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5/24/2022

RNP's Male Engagement Portfolio:

A Synthesis of Primary and
Secondary Research

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I: MALE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS IN REVIEW

The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994, are generally viewed as the turning point in efforts to engage men and boys in gender equality at the international level (MenEngage Alliance et al., 2014). Both the Beijing Platform for Action, produced by the Fourth World Conference on Women (*The Beijing Platform for Action Turns 20*, n.d.), and the ICPD Programme of Action, called for a change in the partnership between men and women. The Beijing Platform for Action called for a, “transformed partnership” (MenEngage Alliance et al., 2014), and the ICPD Programme of Action emphasized that, “changes in both men’s and women’s knowledge, attitudes and behavior are necessary conditions for achieving the harmonious partnership of men and women” (United Nations, 1994, p. 36).

Yet, at the national and sub-national levels, the origins of male engagement programming predated the Fourth World Conference on Women and the ICPD. There is sufficient evidence to indicate that the first programs reached out to men to play a significant role in the prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and HIV/AIDS (Glinski et al., 2018; MenEngage Alliance et al., 2014; World Bank, 2013 as cited in Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies & Arete Advisors, 2021). While the first programs were not well documented, a few reports state that they began as early as the 1980s (Barker in Girard, 2003; Glinski et al., 2018). In 1991, the White Ribbon Campaign was started by a group of men in Canada, and encourages men to wear white ribbons as an expression of their public opposition to men’s violence against women (MenEngage Alliance et al., 2014). In the 1990s, there were also reportedly several noteworthy groups engaging men and boys in gender equality efforts within Latin America, such as the Men’s Group Against Violence in Managua.

It was from the mid- to late-1990s and into the early 2000s that one of the first large, well-funded male engagement programs began in South Africa. It was called the Men as Partners Program, and focused on HIV/AIDS prevention. In 2009, the MenEngage Alliance organized a “Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality” in Rio de Janeiro. This first global event focused exclusively on engaging men and boys marked a pinnacle moment in the male engagement field. More than 400 people representing 80 different countries attended, including activists, researchers, and practitioners (Glinski et al., 2018).

In India, the earliest known male engagement program was begun by Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA) in 1993 (MAVA India, 2020). Some of the other early programs were Yaari Dosti and Sakhi Saheli, run by CORO in partnership with the Population Council New Delhi and Promundo between 2000 and 2007. Yaari Dosti and Sakhi Saheli were research intervention programs that addressed unequal gender norms to reduce sexual risks and violence against women (CORO, 2018). In 2007, Men’s Action to Stop Violence Against Women (MASVAW) was established. MASVAW is a network of approximately 200 organizations working on gender issues, primarily in the north Indian State of Uttar Pradesh (MenEngage Alliance et al., 2014).

Yet, estimates of the number of male engagement programs in India vary based on the criteria used to find them, and other recent sources count fewer than 50. A stakeholder mapping and analysis was conducted by UNESCO in 2019, that was based on an internet search for key terms such as, “gender equality interventions in India” and “masculinities”. This search identified only 12 civil society organizations (CSOs) (Arora, 2019), and excludes both some of the newer programs and organizations, as well as a pioneer such as CORO.

Based on initial results from a landscaping study by Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies (RNP) and Arete Advisors, there are 20 male engagement programs in India for which they were able to find research and/or evaluation reports. Their sample included both the 10 programs that RNP has funded through their Young Men and Boys Portfolio, as well as 10 others. The landscaping study categorized them by both their domain of intervention and their conceptualization of men’s roles (Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies & Arete Advisors, 2021).

The research on the Young Men and Boys Portfolio that the landscaping study drew on included four reports by Probex Consulting, that were commissioned by RNP based on the needs of the grantees. This report is the fifth in the series by Probex Consulting, and synthesizes findings from both the four reports as well as the global literature on male engagement. It focuses particularly on the conceptualization of men's roles within the RNP portfolio, and the contribution of this research to the global debate on the topic.

II: The “He for He” Approach

A 2014 discussion paper by MenEngage Alliance et al. states that there are divergent understandings of the nature and extent of men's role in achieving gender equality, but portrays the conceptualization of these roles as having replaced one another in a linear progression. In this portrayal, the first conceptualization was of men as gatekeepers. This conceptualization viewed male engagement as a practical necessity to changing the conditions of women's lives, given that household relations, communities, and social structures are still largely dominated by men (MenEngage Alliance et al., 2014).

However, the conceptualization of men as gatekeepers did not take into account that they are also individuals (companions, fathers and colleagues) who are concerned about the well-being of the women and girls in their lives. Therefore, the discussion paper argues that it was replaced by the conceptualization of men as allies. While a clear definition of the conceptualization of men as allies is not provided, the discussion paper points out that it too has a limitation, which is that it does not capture the ways in which men's lives also improve with greater gender equality (MenEngage Alliance et al., 2014). In this portrayal, men's roles have finally evolved to being conceptualized as that of co-beneficiaries.

Yet, the controversial nature of the conceptualization of men as co-beneficiaries, and the differences between those who support and criticize it, is concealed in this portrayal. On the one hand, support for this conceptualization is evident not only in the discussion paper cited above, but in a 2018 report published by the International Center for Research on Women. This report builds on the 2014 discussion paper, both providing a clear definition of the conceptualization of men as co-beneficiaries and advocating for it. The report states that framing men as co-beneficiaries, “conceptualizes men as participants and promoters in the process of creating progressively increasing standards of gender equality and equity. It also sees men as benefiting from this process through what they gain from more equitable families and societies (Glinski et al., 2018).”

On the other hand, one of the key criticisms of male engagement programs in general is that they could contribute to the tendency to allow the needs and voices of women and girls to be overshadowed by men (Glinski et al., 2018). In particular, there is a risk that programs that conceptualize men as co-beneficiaries will lead them to focus exclusively on challenging hegemonic masculinity, but not femininity. There is a potential that men will then gain much more freedom to construct alternative identities, without these benefits extending to women.

In addition, of the five benefits of gender equality for men that are highlighted in the 2014 paper by MenEngage Alliance et al., two are only relevant to men who are living with their partners, and one is only relevant to fathers. This raises the question of what the benefits of gender equality are that young men and boys value, and which programs that engage them should promote. Adolescent boys are a neglected topic of research within the male engagement literature overall (Marcus et al., 2018), and more so the question of how they perceive the benefits of gender equality, and its implications for programming.

Research on the male engagement programs supported by RNP is uniquely positioned to address this question for two reasons. Firstly, as the title of the portfolio suggests, a deliberate choice was made by RNP to focus on young men and boys. Secondly, all the programs supported by RNP conceptualize young men and boys as co-beneficiaries, albeit defined more broadly than by Glinski et al.

While recognizing that the term “He for He” is contested, for the reasons discussed here it is nevertheless used in this report to describe this broader conceptualization of young men and boys as co-beneficiaries. Programs are considered as employing the “He for He” approach if their Theories of Change contain benefits beyond those for women and girls in their outcomes and/or impacts. For the majority of programs, the ultimate impact that they aim to achieve is applicable to both genders (some programs did include content on transgenders but this was only mentioned in one Theory of Change). In addition, these programs envision benefits for young men and boys that will be achieved through the process of program participation. It is this broader definition of “benefits”, to include those from program participation, that differentiates the “He for He” approach from the conceptualization of men as co-beneficiaries by Glinski et al. The Theories of Change of the RNP grantees, and the types of benefits they envision for young men and boys, are elaborated on in section III.

In 2018-19, when RNP was expanding their Young Men and Boys portfolio, they saw potential in the “He for He” approach (as articulated by them) and therefore chose to support programs that employed it, but at the same time were aware of the risk that these programs would result in negative outcomes that were not anticipated when they were designed. They therefore commissioned Probex Consulting to conduct research on both the benefits of these programs for young men and boys, as well as the unanticipated outcomes (positive and negative). When the research results were shared with the portfolio organizations, a valid concern was raised, which was that the use of the term “He for He” creates the false impression that the grantees’ programs focus only on benefits for young men and boys, and not for other genders. On the other hand, in the course of this research Probex Consulting has observed that when the term “He for He” is dropped, there is a tendency to assume the converse, that male engagement programs only benefit women and girls. While a term such as, “He for All Genders” could be considered if/when programs move beyond the binary, for now the term has been retained in this report *as defined in the paragraph above*.

III: Theories of Change

This report synthesizes research conducted between April 2019 and December 2021. The research began with workshops that we held with the grantees to review their Theories of Change. These reviews resulted in revised or refined Theories of Change for all the eight grantees that were part of the Young Men and Boys portfolio in April 2019.

Grantees were *not* asked to define the terms used in their Theories of Change, either within the context of their own programs or across them. Given that there are numerous definitions in the literature of terms such as gender equality and equity, and social norms, there is a risk that any attempt to define these terms would have proved inconclusive. At the same time, the lack of agreed definitions raised issues both for the research and for the programs themselves.

An issue that arose while conducting research for CORO was that without a definition of social norms, it was not possible to determine whether the Fellows understand what they are and are able to identify them. Therefore, a definition was chosen from the literature for the study for CORO. Another issue that arose in writing this synthesis is that it would have been incomplete without defining some key terms. These definitions have been included in section IV. The implications that the lack of agreement on common terms has for the programs is addressed in section VII.

An analysis of the Theories of Change of the programs revealed two ways in which they conceptualize the reasons for young men and boys to engage, and how they would benefit from doing so. The first conceptualizes young men and boys as being constrained by hegemonic masculinity in their choices, actions and behaviors. Young men and boys are therefore willing to engage in programs through which they can challenge hegemonic masculinity, so that they are free to make choices, act and behave in ways that they aspire to.

This conceptualization is clearly discernible in the Theory of Change of The Gender Lab Boys’ Program. One of the impacts that the program aims for is that boys make choices, take actions and behave in ways that are not influenced by

gender-based stereotypes. To achieve this impact, The Gender Lab has created content on gender stereotypes and masculinity that boys engage with through the program. However, the Theory of Change of The Gender Lab also acknowledges that boys must gain self-awareness of how gender-based stereotypes influence them, before they choose and act differently. This conceptualization will be referred to in this report as the Alternative Masculinities Theory of Change.

Other programs in the portfolio share this conceptualization, but use different terms to describe it. For example, one of the impacts that CEQUIN's *Mardo Wali Baat* Program aims for is that adolescents can confidently break out of gendered roles and support others to do the same. However, to achieve this impact the Agents of Change (who are all boys) first have to explore opportunities outside the gender norm themselves, and this corresponds to one of the outcomes of the Theory of Change. While the Theory of Change does not use the term "masculinity", it is evident that Agents of Change are expected to challenge hegemonic masculinity in order to be able to explore opportunities outside the gender norm.

