of registering their interest in being considered as a speaker or contributor to a session.

In our case, an initial open-ended online survey was developed and shared with members via our listserv. The survey asked member organisations if they have or had any initiatives, programs and expertise working on VAWG and/or GBV prevention. If they answered ‘yes’, members were asked to provide information about their interventions, such as type of activity, length since started, beneficiaries, and lessons learned. Finally, the survey asked if participants would like to present their work in a CoLab peer-learning session. The survey information supported the mapping process of members working on GBV prevention and served to assess members' interest in the topic. It also motivated members to get involved and contribute to the broad learning process. We also proactively reached out to members known to the organising team as having VAWG prevention programmes in place, and they could share their work in a peer learning session.

**OUTREACH** involved distributing the open call form to members using the MenEngage Alliance listserv. To attract the attention of practitioners working to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls, and gender-based

violence more broadly, we used a heading that indicated “if you work on VAWG or GBV prevention” we would like to hear from you.

**REVIEW OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST** - Using the guidelines of the MenEngage Alliance CoLab, members were invited to submit ideas for leading a peer-learning session on practice and lessons learned in VAWG/GBV prevention. We kept criteria (see [Annex 1](#)) for a member-led session to a minimum to avoid excessive limitations on what constitutes knowledge, learning and impact. We sought to avoid using implied, preexisting definitions of what knowledge is or isn't, or how evidence is understood or counts. The set parameters we had for the expressions of interest included:

- Relevance to the topic and the purpose of the series as articulated in the concept note.
- Clarity of objectives, methods used, activities and beneficiaries reached
- Details about the number of participants, start date, periodicity, lessons learned, etc.

When a submission lacked information, seemed vague or appeared to deviate from the topic, the organising team took note of the issues and drafted a series of questions to help clarify the submission and facilitate determining whether that practice was pertinent to peer learning series.

**FOLLOW-UP CALLS** - In our case, we sought clarifications by following the review phase with online conversations with practitioners to clarify doubts from both sides and to help jointly determine if the practice or program being

considered for the session constituted a promising practice or brought up insights and lessons that might be relevant to the audience. Rather than a top-down decision by organisers about what a practice is or isn't, these follow-up conversations strived to be horizontal and peer-to-peer allowing practitioners to convey to organisers the relevance of their work. This way, those directly involved with the programme implementations and knowledge of theories and methods used, took the lead in the conversation. While the organisers asked clarification questions.

These conversations also allowed for clarification about the most suitable format, duration, and features of the peer-led session. Together, organisers and contributors worked out logistics and details to maximise the desired outcome of the session for both presenters and participants. The conversations included suggestions for how to run the session and present the lessons learned in a way that would be easier to understand by participants not familiar with their work.

**ADVISORY OR TECHNICAL GUIDANCE GROUP** - The Alliance's GBV working group comprised of members and partners with knowledge and experience in the field was reconvened to serve as a strategic advisor for this exercise. This group comprises leading voices and organisations in the field of GBV prevention and ending VAWG from various contexts, with expertise to have a nuanced understanding of the work with men and boys in ending and preventing GBV.

### 3. Logistics:

#### **IDENTIFYING A FACILITATOR -**

To best facilitate and create a meaningful learning experience, it is important to have a skilled facilitator to enable a balanced learning process. Depending on how many contributors will take part in each session, as well as the type of practices being shared, having facilitator/s becomes a crucial step to manage the interaction between presenters and participants. Keeping the session focused and within the allocated time window, and ensuring that participants have time to ask questions and share their own experiences requires planning and skill. For example, while we want to encourage participants to ask questions and share, a facilitator can keep comments from the audience within the scope of the topic, and prevent comments from growing into their own presentation or about a completely different programme or experience.

**DISSEMINATION** - Ensuring that a session is well attended stimulates and enriches the learning process. A lively and productive learning space benefits from a group of diverse participants engaged in the discussion and Q&A portion of the session. To let your community know of a scheduled event, you may want to use similar means used for the call for expressions of interest, such as personalised emails or bulk mail, reminders in your regular newsletter, flagging the event on your website, and social media posts. You can also reach out to networks and partner groups or organisations to let them know about the event and ask them to help disseminate the information within their networks. One lesson we learned was about having

communication packages that can be adapted and used throughout the series. This includes design templates for announcements that can lay out the branding of the series, announcement templates in multiple languages to reach wider audiences, and mail-merge or listservs to send out information on time.

### **POST-SESSION ASSESSMENT -**

Developing a framework to gather feedback and assess each session is an important piece of the learning process, and can be valuable feedback for shaping future events.