The second conceptualization that is reflected in the Theories of Change is that young men and boys engage with these programs because through the process of participation, they gain skills that are valuable to them. This conceptualization is clearly visible in the Theory of Change for Swayam's program, titled, "Towards Violence Free Communities". This Theory of Change envisions that through joining groups and then becoming changemakers, young men's involvement in awareness campaigns and training on gender inequality and violence against women and girls increases (VAWG). As changemakers they transition from participating in the campaigns and training to conducting them, as well as intervening in VAWG cases and facilitating the formation and meetings of other groups. They also collaborate with women's groups, and through all these activities they gain and exercise communication and leadership skills, which enable them to become role models and receive recognition from their communities. This conceptualization will be referred to in this report as the, "Skills for Males" Theory of Change.

The two conceptualizations have been separated out for the purposes of illustration, but co-exist in all the Theory of Change examples provided above. Through their Boys' Program, The Gender Lab intends to build participants' skills in critical thinking and negotiation, while they are engaging with the content on gender stereotyping and masculinity. Similar to Swayam, CEQUIN builds leadership skills in its Agents of Change, which they use to conduct gender awareness campaigns. Swayam's group members receive training on patriarchy that enables them to understand its negative impact on their lives, and they then begin to express their feelings and emotions. Again, the sub-text here is that hegemonic masculinity constrained them from expressing their feelings and emotions earlier, which they aspired to do but were not able to.

While all the examples provided above are of programs that work only with males, it is important to note that 50% of the programs that were part of the portfolio in April 2019 were co-educational. In comparison to the programs that work only with males, it was less clearly discernible from the Theories of Change for the co-educational programs what the rationale was for young men and boys to engage, and how they would benefit from doing so. Initial analysis of the Theories of Change of the co-educational programs indicated that both genders were expected to benefit in the same ways, as is reflected in these impact statements:

- Youth leaders and peer groups continue to question gender-based social norms and sustain the changes made (Grassroots Leadership Development Program)
- Youth leaders and peer groups challenge gender-based social norms in new spheres, especially in their own families (Grassroots Leadership Development Program)
- Youth make life choices in multiple arenas that are not influenced by gender, caste, class and ethnic stereotypes (*Yuwashastra*)
- Youth treat all genders equitably (Project KHEL)

However, further research into PRADAN's *Yuwashastra* program found that men and women differed from one another in both the benefits they expected from the program and in what they gained. The "Skills for Males" and Alternative

Masculinities Theories of Change are relevant to co-educational programs, and three of them will be explored further in this report. They are the Personal Safety Education Program of Arpan, the Grassroots Leadership Development Program (GLDP) of CORO and the *Yuwashastra* program of PRADAN.

IV: Research Scope

This report synthesizes primary research conducted by Probex Consulting, as well as several secondary sources. The primary research by Probex Consulting was on the programs of 4 of the RNP grantees in the Young Men and Boys Portfolio. These programs were CORO's GLDP, PRADAN's *Yuwashastra*, Swayam's "Towards Violence Free Communities" and The Gender Lab Boys' Program. The research outputs were stand-alone reports for the first 3 programs, and a presentation for the fourth.

This report is also based on two types of secondary research, as well as materials produced on the Young Men and Boys grantees for the purposes of knowledge transfer and communication. In addition to the secondary research conducted specifically for this synthesis, this report draws from a literature review by Probex Consulting for Arpan. This review examined findings on the relationship between the age of a child and retention, from the research on child sexual abuse, dating violence and bullying, to investigate the extent to which these bodies of literature agree that older children experience poorer retention, on the reasons why and how to improve it.

The choice of grantees to conduct research for, as well as the type of research, were determined by grantees' stated needs. Below is a brief description of each of the programs on which primary research was conducted, followed by a discussion of the similarities and differences between them. The Theory of Change for each of these programs is in Annex I.

CORO's PROGRAM

CORO's GLDP is an 18-month course which aims to build the capacities of leaders who are primarily from Dalit, Muslim and tribal communities. The grant from RNP supported male and female adolescents to participate in the GLDP. Alongside the various dimensions of leadership that the GLDP already focuses on, these participants also received capacity building on gender-related interventions. In the interests of brevity and clarity, the portion of the GLDP that was funded by RNP is referred to in this report as the "Youth Fellowship". The participants are referred to interchangeably as youth leaders and Fellows.

This report focuses on the portion of the research on the Youth Fellowship that sought to understand participants' perceptions of the training and other forms of support received, as well as the outcomes that resulted (both intended and unintended). Some of the intended outcomes were that participants would apply what they have learnt during the Youth Fellowship both to themselves identify the gender-based social norms that exist in their context and determine which of these are unequal, as well as to facilitate their peer groups to do the same. Fellows and peer groups would then start to question these gender-based social norms and create change. The intended impacts were that Fellows and peer groups would continue to question gender-based social norms, both sustaining the changes already made and in new spheres. The Youth Fellowship participants were from 17 districts in Maharashtra state.

PRADAN's PROGRAM

PRADAN was founded in 1983, and is a non-government, non-profit organization that works with India's rural poor. In 2012, PRADAN initiated the *Yuwashastra* program. *Yuwashastra* is a co-educational program that consists broadly of four steps (a more complete description is contained in the Theory of Change). The first step is the mobilization of adolescents and adults to attend a 3-5 day residential workshop, titled, "Re-Imagining the Future". The second step is the workshop, during which participants focus on: i) understanding themselves and their aspirations better, ii) questioning traditional societal norms and how they govern their decisions, and iii) envisioning the kind of future they want for themselves and their society. The norms that they are encouraged to question during the workshop relate to gender, caste, class and ethnicity.

The third step is that program participants are expected to make informed choices about their careers (which are not influenced by gender stereotypes). Making a career choice that is not influenced by gender stereotypes then enables participants both to pursue this choice (the fourth step), and reach the ultimate impact, which is that they make life choices in multiple arenas that are not influenced by gender, caste, class and ethnic stereotypes. Yuwashastra has been implemented in the Mahakaushal region of the state of Madhya Pradesh.

SWAYAM'S PROGRAM

Swayam is an NGO that has been working on issues of women's rights, discrimination and violence against women for more than 20 years. Swayam's "Towards Violence Free Communities" aims to ensure non-discriminatory and violence free communities by changing the mindsets and behaviors of male adolescents, and building their capacities to become agents of change for equality. The grant from RNP supported Swayam to build the capacities of the groups that they had already formed, to develop their understanding and their leadership skills further so that they become active changemakers in their communities. While as group members young men participate in awareness campaigns and training, as changemakers they conduct them themselves. Changemakers also intervene in VAWG cases, facilitate the formation and meetings of other groups, and collaborate with women's groups. Through all these initiatives they gain and exercise communication and leadership skills.

In the long run, Swayam enables male adolescents to lead by example in breaking gender stereotypes and addressing VAWG, so that they experience more meaningful and healthier relationships, and women and girls experience greater gender equality. Changemakers are also critical to expand and sustain Swayam's work. As they take more responsibility and initiative, they are expected to ultimately take ownership of male groups in the area, so that Swayam can scale its work with new recruits or in new locations.

"Towards Violence Free Communities" is not a stand-alone program, but rather is integrated with the work that Swayam is doing with women and girls. The ultimate objective is for male adolescents to work with women and girls on issues of gender equality in their communities. To date, "Towards Violence Free Communities" has been implemented in Diamond Harbour District, Metiabruz, Mahestala and Khidderpore in the state of West Bengal.

THE GENDER LAB'S PROGRAM

For more than 8 years, The Gender Lab has been conducting a leadership skill building program based on a service-learning model for adolescent girls. In 2017, The Gender Lab launched The Boys' Program. The Gender Lab Boys' Program is a service-learning program (that consists of classroom facilitation and community service) for adolescent boys. The Boys' Program also engages with stakeholders such as parents and educators. It has been implemented in the states of Maharashtra and Haryana, and in the city of Delhi. The primary research that informs this report was conducted with boys in Mumbai, Maharashtra (where The Gender Lab has the largest presence). Both boys in Delhi and Haryana, and other stakeholders in all three locations, were excluded from the research.

One of the impacts that the program aims for is that boys make choices, act and behave in ways that are not influenced by gender-based stereotypes. To achieve this impact, The Boys' Program envisions that boys will both engage with the content on gender stereotypes and masculinity, and will gain self-awareness of how gender-based stereotypes influence them. The other impacts expected for boys are that they feel comfortable expressing their emotions and being vulnerable, practice kindness and empathy, refrain from perpetrating gender-based discrimination or violence and influence their circles to accept new forms of masculinity.

DIFFERENCES, SIMILARITIES AND SOME DEFINITIONS

As is evident from Table I, there is minimal overlap in the geographical locations in which the programs have been implemented. In addition, within the four states in which the programs have been implemented, they differ from one another in whether they focus on rural or urban populations. For example, both the programs of CORO and The Gender Lab have been implemented in Maharashtra, but participants in the former are from both rural and urban communities,

whereas in the latter they are all from the city of Mumbai. Other ways in which the programs differ from one another are in terms of the activities involved, their duration, and whether they are implemented in schools or communities.

Table I: Summary of Primary Research Scope

Organization Name	Program Name	Target Population	Location	Program Purpose
CORO	GLDP Youth Fellowship	Adolescents	State of Maharashtra	Changing gender norms
PRADAN	<i>Yuwashastra</i>	Adolescents, Adults	State of Madhya Pradesh	Enabling adolescents and adults to question norms and make non-stereotypical choices
Swayam	Towards Violence Free Communities	Adolescents	State of West Bengal	Enabling male adolescents to lead by example in breaking gender stereotypes and addressing VAWG, so that they experience more meaningful and healthier relationships, and women and girls experience greater gender equality
The Gender Lab	Boys' Program	Adolescents	States of Maharashtra and Haryana, and the city of Delhi	Enabling male adolescents to challenge gender stereotypes in their actions, behaviors and choices

A comparison of the purposes of all four programs reveals more similarities than differences. All four programs expect participants to challenge gender-based social norms or stereotypes, and while the two terms are distinct, they are related. Both social norms and stereotypes can be obstacles to gender equality, as it is defined in the lexicon of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This definition is:

...The state of being equal in status, rights and opportunities, and of being valued equally, regardless of sex or gender identity and/or expression. In a state of gender equality, people are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, gender norms, or prejudices...Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration and that achievement of development outcomes does not depend on an individual's sex or gender identity and/or expression (*Gender Equality Lexicon, 2021*).

While the quote above emphasizes the negative connotations of social norms and stereotypes, the multiple definitions of the former that exist are typically value-neutral. (The range of definitions of social norms is visible in a recent report on their relationship to gender justice (Marcus & Harper, 2014)). The definition used in this research has been formulated by Cristina Bicchieri and Alexander Funcke. Philosophical and game theory, particularly as developed by Cristina Bicchieri, is a key contributor to analysis and action on social norms in the context of international development. It has provided important insights at the micro level into what norms are and how they are held in place (Marcus & Harper, 2014).

The definition by Bicchieri and Funcke is as follows:

...We define a social norm as a rule of behavior that individuals prefer to conform to on the conditions that they believe that most people in their reference network conform to it (normative expectation). These expectations always refer to a specific group of people whose behavior and approval matter to the individual in question. This is the reference network...Normative expectations are often accompanied by the belief that we will be punished if we do not conform...the reaction to nonconformity may range from slight displeasure to active or even extreme punishment (2018, p. 2).