- A short survey-like form may be all you need to ask short questions about what participants learned that was new to them, and what was unique or different about this series or session. And how participants felt about the space, the format used, or technical features.
- An informal debrief with those who presented at the sessions is another way to gather feedback. You may want to hear from them about their experience leading a session with peers. You may also want to check whether the objectives set for the session were achieved.
- Finally, you may want to learn whether the sessions contributed to the overall purpose of the series, as laid out in the concept note. You can do that by asking for suggestions to improve future sessions and open the communication line by sharing an email address for questions and comments.

### **TECHNICAL AND ACCESSIBILITY SET-UP -**

Whether you organise in-person sessions or online events, you will need to consider technology, language and accessibility issues such as:

- Remote sessions via an online platform (Zoom) accessible via computer or mobile phone, including for places with low bandwidth internet connectivity.
- Language barriers, if you anticipate participation from different geographical regions. We offered live simultaneous interpretations in English, Spanish and French, or close caption AI translation of the content being presented or shared in languages available via the Zoom platform. For the AI-generated interpretations, it is important to note that they are not perfect and useful only to a certain degree.
- Recording of sessions with consent from participants enabled members unable to attend the live sessions to access the content. Sessions were recorded, uploaded and shared in English, Spanish and French via the [MenEngage YouTube channel](#).
- Budget limitations will matter in what choices you make, and we encourage you to review the planning and budget section included in this report.

### **LOGISTICS AND FACILITATION**

- The organising team must create and develop a Run of Show (see sample [Annex 3](#)) for the sessions that spells out who is responsible for what from the time before the sessions start until after the end of the session, including minute steps that need to be factored in.

**Before a session begins**, tasks may include:

- Calls with presenters and facilitators
- Dry run or brief rehearsal of the presentations with or without all presenters (if needed)
- Sharing the **Run of Show** with facilitators and clarifying roles and times
- Anticipating problems for example, being prepared to replace a presenter or fill the time allocated to that presenter with another activity, cancelling a break-out group activity if only a handful of participants show up, providing some alternative form of translation if equipment is not working.
- Engaging with language interpreters, as applicable, sharing with them the detailed Run of Show, the presentations that will be used, glossary of key terms and terminologies, or any other materials and samples to familiarise them with jargon and concepts used in our field of work. Checking that equipment is set up, and that they have all they need to do their work.
- Have a list of resources available to share with participants at the end of the session.
- Have a set of ‘housekeeping’ rules ready to share with participants at the start of the session.
- Check with presenters on what they need.
- Check that the microphones and equipment needed for the presentation are operating.

**At the start of the session:**

- Welcome participants
- Inform all participants of the ground rules and housekeeping rules, and ask for other suggestions. See sample [Annex 2](#).
- Inform about preferred style for interventions and comments, whether they are free to interrupt and ask questions, must raise hands, or should wait until the end of the presentation to participate.
- Inform and ask for consent for recording the event.
- Inform about the use of chat features and how to access translation, if provided.

### **Key learnings and considerations based on our experience so far with this process**

These key learnings are shared as a road-map for others in the field to navigate the terrain of existing practices, insights and observations, and it highlights the importance of documenting practices and processes to expand our collective practice-based knowledge. As a living document, we will continue to gather and share evidence and promising approaches to engaging men and boys in ending and preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG) and gender-based violence (GBV). We may add new sections to the documents and revise recommendations.

#### **1. Building on Peer-to-Peer Learning:**

There is evidence that addressing masculinities and working with men and boys to prevent VAWG and GBV can

work to advance the elimination of violence. Our CoLab sessions facilitate the sharing of experiences and strategies among practitioners. In these sessions, participants and presenters alike shared resources, asked questions and expressed concerns in a critical but non-judgemental way. The format encourages questioning and raising concerns rather than prioritising one single method or process. As such we observed a more robust influential of information and critical reflection of programs. Peer knowledge sharing facilitates collective learning about ‘how’ to do this work in a way that is feminist-informed and gender transformative. Peer learning formats that encourage a critical understanding of gender power inequalities can move the field forward in ‘how to address’ both interpersonal and structural drivers of gender-based violence.

**2. Having an Advisory Group:** GBV prevention has been a long-standing problem that the MenEngage Alliance members address, and the GBV working group comprised of members and partners with knowledge and experience in the field was reconvened to serve as a strategic advisory body for this exercise. Considering the diversity of approaches that each intervention uses, and the different contexts and conditions under which they are carried out, it is helpful to set up an advisory group with representatives, as much as possible, from diverse contexts and expertise that can complement the knowledge building and learning journey. Engaging experts from across the world is key to ensuring that diverse experiences from different contexts are considered. Furthermore, an advisory group, inclusive of influential representatives of their communities and settings, provides credibility to your

exercise. It can also be a powerful reminder about lives at stake and of the implications to beneficiaries and practitioners involved in gender equality work.