In contrast to social norms, definitions of stereotypes are more likely to emphasize the negative connotation of the term. However, the definition that is used in this research is from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and is value-neutral. This definition is:

...A generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by members of a particular social group or the roles that are or should be performed by, members of a particular social group (OHCHR, 2014).

The decision in this report to focus not on gender equity but on equality (and the obstacles to it) is deliberate. This decision was made because it appeared to reflect more accurately the focus of the four programs on which primary research was conducted. However, it is important to note that male engagement programs can choose to emphasize gender equity rather than equality. Of the multiple definitions of gender equity and equality (Glinski et al., 2018; Rolleri, 2013), this report chooses again to use the definition provided in the lexicon of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, according to which gender equity is a means towards equality. This definition is:

...Fairness in treatment of all people regardless of sex or gender identity and/or expression. The concept of gender equity recognizes that individuals have different needs and power based on their sex or gender identity and/or expression, and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies inequities. To ensure fairness, affirmative action is often used to remedy gaps and compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent individuals from otherwise operating as equals. Gender equity is a strategy that can lead to gender equality using targeted time-bound policies (*Gender Equality Lexicon*, 2021).

A final term to define in this section is adolescents, as all four programs either focus on them exclusively, or include them among the target population. (The programs of PRADAN, and CORO to a lesser degree, also target adults.) The definition of adolescence in the literature, and which this report uses, "is the period between the onset of puberty and the achievement of relative self-sufficiency" (Blakemore & Mills, 2014, p. 188). The "achievement of relative self-sufficiency" marks the transition into adulthood, and has been further defined sociologically in terms of marriage and family formation, completion of education, and entrance into the labor force (Smetana et al., 2006). A commonly used indicator of the end of adolescence is the average age of marriage (Dahl, 2004). While the median age is a more precise representation of when the majority of people marry, often only the average age is reported (*List of countries by age at first marriage*, n.d.).

In India, the median age of marriage for males in 2015-16 was 24.5 years (NFHS-4, as cited in (S, 2020)). Given that the initial onset of the pubertal growth spurt occurs on average at 11 for boys (Santrock 2013), this report considers adolescence as the period between age 11 and 25. In other countries, this period is even longer (in the United States the average age of marriage for men is 27 and in Japan it is 28.4) (Dahl, 2004), and therefore most researchers have parsed adolescence into 3 developmental periods: early, middle and late. Early adolescence is typically from ages 10 to 13. Middle adolescence is typically from ages 14 to 17 (Smetana et al., 2006). When middle childhood is defined as ending in the onset of puberty, it is a period that is separate from, and immediately precedes, adolescence (Shaffer & Kipp, 2007). However, when middle childhood is defined as the approximate age range from 6 to 11 (Kuther 2016), there is some overlap with early adolescence.

V: Research Purpose and Questions

Research questions were originally formulated in October 2019, and 2 changes have been made to them since then. The first change was that the term, “young men and boys” in RQA, B and D was replaced with, “male adolescents and adults”. This change was made because the term “adolescent” is a more precise definition of a key target group of the four programs that the primary research was conducted on (see section IV). The second change that was made was that RQE was added. The final research questions are below.

RQA. To what extent do male adolescents and adults believe these projects benefit them personally, and in what ways?

RQB. Compared to the other benefits that these projects provide, to what extent do male adolescents and adults value the opportunity to embrace alternative masculinities?

RQC. What have been the unanticipated outcomes of these projects?

RQD. To what extent have projects with an explicit intent to build critical thinking in male adolescents and adults been able to do so? How do these programs compare with one another, in terms of their content and structure, length, the role of the peer group and the age of participants?

RQE. What do the female family members and friends of male participants know about these projects? What changes in male participants have female family members and friends observed, and what is their opinion of these projects?

The questions were formulated through consultations with both RNP and the grantees in the Young Men and Boys portfolio. RQA-E were investigated *in addition to* questions that grantees had already prioritized, that were specific to their individual Theories of Change. The grantee-specific questions have already been addressed in the stand-alone reports and presentation that were the other outputs of this research.

VI: Research Methods and Limitations

The research on the 4 male engagement programs was conducted in 2 phases. In both phases, the data collected was largely qualitative. However, in the first phase the methods used differed between programs, as did the scope of data collection, the respondent types and how the samples were selected.

The reason for the high degree of variation across studies was because they were primarily designed to cater to the research questions that were specific to each grantee. Due to time constraints, RQA-D were investigated only either by analyzing data that grantees had already wanted to collect, or by including additional questions for respondents in the focus group and interview guides. The scope of the focus groups and interviews, as well as the types of respondents who participated, are described in Tables II and III. The first phase of the study consisted of approximately 90 hours of exposure, which is the total amount of time spent on focus groups and interviews.

Table II: First Phase Focus Groups

Type of Respondent	Number of Focus Groups
CORO staff	1
Members of peer groups of CORO Fellows	10
Swayam staff	1
The Gender Lab Boys' Program participants	6

Table III: First Phase Interviews

Type of Respondent	Number of Interviews	Comments
CORO staff	5	
CORO Fellows	53	The research was designed so that each Fellow would participate in 3 rounds of interviews: in Q4 of 2019, and Q1 and Q4 of 2020 respectively. 19 Fellows were available

		during the 1 st round, and 17 Fellows were available during the 2 nd and 3 rd rounds.
Yuwashastra participants	70	
Swayam staff	5	
Swayam Changemakers	21	
Family members of Swayam Changemakers	9	
Swayam Animators	4	Animators are community volunteers who are reimbursed by Swayam for their travel expenses

In the first phase, Probex Consulting was responsible for designing the focus group and interview guides, analyzing the data and presenting the results. For the studies for the smaller organizations (Swayam and The Gender Lab), Probex Consulting was also responsible for data collection. However, as larger organizations, CORO and PRADAN shared the responsibilities for data collection (which was correspondingly larger in scope than for Swayam and The Gender Lab) with Probex Consulting.

In July and August 2021, presentations based on the draft synthesis report were made to CORO, PRADAN, Swayam and The Gender Lab, as well as RNP. Their feedback was incorporated into the research, including the addition of RQE. The second phase of the research focused on RQE, and contributed to addressing RQC.

The second phase of the research was conducted between October and November 2021, and consisted of brief phone interviews with the female family members and friends of male participants in the 4 programs. Probex Consulting was responsible for designing the interview guide, data collection, analysis and incorporating the results into this synthesis. While the criteria for sample selection were consistent across programs, there were variations between them in the distribution of respondents and how they were identified.

The female respondents were identified by the grantees themselves, except for PRADAN who provided a list of 66 male participants. These male participants were then contacted up to 6 times each by Probex, to identify the female respondents. The variations in the distribution of respondents are elaborated on in Table IV.

Table IV: Second Phase Interviews

Organization	Respondents			Total
	Female Friends / Girlfriends	Sisters	Other Female Family Members	
CORO	6	2	2	10
PRADAN	5	7	3	15
Swayam	3	9	6	18
The Gender Lab	3	4	1	8
Total	17	22	12	51

LIMITATIONS

From the perspective of Probex Consulting and the grantees, there are four key limitations to this research. The first is that while the bulk of the data collection for this research was completed by December 2020, all the programs on which it is based continue to evolve. The evolution of individual programs has been influenced by multiple factors, but especially by India's lockdown to limit the spread of COVID-19, and the ongoing pandemic. Going forward, grantees have expressed an interest in working at scale, whether that is through growing individual programs or collaborating to develop a common framework and bring about larger social shifts. Therefore, this research is only able to provide a "snapshot" of these programs at a particular moment in time.

The second limitation is that while acknowledging that the four programs differ in the participants they target, the focus is only on the variables of age and gender. Grantee feedback drew attention to the fact that socio-economic and

cultural differences, as well as the caste and religious identities of their respective participants, must also be considered when comparing programs with one another. Further research on these programs should use a more intersectional approach.

A third limitation of the research was that programs targeting early and middle adolescents were underrepresented. Originally, a fifth RNP grantee (who targets early and middle adolescents) was to have been included in the primary research sample. This grantee was Equal Community Foundation (ECF), who had asked Probex Consulting to develop tools for them to measure the life skills identified in their Theory of Change. The insights from the tool development process were to have been incorporated into this synthesis. However, while tool development and pilot testing were scheduled for December 2019-January 2020 they were delayed, and then could not be completed due to India's lockdown to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Of the four programs for which the primary research was completed, only The Gender Lab targets early and middle adolescents. The scope of data collection for The Gender Lab was also smaller than for the other programs. An additional 4 focus groups and 20-25 interviews with participants, as well as 20 interviews with family and community members, were planned for August 2020. As was the case with ECF, the data collection planned for August 2020 could not be completed due to India's lockdown to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Phase 2 of the research attempted to compensate for the 20 interviews with family and community members of boys in The Gender Lab program that could not be completed, as well as validate the research with additional female respondents. Sufficient sample sizes were achieved to validate the research with the female friends and family members of participants in the programs of PRADAN and Swayam. However, more than two-thirds of the female family members and friends of PRADAN participants were not aware of the program. The insufficient sample sizes for the Phase 2 research on CORO and The Gender Lab, as well as the small number of female respondents who were aware of PRADAN's program, were the fourth limitation of this study.

VII: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

“SKILLS FOR MALES”

The “Skills for Males” Theory of Change, mentioned in section III, is embedded in all the programs that were part of the primary research sample. However, there were very few similarities across the programs in the specific skills that they aimed to build. Aside from communication and critical thinking (discussed below), these skills were problem solving, teamwork, mobilization, planning, leadership, negotiation and VAWG case intervention.

In response to RQA and D, this report focuses on critical thinking and communication. Male adolescents and adults named gaining communication skills as the main way in which they had benefited personally from the programs they had participated in. Therefore, the section on communication skills in this report contributes to answering RQA. Critical thinking was chosen because it is the subject of RQD.

Critical Thinking Skills

The two of the eight grantees whose Theories of Change use the term, “critical thinking”, are ECF and The Gender Lab. Both programs state (either explicitly or implicitly) that teaching program participants critical thinking will enable them to relate the content of the classroom sessions to their own contexts, and therefore to act. ECF defines critical thinking (CT) in its curriculum as the ability of boys to link their own experiences with gender issues, and to challenge existing situations and norms. The Theory of Change for The Gender Lab program indicates that boys will be able to identify gender-based violence in their schools, communities and families and respond mindfully and assertively, if they gain knowledge on it and CT skills through the classroom sessions. (However, this is a simplification of the Theory of Change for The Gender Lab Boys' Program). Similarly, while CORO's Theory of Change does not use the term, “critical thinking”,

it also expects Fellows to identify gender norms in their context and initiate change against them, if/once they understand what they are and gain the skills to do so.

To answer the first part of RQD, it was important to consider how CT should be measured. This question has concerned scholars at least since 1987, when a two-year project was launched to create a consensus among international experts on the definition of CT, its instruction and assessment, and the characteristics of an ideal critical thinker (Insight Assessment, 2020). The Delphi Report, which describes the results of this project, identified 6 cognitive skills and 16 sub-skills that constitute CT (Facione, 1990). Therefore, it is not surprising that some tests limit their scope to a single sub-skill, as found in a review by Evaldesign. For example, Evaldesign found four tests that measure “analyzing arguments”, which is itself a sub-skill of analysis (Bapna et al., 2017).

Our use of standardized measures of CT in this research was precluded both by cost factors, and the difficulty of administering multiple tests to each program participant. While multi-aspect CT tests do exist as well (Ennis & Chattin, 2018), they are largely not available free of charge. Therefore, it was decided that this research would define CT as grantees have, and that it would be measured through focus groups and interviews with program participants.

This section of the report begins by addressing the second part of RQD, which asks us to compare the content and structure, the role of the peer group and the age of participants across the programs of the 3 grantees (ECF, CORO and The Gender Lab) that aim to build CT, either explicitly or implicitly. The report then highlights the critical role played by the instructor of CT, a theme that is returned to later in this section. Finally, it answers the first part of RQD, on the extent to which the programs of CORO and The Gender Lab have been able to build CT in male adolescents and adults. (ECF’s program has not been considered in addressing the first part of RQD because this research did not collect any primary data on it.)

Program Descriptions

The descriptions of the 3 programs below have been arranged in order of program duration. Of the 3, The Gender Lab Boys Program is the shortest. The program duration is 3-5 months, and it begins with an opening workshop, which is followed by a series of 6 additional workshops (a total of 7). In 2019-20, 9 hours of content were provided to each participant (*The Gender Lab Boys Program, 2020*), followed by approximately 10 hours of training and reflection on action projects.

Program participants are 13-14 year-old male adolescents. In addition to attending the workshops, participants are expected to undertake action projects to either address, or research, the issue of gender-based violence. In 2019-20, participants were given the option of either undertaking the action projects in peer groups or individually (*The Gender Lab Boys Program, 2020*). In addition to its short duration and exclusive focus on 13 and 14 year-olds, The Gender Lab Boys Program differs from the programs of ECF and CORO because it is implemented in school rather than community settings.

ECF’s Action for Equality Programme comprises of three stages: Foundation, Action and Leadership. Each of the stages includes 15 modules, and is typically implemented through weekly sessions of no more than 2 hours each (Project Raise, 2021). The content and the structure of the second and third stages of the Programme have been undergoing revision, starting with their Theories of Change, since 2019.

Action for Equality participants are 13-17 year old male adolescents. While the role of peer groups is not emphasized in the Foundation stage of the Programme, ECF is considering the formation of alumni groups, as part of its revisions to the erstwhile Action and Leadership stages. These alumni groups are intended to enable boys to take action at the community level (Project Raise, 2021).

As discussed earlier, the programs of ECF, CORO and The Gender Lab all state (either explicitly or implicitly) that teaching program participants CT will enable them to relate the content of the classroom sessions to their own contexts, and therefore to act. More specifically, both ECF and CORO emphasize teaching content on social norms, which leads participants to identify them in their own contexts and act against them. Beyond this emphasis on social norms, the programs of ECF and CORO largely differ from one another in their structure, the ages of the participants, the incentives and support provided to them, and the expectations of them.

CORO's Youth Fellowship consists of five modules, each of which is delivered through a residential training of 3-5 days. These trainings are conducted at intervals over a period of 9 months. To be eligible for the Youth Fellowship, participants must be no younger than 18. Most participants are under 25, but a few are older. Preference is given to youth who are already associated with NGOs / CBOs.

Fellows receive support both from CORO's Regional Coordinators, as well as from mentors who are assigned to them from their NGOs / CBOs. Both Fellows and mentors also receive financial support. Given that Fellows receive both a financial incentive as well as more support than participants in either the programs of ECF or The Gender Lab do, the expectations of them are also higher. Peer groups are not a part of Action for Equality (although they are being considered for the future), and are optional in The Gender Lab Boys Program, but were formed by the majority of CORO Fellows even if this took 2-3 months of consistent effort. Forming peer groups, and facilitating them to identify gender norms that exist in their context and determine which are unequal, in turn provides further support to the Fellows. It is with the support of their peer groups that Fellows are then able to question gender norms and initiate change.

Content and Instruction

The preceding discussion has compared all the program elements listed in RQD (the structure, duration, the role of the peer group and the age of participants), except for content. A comprehensive analysis of the curriculum of each program is beyond the scope of this synthesis, although select information is provided in the annexes. The paragraphs below provide brief descriptions of the curricula for the 3 programs, as well as highlight the relationship between content and instruction.

The Gender Lab had a new curriculum framework designed for the 2019-20 program. The new curriculum was based on Nirantar Trust's study, called, "Textbook Regimes", which highlights feminist struggles in five areas. These areas are the nation, labor, violence, the body, and tradition and modernity. The idea was to critique the gender narratives within these five areas (*The Gender Lab Boys Program*, 2020). In addition, participants were expected to become aware of and be able to identify:

- the sources that influence their definition of masculinity
- alternative masculinities
- the difference between sex and gender
- gender-based discrimination and violence, as a function of power and
- gender stereotypes.

CORO's curriculum consists of 5 modules on: 1) the self and one's context, 2) gender and constitutional rights, 3) relationships, sexual health and gender-based violence, 4) leadership and contributing to society and 5) life skills. The life skills that the 5th module includes are communication, research, community mobilization, team building, stress and emotion management and advocacy. (As mentioned earlier, the Youth Fellowship does not have an explicit focus on critical thinking). All 5 modules are elaborated on in Annex II.

Finally, the description here of ECF's curriculum has been limited to the Foundation stage of Action for Equality, as the other stages are undergoing revision. In the curriculum, the 15 modules have been grouped thematically. The themes are building a group, setting expectations, human rights, gender, boyhood to manhood, violence, relationships, reflection and taking action (Project Raise, 2021). All 15 modules are listed in Annex III.

It is important to highlight that none of the 3 programs include specific content on CT. By itself, this lack of specific content on CT is not a cause for concern. As stated in the Delphi Report:

...The experts do not regard CT as a body of knowledge to be delivered to students as one more school subject along with others. Like reading and writing, CT has applications in all areas of life and learning. Also as with reading and writing, CT instruction can occur in programs rich with discipline-specific content or in programs which rely on the events in everyday life as the basis for developing one's CT (Facione, 1990, p. 4).

Yet, the lack of specific content on CT does underscore the crucial role that instructors play in ensuring that this skill (or set of skills) is developed in participants in the way that the curriculum is delivered. The Delphi Report proceeds to recommend that:

...Teaching CT is most effective if the instructor models CT dispositions and the proper use of CT skills in the very process of instruction. Regardless of the subject area, students should be encouraged to be curious, to raise objections, ask questions, point out difficulties in the instructor's position. These objections and questions should be clarified, interpreted, and examined objectively. Students should be given reasons for doing things a certain way, rather than being dogmatically told how to do them. Instruction should bridge the gap between the subject and the student's own experience. In the case of CT instruction, the topics of discussion should not be restricted to factual matters or academic subjects, but should include issues which have normative, moral, ethical or public policy dimensions (Facione, 1990, p. 17).

As the role of the instructor of CT was not the focus of this report, it was not investigated systematically across all 3 programs (although one of CORO's residential trainings was observed). Therefore, this report limits itself to indicating where the role of the instructor could have influenced the extent to which CT skills were built. However, the role of the instructor in building CT skills in all 3 programs is an important topic for future research.

Evidence of CT by Participants

Primary research on the programs of CORO and The Gender Lab provided an opportunity to investigate the extent to which they had been able to teach participants how to relate the classroom sessions to their own contexts, and therefore to act (the definition of CT that is based on their Theories of Change). The interviews with CORO participants in Q4 of 2019 and Q1 of 2020 revealed that all but one of the Fellows was able to provide examples of gender norms that exist in their own communities. Therefore, CORO's program was successful to the extent that it enabled participants to relate the classroom instruction on social norms to their own contexts.

It is worth noting that the first outcome in CORO's Theory of Change is that youth leaders not only identify gender norms that exist in their context but also determine which are unequal. To investigate the second part of this outcome, interviewers were instructed to ask Fellows if the gender norms they had identified were equal or not. All but one of the Fellows who was asked this question said that the gender-based social norms that he / she had mentioned were unequal. (However, not all the Fellows were asked this question as it was omitted by some of the interviewers.)

This perception that social norms are always unequal is consistent with Fellows' definitions of the term and the examples they remembered from the training. The majority of Fellows recalled examples of unequal social norms from the training, and this perception was also reflected in the way they defined the term. It is possible that participants' perceptions had also been influenced by sources other than the Fellowship, and/or that examples of unequal social norms were emphasized by CORO's instructors during the training. In either case, instructors who asked participants to provide counter-examples of equal social norms, and thereby modeled the CT dispositions and skills referred to in the Delphi Report, could have closed the gap between the outcome as it was envisioned in the Theory of Change, and achieved.

Beyond enabling participants to relate the classroom sessions to their own contexts, CT as defined by the 3 programs also leads them to act. While the original research design for CORO's program was intended to determine whether youth leaders and peer groups had acted to initiate change against gender norms, it was necessary to modify it due to a nationwide lockdown that was ordered on March 24th to limit the spread of COVID-19. CORO staff and almost all the Fellows became involved in relief efforts, and therefore it was decided that the research would investigate whether Fellows saw gender norms as relevant to their relief efforts. However, the intention of the modified research design was to provide preliminary insights to CORO to strengthen its program going forward, rather than to arrive at definitive conclusions about the Youth Fellowship.

The research found that the majority of Fellows were not able to identify how gender norms were relevant to their relief efforts. While all but one Fellow had been able to relate the classroom sessions on gender norms to their own communities, they found it more difficult to do so in the context of relief work. This indicates that the ability to relate classroom content to other contexts may differ from one context to another, rather than be standard across them.

Nevertheless, 7 of the Fellows were able to identify issues observed during the lockdown that were caused by gender-based norms. Among the 7, 2 Fellows noted that domestic violence had increased during the lockdown, and that this was supported by the norm that women should tolerate it. These 2 Fellows went beyond identifying the norm to initiating change against it, by forming a *Mahila Dakshata Samiti* across 61 villages to handle cases of domestic violence, and by spreading the message that women in trouble shouldn't tolerate it.

Apart from in their relief efforts, Fellows did find opportunities to challenge gender norms in other spheres as well. Some examples were of challenging gender norms related to household chores. Other examples were of challenging gender norms in their community "assignments", which they were asked to complete between the residential trainings.

In summary, CORO's program appears to be successful in enabling participants to relate the classroom sessions on social norms to their own communities, but less so in the specific context of relief work. It has also enabled participants, to some extent, to *challenge* gender norms despite the disruptions to the program and to Fellows' lives caused by the lockdown. Yet, it is possible that CORO's program would have been less successful if implemented with a different group of participants, or with less support provided to them. Therefore, the research that was conducted on building CT through The Gender Lab Boys Program provides a useful point of contrast, and is discussed below.