### **3. The Importance of Context and Multi-Language Accessibility:**

Providing interpretation in several languages expands the reach and accessibility of members of diverse geographic regions of the world. This allows for a more inclusive learning experience as well as opportunities for cross-referencing and knowledge and adaptations of existing methodologies. While interpretation can be costly, it has benefits that are worth investing in.

**4. Setting up Clear Guidelines:** While allowing a great deal of flexibility in the expressions of interest, we realised that the invitation to members to present their work should include more information. We observed a more productive learning experience for both presenters and participants when more and clearer information was shared ahead of time.

It enabled the organising team and presenters to prepare for the event, secure the right equipment and identify the appropriate facilitator/s for the session. A clear set of guidelines for expressions of interest can be helpful, and we recommend, at a minimum:

- Description of the practice they will present to their peers
- Length or duration of the intervention, programme or campaign
- Information about participants/beneficiaries or intended audience
- Types of activities, meetings, posts,

events etc. included in the intervention

- List of any observed changes and /or results from the activities.

### 5. The Impact of Dissemination:

Creative dissemination strategies are crucial in expanding the reach of our findings, influencing policy, and inspiring action among a broad audience, including stakeholders previously unaware of or unengaged in gender transformative work. Dissemination strategies might include short video snippets, poster messages, and social media posts based on the key messages coming out from the sessions. This can bring forward the practice knowledge and help get traction among practitioners to join the sessions or access the recordings.

### 6. The importance of Consolidation:

While the onus is on members to share their work in ways that allow for learning by others, we recognised the importance of consolidating and reflecting on what is shared via this initiative. Possible ways to do this include:

- Developing a consolidated report that brings together key learnings, emerging trends and recommendations. We worked with a consultant to do this.
- Hosting consolidation sessions that weave together the learnings. This could incorporate dialogue sessions with session organisers to reflect on what they are learning about advancing gender transformative programs, policies and narratives.

### 7. Guiding Future Initiatives:

Documenting the process and developing program guiding notes can lay the groundwork for future initiatives. These resources provide a blueprint for organisations and individuals aiming to generate and disseminate collective knowledge that continues to grow and take shape and inform global efforts to prevent GBV and VAWG.

### 8. Strengthen Accountable Practices:

Ensuring initiatives are gender-transformative, feminist-informed and address power imbalances will challenge oppressive, unfair systems. We recognise that our field of work often uses language and jargon that can be contested. In our experience, even among Menengage Alliance members, concepts and terms may be used with different meanings. While this is understandable given the diverse contexts in which practices are situated, the learning process itself requires unpacking the terminology we use and striving for clarity in how we define the terms that are central to our work.

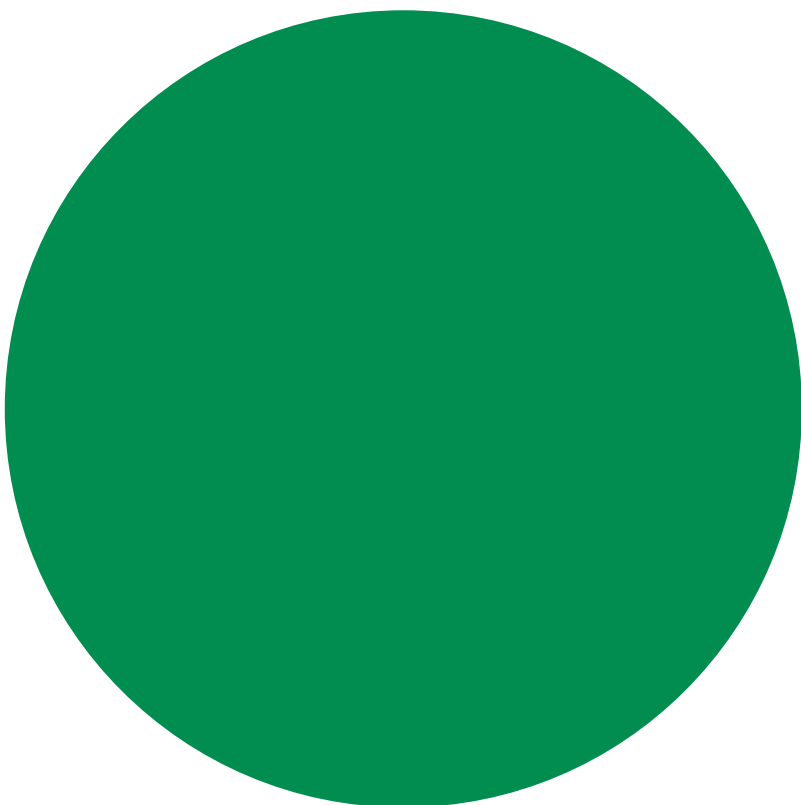
For example, defining what is considered gender transformative in practices and approaches related to working with men and boys is crucial to having an impact. This is critical to the field and knowledge building. This process therefore fosters common ground among practitioners so that they can speak to how their work advances gender equality as opposed to perpetuating patriarchal inequalities. The peer-learning series provides a space and an opportunity for peers to clarify to each other how they approach gender inequalities in each part of their work, and how they translate to their community and beneficiaries why they use gender transformative approaches.