For the research on The Gender Lab Boys Program, six focus groups were conducted with participants, all of which included an activity designed to investigate CT. The activity required participants to watch an ad film in Hindi, and then discuss it in the group. The ad chosen was aimed at increasing subscriptions to the Start Sports cable channel, through promoting its coverage of professional *kabaddi*. The not-so-subtle sub-text of the ad is that watching *kabaddi* can make a man regain his masculinity. This is evident both in the sequence of events that the ad portrays and its title, "From a 'zero' become a hero".

The ad portrays a short man who is neither successful at work nor at home, earning the displeasure of both his employer and his stay-at-home wife. He is responsible for household chores like making tea and watering the plants, but he is humiliated by everyone around him including his neighbor and a taller, stronger man on the bus. Even when he is saluted by a guard, he is startled because he is unused to such treatment.

When he inadvertently switches on Star Sports and watches professional *kabaddi*, he is suddenly transformed into a man who is willing to take risks, and to avenge the humiliations he has suffered. He earns the approval of his employer at work, and when he returns home it is his wife who offers to make him tea.

The discussions on the ad revealed that it was understood by participants, and accepted without questioning. All the groups were able to identify that the ad was about *kabaddi*, and could recall at least some of the characters depicted. When asked what the main message of the ad was, all six groups were consistent in saying that it was not to be scared in the way that the main character in the ad was, which led him to be repeatedly humiliated.

None of the participants questioned why a man who does household chores is equated with lacking courage, and why a man who takes risks, is aggressive and is served by his wife is equated with being strong. Similarly, when asked who the ad targeted all six groups said it was for people who are afraid, weak and/or can't face challenges. While two groups specified that the ad was for men who are afraid, the others did not observe that an ad that sells watching *kabaddi* as enabling men to regain dominance (including at home) is unlikely to appeal to women who could otherwise be potential viewers of the sport.

The discussion of the ad revealed that participants were not only unable to identify its sexist content, but in fact supported a highly gendered division of labor. When asked what they did not like about the ad, all the groups said that they did not like the wife. In two of the groups it was mentioned that it was the wife's job to make tea. One group added that it was also the wife's duty to follow her husband. In two of the other groups, it was specifically the wife's criticism of the tea her husband made that was objected to. In both these groups it was mentioned that in some cases fighting or violence by the husband was justified.

"If a man is handling both work at home and in the office, if his wife criticizes him, he has the right to get violent".

Focus group participant

As surprising as the boys' responses to the character of the wife was their *lack* of reaction to the other characters who antagonize the "hero". While the wife only expresses mild displeasure at the tea her husband makes, his employer and neighbor (both male) fly into a rage. His employer throws the papers he is handed by the "hero" into the air and shouts at him in a room full of people. One plausible reason for the boys' muted responses to the neighbor and employer is that they believe men are entitled to express aggression in certain situations. In contrast, as the quote above indicates, a man who works outside the house is perceived as helping his wife or doing her a favor by making tea, and the expectation is that she should be appreciative and grateful.

In summary, the activity results indicate that either The Gender Lab Boys Program was not effective in making participants aware of alternative masculinities, and gender-based discrimination and violence, or they were not able to relate what they learnt in the classroom to another context. Further research is required to either validate or rule out the former. In the case of the latter, it is possible that participants found the specific context of the ad film difficult to relate to, and would have found it easier to do so in other contexts.

That participants found the specific context of the ad film difficult to relate to was also mentioned by grantees as one of the possible explanations for the results observed. Grantees reflected that it may be easier to generate empathy among male participants for greater equality in some domains (such as education and nutrition) than others (like marriage or sexuality). Grantees also drew attention to the short duration of The Gender Lab program as a contributing factor. The Boys' Program and others like it are constrained by how much time schools allocate for them, but are also able to reach a large number of students. Therefore, the implication is not that short duration programs are undesirable, but rather that the expectations of them should be calibrated accordingly.

It is also possible that the expectations of the program (specifically with respect to critical thinking) are not appropriate for participants who are 13-14 years old. Some considerations related to the age of participants in male engagement programs are investigated below.

Age As A Factor

If critical thinking is defined to include taking action, then it is possible that it is easier for older program participants to do so than those who are younger. For example, 2 of the Fellows in CORO's program who challenged gender norms in their personal lives were not adolescents but adults. One Fellow described challenging the norm in his community that women should not deliver in hospitals, by having his own wife do so. Once his wife challenged the norm, other women started visiting the hospital regularly as well. Another Fellow who had recently got married said that he had asked his wife not to wear a veil (*ghoonghat*) during the wedding, although this incurred an INR 51,000 fine from his community.

In both these examples, it is noteworthy that the men challenged gender norms through their wives rather than on their own. This raises further questions as to whether the husbands supported their wives' choices or chose for them, and indicates that programs that target male adults should be particularly sensitive to the exercise of power by their participants in such situations. While there is a risk that men have "too much" agency, based on anecdotal evidence from ECF, it appears that male early and middle adolescents don't have enough, and therefore are not able to challenge gender norms at the community level. Reflecting on this issue, grantees recommended that programs that target early and middle adolescents, especially if they are of short duration, calibrate their expectations accordingly. They stated that it might be sufficient for younger males to change their own understanding and attitudes, and refer situations that require community action to others such as women's groups instead.

Aside from questions of agency, the number of factors for implementers to consider when deciding which age group to target makes it difficult terrain to navigate. The decision is further complicated by the fact that this is an evolving field of research, and therefore the insights from the literature can appear to be conflicting. Yet, it is increasingly clear that programs that target early and middle adolescents must be designed to respond to their unique characteristics if they are to be effective.

In 1995, when Eddie Madunagu piloted the Conscientizing Male Adolescents program in Calabar, Nigeria, he deliberately chose not to work with participants below the 14-15 age group. Madunagu's rationale was that the program's objectives could not be reached with participants below the 14-15 age group, as they would not be able to engage in intellectual debate and see parallels between patriarchy and other forms of oppressive power, such as the oppression of ethnic minorities and the exploitation of the poor. The two objectives that the program was founded with were: 1) to increase participants' awareness of gender-based oppression; and 2) to foster their critical thinking skills by teaching them to analyze the world around them and arrive at a new set of values on their own (Girard, 2003).

Madunagu's emphasis in Conscientizing Male Adolescents on a minimum age at which it is appropriate to teach CT differs from the Delphi Report, although both the program and the report (which was written in 1990 but revised in 1998) are from the same time period. The Delphi Report chooses to emphasize that, "explicit attention to the fostering of CT skills and dispositions should be made an instructional goal at all levels of the K-12 curriculum" (Facione, 1990), without qualifying this statement with what can and cannot be expected from students below the age of 14. However, recent research on cognitive development not only validates Madunagu's rationale for not working with participants below the ages of 14-15, but also indicates that an even later age of intervention is justified.

Recent research has found that it is not until males reach 15-17 years of age that their brain structures and cognitive processes have matured sufficiently to allow complex abstract thinking and full meta-cognitive functions. In addition, it is only in early adulthood that the development of regions of the brain linked to impulse control and mature decision-making are completed. These in turn are linked to abstract thinking and justice-based reasoning, both of which are crucial for young people to be able to question, reflect on and construct their own ideas about gender norms and roles (Breinabauer and Maddaleno 2005; Patton and Viner 2007, as cited in (International Center for Research on Women, 2010)).

These findings have implications for all 3 of the programs in the RNP portfolio that aim to build CT. For CORO, this evidence supports their decision to work with 18-25 year-olds, and implies that one of the factors that has made the program successful in building CT is the age of the participants targeted. For ECF and CORO, the implication is that either they must reconsider the age group of participants who are targeted, or find ways to follow adolescents throughout their development. In this context, the example of Conscientizing Male Adolescents is again illuminating.

The structure of Conscientizing Male Adolescents was, in its first version, remarkably similar to that of ECF's Action for Equality, and consisted of two-hour discussion sessions every week for a year. However, in 1997, the decision was made to pare down the initial curriculum, and introduce a second year for the most promising and committed participants (Girard, 2003). This experience is mirrored by ECF. As mentioned earlier, ECF is considering the formation of alumni groups with its most promising and committed participants. ECF has also realized that participants with lower levels of commitment require a pared down curriculum, which is being developed as well.

By creating alumni groups, ECF is likely to be able to follow the adolescents it works with for a second year as Conscientizing Male Adolescents does, and possibly for even longer. The extended duration may allow for the biological changes required for ECF's efforts to build CT skills to be more effective. At the same time, it is worth noting that the adolescents in the second year of Conscientizing Male Adolescents still found it difficult to "act", and therefore it is possible that ECF's goal of challenging gender norms at the community level will be difficult for the alumni groups to achieve in the short-term.

Some sexuality curricula are also designed to follow adolescents throughout their development, and could serve as examples for programs in the Young Men and Boys portfolio that are considering doing so. Such examples include the curriculum of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), the Child Safety Curriculum developed by the Queensland Department of Education and Training and the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, and the Safe Start program (Smyth & Katz, 2016). The publication by the International Center for Research on Women, cited earlier, states that the SIECUS curriculum may be one of the clearest and best examples of a developmental approach applied to sexuality education (2010). The material by SIECUS has sought to identify the necessary and recommended components of sexuality education by age and development stage.

At each development stage, SIECUS has not only considered changes in adolescents' cognitive abilities, but also in the topics that are relevant to them and that they relate to (International Center for Research on Women, 2010). This importance, of being cognizant of changes other than in cognitive abilities, was underscored by a literature review that Probex Consulting conducted for Arpan, on the relationship between the age of a child and retention. The specific questions that the literature review explored were, "What are the different bodies of literature that investigate the relationship between the age of a child and retention? To what extent do these bodies of literature agree that older children experience poorer retention, on the reasons why and how to improve it?"

Arpan is an NGO based in Mumbai, that works on the issue of child sexual abuse (CSA) in India. Arpan's Personal Safety Education program (PSE) is implemented with students in pre-primary (currently being piloted) to grade X in schools. While Arpan's hypothesis was that there are cognitive factors that impair retention in early and middle adolescents, the opposite turned out to be true. The literature review found that there are linear and steep rises in memory from 6 to 11 years of age, and that performance plateaus subsequently (Schneider, 2002). It is important to note that this is in contrast to abstract thinking, which also increases in early adolescence but is linked (along with justice-based reasoning) to regions of the brain that only fully develop in early adulthood. Therefore, while programs that require abstract thinking by participants can start with middle adolescents but must follow them throughout their development, programs that only require retention can target early adolescents alone.

Yet, the literature review also revealed that to support positive outcomes for youth in programs, schools and family life, it is important to consider both the factors that are positively and negatively correlated with age during adolescence. On

the one hand, a range of cognitive abilities, including memory development, are positively correlated with age during adolescence. On the other hand, factors such as academic motivation, interest in school, and achievement all decline across adolescence (Eccles, 1999). A factor that is of particular importance to CSA and bullying prevention programs is a decline in willingness to think, feel, or behave in ways sanctioned by adults (Diaz et al., 2020; Yeager et al., 2015).