The work with men and boys for gender equality emerged from the broader movement for women’s rights and gender equality. Feminist analysis provided clarity about patriarchal inequalities and gender power dynamics, and how that continues to keep women from enjoying their universal human rights, and from having the same opportunities as their male counterparts. Gender transformative work seeks to build understanding and collaboration about patriarchy and move beyond working with men at an individual level.

Accountability means being true to the purpose of the work, which means transforming inequalities. It also means a long-term commitment to gender equality, human rights and social justice. It is important to recognise that gender-transformative and feminist-informed work on GBV and VAW can take time. Transforming well-

established patterns and norms takes time and often encounters push-back. It is important to keep a learning attitude toward your work’s purpose and revisit definitions periodically to further clarify them.

**9. Partner Meaningfully and Horizontally:** It is critical to validate what has emerged through collaborative partnerships with women’s rights, LGBTIQ+ rights, and other relevant organisations to design, deliver, and evaluate initiatives. This can be done by inviting stakeholders from these groups to attend sessions and review findings. Finally, it is worth reminding ourselves that this is a practitioners-led knowledge-building process, and practitioners have the power to decide what to present and clarify to others how their programmes work. Organisers support, facilitate and host such sessions that are primarily intended as peer-learning spaces.



# Annexes

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**Annex 1 - Session Requirements/Objectives**

**Annex 2 - Participation Guidelines**

**Annex 3 - Sample Run of Show**

## Annex 1

# Session Requirements/Objectives

- Sessions should include sharing lessons learned from both failures and successes, results and impacts of the work. The GS is available to help shape the session with a focus on presenting the results and impacts.
- Sessions can work across modes such as: collaborations between researchers and practitioners showing how members use the research in their programs; or collaborations that combine research, practice and advocacy.
- Organisers are encouraged to present interconnected themes.
- The political framework developed for the Ubuntu symposium will be used to help clarify expectations, and to advance building practice-based knowledge and evidence from political perspectives (accountability, intersectionality, feminist/power/patriarchy).

## Annex 2

# Participation Guidelines

MenEngage Alliance seeks to foster a safe, inclusive and respectful spaces/ environment. We hope to achieve a positive learning and engaging experience for all participants. We ask everyone to:

- **Be Respectful.**
- **Take Responsibility.**
- **Be Inclusive.**
- **Follow online rules of friendliness**

## PARTICIPANT'S DISCLAIMER

The sessions convened/organised by MenEngage Alliance intend/strive to offer a safe space for sharing knowledge, experience, skills and opinions in a mutually respectful manner. We do not condone any forms of bullying, harassment, use of abusive and discriminatory language, aggressive expression of opinions or any such undesirable and unethical behaviours.

MenEngage Alliance retains the right to remove any participant/s who engage in such actions during the session with no prior notice.

## Annex 3

# Sample Run of Show

### ROLES:

- **Facilitator:** Person 1 Conversation
- **Anchor:** Person 2
- **Chat monitor:** Persons 3 and 4
- **Time keeper + Notes:** Persons 4 and 5

### USEFUL LINKS:

SESSION					
7 May					
09:00AM ET   2:00PM UK   6:00PM PKT					
EST	Item	Speaker	Slides	Speaker notes	Team responsibility
08:45 or 5:45	Team members join early to set up and test sound	NA		NA	All
09:00 or 6:00	Welcome	Person		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain that the meeting will be recorded</li> <li>Disclose why AI tools won't be used or supported</li> <li>Language AI support but no translation</li> <li>State the Agenda of the Day</li> </ul>	
9:05 or 6:05	Background	Person 2	8-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain some background:</li> <li>Why/how it was created, what was the intended general aim? Who worked on it?</li> </ul>	
9:15 or 6:15	Presentations	Person 1	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite people to introduce themselves and share what brought them here today/what they hope to learn</li> </ul>	NA
9:45 or 6:45	Collective learning	Person 2	11-12	<p>Open discussion with participants about the course content: <i>invite them to insert their insights/questions in the jamboard.</i></p> <p><b>Possible Leading questions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What did you learn/like most about</li> <li>What did you dislike?</li> <li>What burning questions do you bring today?</li> </ol>	
10:55 or 7:55	Final reflections and closing thank yous	Person 1	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final thanks</li> <li>Some are not members, encourage them to connect with the local and regional networks</li> <li>Share zoom survey where they can express their final evaluation and suggestions</li> </ul>	Person 4 Share survey in the chat

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