The literature on motivational beliefs and engagement (which focuses on the academic context) has tried to address the formidable challenges that are apparent when working with adolescents. A framework that has been developed to do so is *How People Learn*, which identifies four paths to motivation that correspond to knowledge, learners, communities and assessments. Bransford et al. (2005) say that students will be motivated when:

- They know they are learning content and skills that will be important in life (knowledge).
- They receive frequent feedback that allows them to see their progress in learning and gives them chances to do even better (assessments).
- They feel they are a valued part of vibrant, “high-standards” communities-at the classroom, school, and overall community level (communities).
- Courses connect with their interests and strengths, and provide interesting challenges to their preconceptions (Dweck, 1989, as cited in Bransford et al., 2005). This corresponds to the “learners” component of the framework.

Programs that are informed by the “Skills for Males” Theory of Change have the potential to meet all four of the criteria outlined in the *How People Learn* framework. In order to meet the first criterion, program participants must not only be learning content and skills that will be important in life, but know or *believe* that they are doing so. Frequent feedback on their progress (the second criterion) allows them to validate this belief. Therefore, how program participants believe they are benefiting from male engagement programs is discussed in the next section.

Communication Skills

CORO’s curriculum seeks explicitly to build communication skills in their participants, and the study of their program validated that men (and women) believe that they are doing so. The content on communication was one of three topics that was best remembered and considered most useful by program participants. The other two topics mentioned were not skill-related (gender, and constitutional values and duties). Therefore, while the CORO curriculum seeks to build multiple skills among participants, it was communication that was both remembered and valued.

The findings from the study for Swayam on the value that participants place on communication skills was similar. When asked what participants value in Swayam staff, the main skill they mentioned was communication, but they were unable to be more specific. However, it was evident from the interviews that animators and changemakers have gained communication skills from community mobilizers (Swayam staff), and in particular have used dialogue, logical reasoning and persuasive speaking when countering opposition.

A changemaker recounted the objection being raised at a group meeting that Swayam was making girls too liberal, and that if they didn’t cover up they would get raped. The changemaker, who himself had earlier believed that girls should cover up, countered this argument by saying that, “if that is the case, why do we hear of a 3 or 4-year old getting raped, or for that matter a girl in a *hijab* or even a 70-year old woman?” In an example of religious opposition provided by an animator, a *maulana* had tried to discourage him from engaging with Swayam because he alleged that it was funded by Christians. Reflecting the skills that are modelled by Swayam staff, the animator countered the *maulana* using communication and logical reasoning. The animator’s argument was that when the *maulana* had an accident he hadn’t checked if the blood transfusion he received was from a Muslim or Christian. The animator continued, “So, I said, if that blood is not *haram*, why should this money be *haram*?” The animator reported that since then his relationship with the *maulana* has improved.

The remaining 2 programs on which primary research was conducted (PRADAN's *Yuwashastra* and The Gender Lab Boys' Program), do not refer to building communication skills in their Theories of Change. Therefore, communication skills were neither the focus of the research, nor did they emerge as a program benefit for the majority of participants. However, approximately a fifth of the *female* participants in *Yuwashastra* did name a gain in communication skills, when asked about program benefits for them. In contrast, only one male participant mentioned communication skills as a program benefit for him.

Prior to the workshop, women may have had fewer opportunities than men to communicate with people outside their village, and therefore valued this aspect of the RIF workshop more. Restrictions on women's mobility make it likely that the workshop provided a rare opportunity for female participants to communicate with people outside their village. With fewer or no restrictions on their mobility, it is likely that men would have had sufficient opportunities to communicate with people outside their village, and may have believed that they already possessed the skills to do so.

That male participants did not gain communication skills through the RIF workshop is less of a concern than the fact that they exited the program soon after. Among all the participants between April and December 2019, 28% of men (compared to 15% of women) exited immediately after the RIF workshop. Therefore, they did not have the opportunity to participate in the soft skills and vocational training that had been planned for subsequent stages of the program. If they had continued with *Yuwashastra*, they may have found that at subsequent stages, the types of training and skill levels targeted were of value to them.

Improving Skills-Related Programming

The research findings on *Yuwashastra* indicate that greater alignment is required between program implementers and participants in how: 1) the targeted skill types and levels are identified; 2) expectations are set; and 3) progress is measured. To achieve 1), it is important not only to assess the capacity building needs of potential participants, but also to be more specific in how terms such as "communication skills" are defined. For example, when some of the female participants in *Yuwashastra* mentioned gaining "communication skills", their understanding of the term was different from that of Swayam's animators and changemakers. The RIF workshop could be described as building skills in basic communication, which includes being able to hold a conversation and participate in a discussion with strangers. In contrast, Swayam's program builds skills specifically in logical reasoning and persuasive speaking. Based on anecdotal evidence from ECF, communication as understood by its participants refers to public speaking, which is a third possible definition. Therefore, common definitions are necessary so that when a participant identifies a skill that he would like to build, his understanding of it and that of the program implementor are the same.

To achieve 2), it is important but not sufficient that male engagement programs target the skill types and levels that participants value. In addition, participants must be aware before they begin the program of what types and levels of skills they can expect to build, and the commitment required of them to do so. Currently, primary research and anecdotal evidence indicate that this is not the case. Of 19 interviews conducted with CORO Fellows, in only one did the respondent have an expectation of gaining skills (again in conversation and body language) prior to joining the program. Similarly, when *Yuwashastra* participants were asked what they believed the intention of the *Yuwashastra* program was, a typical answer was, "to educate young people so they can earn for a living", rather than a specific description of the skills they expected to gain.

However, implementors themselves cannot know the commitment required of participants to achieve the skill types and levels their programs target without two pieces of information. The first piece of information is the average number of hours that participants in the program spend in "sessions". For CORO's Youth Fellowship, it is possible to arrive at 160 hours as the approximate duration that the program *intends* that participants will spend in sessions (if there are 5 residential trainings of an average of 4 days each). For Swayam's program, it is difficult to calculate even the total intended duration of "sessions", as there is no limit to the number that participants can attend, and they include campaigns, group meetings and trainings. In addition, for both CORO and Swayam it is even more difficult to calculate the approximate number of hours that participants *actually spend* in "sessions", as this must account for absences.

The second piece of information is the skill types and levels that participants *actually gain* as they progress through the program. It is only when implementors are able to correlate time spent with skills gained on an actual basis, that they can present an accurate picture of the benefits of the program to participants, and the corresponding commitment required from them. By doing so they can avoid the high levels of attrition that organizations like ECF and PRADAN have experienced which, especially in the case of the latter, may have been caused by male participants' focus on getting jobs alone, without understanding the commitment required of them to first build their skills.

Just as calculating the actual time spent in sessions is difficult, so is measuring skills, and some of the challenges were discussed earlier in the context of critical thinking. However, these challenges can be reduced to a certain extent by clearly defining the skills first, and can be compensated for by the benefits that measurement is likely to bring to both participants and programs. Programs in which progress in learning is made visible motivate participants by fulfilling the second criterion of the *How People Learn* framework.

In addition, programs that are able to clearly articulate and measure the skills that they target can both build on their strengths and address their gaps in doing so. Their skilling challenges may have already been addressed by other organizations, who have "solutions" that they can adopt and adapt. For example, the primary research found that while Swayam aims to build participants' skills in both personal and public communication, it is the latter that is its area of strength. To improve participants' interpersonal communication skills, Swayam could adopt and adapt solutions both from within the Young Men and Boys portfolio and beyond.

One source of solutions is the violence prevention programs for adolescents that were reviewed by Lundgren and Amin (2015), and were classified as "effective," "emerging," "ineffective," or "unclear" based on criteria such as the strength of evidence and replication beyond the initial pilot. Lundgren and Amin found dating violence programs, that aim to build communication and negotiation skills, as effective in preventing violence in adolescent dating relationships. However, an even better fit for Swayam could be the solution offered by Uninhibited (formerly Sukhibhava), an RNP grantee who joined the portfolio after April 2019.

Uninhibited is a civil society organization that has been working on menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) since 2014. Its primary stakeholders are women and girls, and it enables them to understand menstruation and initiate conversations around this stigmatized subject. Based on its belief that extending these conversations to other key stakeholders will lead to the reduction of stigma and the breaking of taboos around menstruation, it is now piloting its second intervention with adult men. The intervention aims to promote dialogue between its male participants and women on MHH and sexual and reproductive health, through activities that are delivered entirely remotely. These activities include providing men with audio visual content, as well as the opportunity to practice dialogue with women in their households.

Uninhibited's intervention could be appropriate for Swayam not only because of its focus on promoting dialogue within the household (and by extension, interpersonal communication skills), but also because it is delivered remotely. One of the challenges that Swayam faces is that many participants migrate for work, and this constrains Swayam's ability to implement programming (including skill development) in person with them. If Uninhibited's pilot is successful, it could be adopted and adapted by Swayam to reach (former) participants who have migrated for work.

ALTERNATIVE MASCULINITIES

"Skills for Males" was one of the two Theories of Change that informed the programs of PRADAN, Swayam and The Gender Lab. The other was the Alternative Masculinities Theory of Change. While there were some differences among the 3 programs in the aspects of the Alternative Masculinities Theory of Change that they chose to emphasize, there was a greater degree of convergence than in the case of "Skills for Males".

For PRADAN, the emphasis was on the embracing of alternative career choices by male participants, that were not influenced by gender stereotypes. For Swayam, the emphasis was on male participants expressing their feelings and emotions. The Theory of Change for The Gender Lab Boys Program combined the aspects that PRADAN and Swayam chose to emphasize, and these were that boys:

- feel comfortable expressing their emotions and being vulnerable
- make choices, take actions and behave in ways that are not influenced by gender-based stereotypes
- practice kindness and empathy

RQB ask us to determine the extent to which male adolescents and adults value the opportunity to embrace alternative masculinities, in comparison to the other benefits that the projects provided. While focus groups and interviews planned for August 2020 would have investigated the extent to which participants in The Gender Lab Boys Program were making gender non-conforming choices, as mentioned in Section VI, these could not be conducted. Therefore, limited information from The Gender Lab Boys Program is available to answer RQB.

Instead, PRADAN's *Yuwashastra* was focused on to answer RQB because the only gender-related outcome that it expected of male participants was that they would make non-conforming career choices, and therefore this was assumed to be of importance. All 27 males in the sample were asked whether there were any choices that they wanted to make in their lives, and were unable to because they were not considered gender appropriate. The purpose of this question was to ascertain whether male participants had an aspiration to embrace alternative masculinities, which would then motivate them to participate in the program. However, in the interviews male respondents (with one exception) clearly stated that there were no choices that they wanted to make in their lives, that they were unable to because they were not considered gender appropriate.

In addition, the primary research on *Yuwashastra* tried to explore gender non-conforming career choices that male participants *had* made. The decision of which careers to consider non-conforming for men and women respectively was made by PRADAN. Due to errors in the sampling frame, only 5 male participants were interviewed who had chosen non-conforming careers.

In hindsight, the methodology chosen to explore gender non-conforming career choices was both a strength and limitation of this research. On the one hand, the strength of the methodology was that it was PRADAN's local staff who decided on which careers to consider gender non-conforming. Their decisions therefore reflected the local context. For example, they decided that tailoring is considered a stereotypically feminine career choice, because in the geographic area in which *Yuwashastra* is implemented many more women work in this profession than men. Grantees reflected that this is not uniform across India, and that in another region in which more men work in tailoring than women, the classification of this profession would have to change accordingly.

On the other hand, the limitation of this methodology was that it was only the job choice that was considered, and not the conditions in which it is performed. Grantees noted that whether men see a profession as appropriate for them can depend on: 1) its economics (small vs. large scale), and 2) whether it is being pursued in a rural or urban location. Taking this limitation into account, this synthesis has given greater weight to respondents' stated beliefs about their careers, rather than their choices per se. The fact that none of these respondents themselves believed that their choice of career was gender non-conforming does support the insight that male participants did not see masculinity as a constraint to decision-making and achieving their aspirations.

Although data collection limitations also prevented the research on The Gender Lab Boys' Program from answering RQB fully, in three of the focus groups participants were asked whether there were any choices that they wanted to make in their lives, and were unable to because they were not considered gender appropriate. In two of the focus groups participants said that they did not. However, in one focus group, learning *kathak* was cited as such a choice. Similarly, although an uncommon response, some participants in Swayam's program did mention the discovery of new, stereotypically feminine interests. In other words, while some participants in male engagement programs may

recognize masculinity as a constraint to pursuing their interests, the Alternative Masculinities Theory of Change is unlikely to appeal to the majority.

SUSTAINING BENEFITS

Based on the primary research that was conducted on the Young Men and Boys portfolio, “Skills for Males” shows promise as a Theory of Change for engaging men. However, a concern is that gaining skills is only a benefit of program participation, and not of gender equality per se. Therefore, the research sought to investigate whether the ways in which male adolescents and adults believe these projects benefit them include benefits from gender equality and not just program participation.

The research found that most of the types of benefits respondents mentioned were from program participation, and not from gender equality. These included skills and an increase in motivation. The skills were communication (discussed earlier), as well as those related to handling backlash and managing anger. The motivation-related benefits mentioned by participants in PRADAN’s program were that they became more confident, courageous and persistent in pursuing their dreams, and had an increased desire to help others. However, despite feeling more motivated after RIF, most participants exited the program soon after.

One benefit of gender equality that was reported by approximately one quarter of the respondents from Swayam is that they have an improved relationship with a female family member or friend, and in most cases they attributed this to their greater participation in housework, as well as the fact that they now listened more to women and involved them in decision-making. While only one quarter of respondents mentioned this benefit, this success can be built on by Swayam and other organizations, to ensure that gaining and practicing skills (such as active listening or participatory decision-making) leads to benefits for males from gender equality. If active listening and participatory communication benefits males through improved relationships with female family members and friends, it is expected that they will then be motivated to continue to practice these skills even once they have completed the program.

UNANTICIPATED AND UNINTENDED OUTCOMES

RQA, B and D all sought to investigate the extent to which male adolescents and adults value the benefits that the “Skills for Males” and Alternative Masculinities Theories of Change focus on. The fourth research question is on the unanticipated outcomes of the programs in the Young Men and Boys portfolio. One example of an unanticipated outcome was already provided earlier in this report, which was that female participants in PRADAN’s program valued the communication skills they gained through participation in the RIF workshop (which was itself an unanticipated outcome), but that male participants did not.

This section of the report is concerned with negative outcomes of the programs that were researched. Two of these were backlash and an increase in protective behavior by male participants towards their female family members and friends, which were unintended and unanticipated respectively. While unintended outcomes can be positive or negative, the research was not able to identify examples of the former. Backlash can be considered a negative unintended outcome because it is both unsurprising and undesirable.

Phase One

In the first phase of the research, backlash was one of the negative outcomes that was identified. When an individual or group challenges a social norm, experiencing backlash is unsurprising. In section IV, a social norm was defined as stated below:

...a rule of behavior that individuals prefer to conform to on the conditions that they believe that most people in their reference network conform to it (normative expectation)...Normative expectations are often accompanied by the belief that we will be punished if we do not conform...the reaction to nonconformity may range from slight displeasure to active or even extreme punishment (2018, p. 2).

Backlash demonstrates that the social norm is still in place, and that the punishment for not conforming is real rather than just perceived. While backlash is undesirable, so is leaving the social norm unchallenged. Especially when the social norm condones child marriage or domestic violence (as in the examples below), the cost of leaving it unchallenged is high. Identifying backlash is therefore very important to making visible problematic social norms.

Action Reaction, a white paper published by Dasra in March 2019, was particularly influential in drawing our attention to the phenomenon of backlash against adolescents for expressing agency or attitudes that differ from traditional gender norms. While the paper focused on adolescent girls, it acknowledged that boys who express agency or attitudes that differ from traditional gender norms experience backlash as well. The male adolescents who were the subjects of this research validated the existence of backlash as highlighted in *Action Reaction*.

Participants in Swayam's program revealed that they faced opposition from family or community members when intervening in cases related to issues such as child marriage, domestic violence and dowry, or even when helping with housework. In some of the examples provided by participants and staff, this opposition was limited to discouraging the respondent from engaging with the program or activity. However, in the case of a child marriage which program participants stopped, some of them received threats and had to temporarily leave the community.

Similarly, when a girl in his school was raped and murdered, a program participant decided to educate the student body on gender issues but was opposed by his father and teacher. The participant then stopped answering calls from program staff, and it is possible that he was prevented from doing so. Retaliatory measures such as threats and denying access to the phone can be considered forms of backlash, and conform to its definition as, "a reaction by those who hold positions of power to attempts to change the status quo by those in less powerful positions. Such reaction could take the form of penalties for those who display non-conformist behavior or defy the status quo" (*Understanding and overcoming backlash against girls' exercise of agency in India*, n.d., p. 4).

Aside from backlash faced by male participants in Swayam's program, the other unintended outcome that this research identified was the family opposition faced by female participants in *Yuwashastra*. Gender norms that restrict women's mobility posed a substantial barrier to female participants trying to access livelihoods opportunities through this program. As a result of this barrier, women were prevented by their families from pursuing careers that required them to work outside their villages.

Beyond facing opposition to pursuing careers outside their villages, female participants did not report any retaliatory measures from their families that would constitute backlash. However, in this scenario an unintended outcome of the program was the sense of disappointment it created in some participants. It is likely that this disappointment was exacerbated by the fact that their participation in the program had raised their expectations of the careers they could pursue, which then were not fulfilled.

Aside from the examples above, the Phase 1 research was not successful in identifying unintended outcomes of the programs studied. In particular, an open-ended question asked of participants about changes experienced as a result of the program did not elicit any examples of unintended outcomes. In hindsight, the research in Phase 1 could have been improved if it was better informed by secondary sources. Before commencing Phase 1, some secondary sources were consulted but an explicit effort was not made to identify potential unintended outcomes through them. If this had been done, the open-ended question asked of respondents about changes experienced could have been supplemented with a question or questions that were more specific, and the types of respondents could have been increased.

Phase Two

A key resource on some of the potential unintended outcomes of male engagement programming, that was identified after Phase 1, was *Gender Equity and Male Engagement: It only works when everyone plays*. This report is noteworthy not only because it draws on over 150 secondary sources and 20 key informant interviews, but because it highlights unintended outcomes of male engagement programming that extend beyond backlash. While backlash is an

unintended outcome *for program participants*, this report draws attention to the results of male engagement programming *for other stakeholders*.

This report, along with the feedback from RNP, alerted us to the importance of incorporating a second phase into the research. The intention in Phase 2 was to interview stakeholders other than program participants. This intention was largely achieved, although approximately a quarter of the female respondents interviewed had also participated in a program by the same NGO as their male family member or friend had. It is possible that the female respondents who said that they had participated in the programs of CORO and PRADAN were therefore participants themselves. Nevertheless, they were also family members or friends of the male participants.

In addition to asking female respondents about any changes they had observed in male participants as a result of the program, a more specific question was asked about protective behavior. The decision to ask about protective behavior was based on one of the findings from ECF's 2017-18 evaluation report. This finding was that one of the unintended outcomes of their Action for Equality program was that it had made boys protective of their sisters, which was demonstrated in behaviors such as starting to chaperone them (Gonsalves, 2018).

Phase 2 of this research validated that an increase in protective behavior was not only an unintended outcome of Action for Equality, but a potential concern for the programs of PRADAN, Swayam and The Gender Lab as well. However, the sample size of female respondents who were aware of the programs of PRADAN and The Gender Lab were too small to arrive at any definitive conclusions. According to the female respondents, no changes in protective behavior were observed as a result of the participation of male adolescents and adults in CORO's program. However, the sample size of female respondents who were aware of CORO's program was also small.

In Phase 2 the sample size for the research on Swayam's program was larger than for the others. In addition, almost all the female respondents were aware of Swayam's program, and hence could be asked about whether they had observed any changes in the protective behaviors of male participants as a result. The rest of this section will therefore focus on Swayam's program, but will make comparisons to the programs of PRADAN and The Gender Lab as appropriate.

Male participants in Swayam's program were reported as a result to have become both more and less protective of female respondents. Male participants who had become less protective were reported to no longer restrict respondents' mobility, or autonomy to make their own decisions on friendships and love-related matters. One brother also intervened when his parents objected to his sister staying out late but not to him, pointing out the double standard involved.

Interestingly, respondents reported being satisfied regardless of whether their brother or friend had become more protective or less. However, an increase in protective behaviors such as trying to accompany respondents wherever they go, or stopping them from going to certain places, can be considered negative from the perspective that they reduce women's independence. All three female respondents who were associated with Swayam themselves said that the male participant had become less protective of them. In contrast, female participants in the programs of the other organizations reported that their male family members and friends had become more protective of them, and that they welcomed the change.

For Swayam, the results of the Phase 2 research indicate that there is some ambiguity in the messages that the program gives male participants on protective behaviors. As a result of this ambiguity, the direction of behavior change is not uniform, with participants divided between those who become more and less protective. It is therefore recommended that Swayam modifies its messaging to discourage male participants from imposing restrictions on their female friends and sisters, as ECF has done with Action for Equality. This recommendation applies to the programs of PRADAN and The Gender Lab as well.

The results of the Phase 2 research on Swayam alone indicate that it is important for them to work not only with male participants, but also directly with their female friends and sisters to ensure that they welcome being protected less. However, the sample size of female respondents who participated in Swayam's program was small, as it was for the programs of PRADAN and The Gender Lab. Unlike in Swayam's program, in the other 2 programs no relationship was

evident between the participation of the female respondent and the male participant becoming less protective. To validate whether participating in the programs of PRADAN, Swayam or The Gender Lab positively influences the attitudes of women and girls towards being protected, as well as male behavior, a larger sample size is recommended.

FEMALE RESPONDENTS ON THE PROGRAMS

In addition to identifying any outcomes that were unanticipated or unintended, Phase 2 aimed to research female respondents' knowledge, opinions and observations of the 4 programs that were studied. The results of the research on CORO, PRADAN and The Gender Lab indicate that male participants in these programs have not communicated about them extensively with their female family members and friends. Depending on the program, approximately one-third to over two-thirds of the female respondents were not aware that their male family member or friend had participated at all.

The lack of communication between male participants and their female family members and friends on the programs of CORO, PRADAN and The Gender Lab is a cause for concern because it reinforces the belief that, "gender is only for women and girls". It is possible that male participants do not talk specifically about the gender-focused programs they have participated in because they themselves are not convinced that the subject is relevant to them. This belief will also be reinforced in the minds of female respondents, if they never hear of their male family member or friend participating in a program with a gender focus.

Given that the results of the Phase 2 research on CORO, PRADAN and The Gender Lab were analyzed together, it is not surprising that respondents who were aware of any of the 3 programs used varied terms to describe their focus. These terms included, "gender discrimination", "menstruation and hygiene", "equal rights", "the safety of girls", "women's empowerment" and "gender norms and women's rights". Most of the female respondents who were aware of the programs of CORO, PRADAN or The Gender Lab were participants themselves.

In contrast, almost all the female respondents interviewed on Swayam's program in Phase 2 were aware of it. Even when the respondents who were participants themselves were excluded, female family members and friends were able to describe Swayam's work as related to women, violence against them or child marriage. That these areas of focus are relevant to the female respondents was validated through the interviews, in which they described the multiple restrictions that women and girls in these communities face, as well as the risks posed to them by child marriage and violence.

None of the respondents expressed a negative opinion of any of the 4 male engagement programs. A few of the female family members and friends who were interviewed on the programs of CORO, PRADAN and The Gender Lab mentioned that they were relevant because many people still discriminate against girls, and young people are not aware of this. Across the Phase 2 research, most responses did not specifically mention why any of the 4 programs were relevant to boys and/or men. The exceptions were respondents who said that it is especially important to educate boys on discrimination against girls, and that fathers and brothers must change their behavior at home for community-level improvements in women's lives.

The Phase 2 research sought to gather information not only on the relevance of the 4 programs (through the opinions of female respondents), but on their effectiveness as well. Effectiveness was determined based on the extent to which the interviews with female respondents validated the program outcomes identified in Phase 1. Two main outcomes were validated, of the programs of CORO, PRADAN and The Gender Lab on the one hand, and Swayam on the other.

The main outcome of the programs of CORO, PRADAN and The Gender Lab that was validated was an increase in male participants' knowledge and skills. Male participants' knowledge was reported to have increased on issues such as hunger, malnutrition, menstruation, women's empowerment and rights. As a result of the skills they gained, some of the changes described in male participants were that they had become more articulate, better public speakers and clearer thinkers. It is not surprising that with one exception, all the skills mentioned were transferable beyond the domain of male engagement, as the "Skills for Males" Theory of Change intends. The exception was a female respondent who said that the male participant had become more comfortable with and confident in talking to girls.

The main outcome that the Phase 2 research on Swayam validated was that as a result of the program, male participants had challenged the gendered division of labor, which mainly consisted of helping with housework. This outcome can have important implications for the education, economic empowerment and mobility of women and girls. Aside from helping with housework, an outcome that was reported by one respondent was that her brother had challenged the gendered division of labor by supporting her to start working outside the house, and effecting a similar change in a neighbor's home as well.

An additional change resulting from Swayam's program is worth highlighting, even though it was only mentioned by 1 respondent. This change was that community members now had more progressive attitudes towards girls' education and freedom of mobility. This change is worth highlighting because it indicates that Swayam's program has begun its progression beyond outcomes to its ultimate impact, which is community-level shifts that lead to local communities becoming places where violence against women and girls is unacceptable.

In summary, this report has drawn attention to the delicate balance that is at the heart of the "He for He" approach. If the focus is exclusively on skills that men value, there is a risk that they themselves will not see these programs as related to gender equality. As a result, if when these participants communicate with their female family members and friends they neglect to mention the gender focus of these programs, it perpetuates the impression that men do not have a role to play in achieving gender equality. At the same time, programs with a clear gender focus, such as on challenging hegemonic masculinity, risk alienating men who do not see this as a benefit. The dilemma of how to design a program that both delivers benefits that men value, and is able to clearly demonstrate their role in achieving gender equality, is explored further in the concluding section of this report.

CONCLUSIONS

This report has aimed to contribute to the global debate on the conceptualization of men's roles within male engagement programming. It has noted that on one side of this debate, the "He for He" approach is advocated for because the contention is that it captures the ways in which men's lives also improve with greater gender equality. Yet, the benefits for male adolescents are a neglected topic of research. On the other side of the debate, it has acknowledged the risk that programs that adopt the "He for He" approach will focus exclusively on challenging hegemonic masculinity, but not femininity, and therefore that men will then gain much more freedom to construct alternative identities, without these benefits extending to women. This research sought to address this debate by both exploring the benefits for male adolescents of the "He for He" approach, and the risk that they would focus exclusively on challenging hegemonic masculinity but not femininity.

The research began by reviewing, revising and analyzing the Theories of Change of the eight grantees that were part of the Young Men and Boys portfolio of RNP in April 2019. This analysis revealed two ways in which they conceptualize the reasons for male adolescents to engage, and how they would benefit from doing so. The first conceptualizes male adolescents as being constrained by hegemonic masculinity in their choices, actions and behaviors. They are therefore willing to engage in programs through which they can challenge hegemonic masculinity, so that they are free to make choices, act and behave in ways that they aspire to. This conceptualization was termed the Alternative Masculinities Theory of Change. The second conceptualization that is reflected in the Theories of Change is that male adolescents engage with these programs because through the process of participation, they gain skills that are valuable to them. This conceptualization was termed the "Skills for Males" Theory of Change.

Primary research on 3 programs that are informed by the Alternative Masculinities Theory of Change found that the majority of male participants do not view masculinity as a constraint. Therefore, the Alternative Masculinities Theory of Change unfortunately does not provide a compelling reason for male adolescents to engage. The positive implication of this finding is that there is little risk that male adolescents will focus exclusively on challenging hegemonic masculinity but not femininity.

Although the Alternative Masculinities Theory of Change did not prove compelling for male adolescents, based on feedback from the grantees it was agreed that it is nevertheless appropriate to retain. The rationale for retaining the Alternative Masculinities Theory of Change was that it creates the space for men and boys to recognize their own vulnerabilities and privileges, which leads to challenging hegemonic masculinity, and greater freedom for male adolescents to make choices, act and behave in ways that they aspire to (which is what the 3 programs are ultimately trying to achieve). In retaining the Alternative Masculinities Theory of Change, the question again arises of the risk that male adolescents will focus exclusively on challenging hegemonic masculinity but not femininity. Grantees agreed that an important strategy for them to mitigate this risk is to be accountable to women and women's movements.

At the same time, grantees acknowledged that the "Skills for Males" Theory of Change is valued more highly by male adolescents and other stakeholders than the Alternative Masculinities Theory of Change. Therefore, male engagement programs should be informed by both Theories of Change. Participants should be enabled to gain transferable skills initially, and later identify and work towards aspirations that are constrained by masculinity. This feedback from grantees aligns with the findings from the synthesis.

The "Skills for Males" Theory of Change shows promise for two reasons. Firstly, respondents named improved communication as the main way in which they had benefited personally from the programs they had participated in, which is evidence that gaining this skill is already a motivator for male adolescents and adults. Secondly, these programs have the potential to further improve their ability to motivate adolescents through the four paths in the *How People Learn* framework.

This report has discussed in detail how programs can better address the first two paths (knowledge and assessments). The third path to motivation is for adolescents to feel that they are a valued part of communities. Examples of such communities are the peer groups in the programs of both CORO and Swayam, and the CBOs in the case of the former. There is also potential for other programs like ECF's Action for Equality to begin integrating peer groups into their program, which they are considering doing.

The fourth path in the framework is "learners", which contains the idea that adolescents will be motivated when courses provide interesting challenges to their preconceptions. The programs in the portfolio that build critical thinking already do this. However, this focus must be made more explicit within programs (both in how it is conveyed and measured), for it to be identifiable and valued by participants.

While the "Skills for Males" Theory of Change has the potential to engage male adolescents for the above reasons, there is a concern that it only envisions benefits that will be achieved through the process of program participation, rather than from gender equality per se. Therefore, the research sought to investigate whether the ways in which male adolescents and adults believe these projects benefit them include benefits from gender equality, and not just program participation. One benefit of gender equality that was reported by approximately one quarter of the respondents from Swayam is that they have an improved relationship with a female family member or friend, and in most cases they attributed this to their greater participation in housework, as well as the fact that they now listened more to women and involved them in decision-making. While only one quarter of respondents mentioned this benefit, this success can be built on by Swayam and other organizations, to ensure that gaining and practicing skills (such as active listening or participatory decision-making) leads to benefits for males from gender equality. If active listening and participatory communication benefits males through improved relationships with female family members and friends, it is expected that they will then be motivated to continue to practice these skills even once they have completed the program.

Finally, this report would not be complete without making recommendations for further research. The first recommendation is to both support and research more multi-year programs, given that evidence from this synthesis indicates that program cycles of one year or less are insufficient to achieve the long-term changes that most of the male engagement programs studied sought to bring about. The second is to continue to employ qualitative methods, as this research found that they are effective in measuring changes in male participants' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors.

Both the recommendations to research multi-year programs and use qualitative methods are based on the understanding that progress towards gender equality is slow and hard to measure, and that insisting on change that can be measured quantitatively in a short time period is counter-productive. While there are several research questions that could be pursued, four are highlighted below (the first has two parts).

- 1a. How diverse are participants in male engagement programs in India, in terms of their socio-economic status, caste, cultural and/or religious identities? How does this diversity within a program influence the ways in which participants receive it, and the outcomes it is able to achieve? How does this diversity across programs influence the ways in which participants receive them, and the outcomes they are able to achieve?
- 1b. Do marginalized and privileged men differ from one another in their ability to empathize with discrimination against women and girls, and/or the basis on which they do so? If so, what are the implications for male engagement programming?
2. How do male engagement programs in India perceive the relationship between gender-based and other forms of violence? To what extent do these perceptions align with those of participants? What (if any) are the challenges that result from differences between program and participant perspectives? How can solutions to these challenges be informed by both the literature on violence, and programmatic innovations from other contexts?
3. What are the lessons from the education sector, that can inform a developmental approach to male engagement programming? How (if at all) have these lessons been adapted and adopted by short duration programs?
4. The male engagement programs on which this synthesis was based have focused to a greater extent on engaging men and boys in peer groups rather other potential influencers such as older male family members. To what extent is this choice of focus supported by the secondary literature on behavior change for gender equality and social norms?

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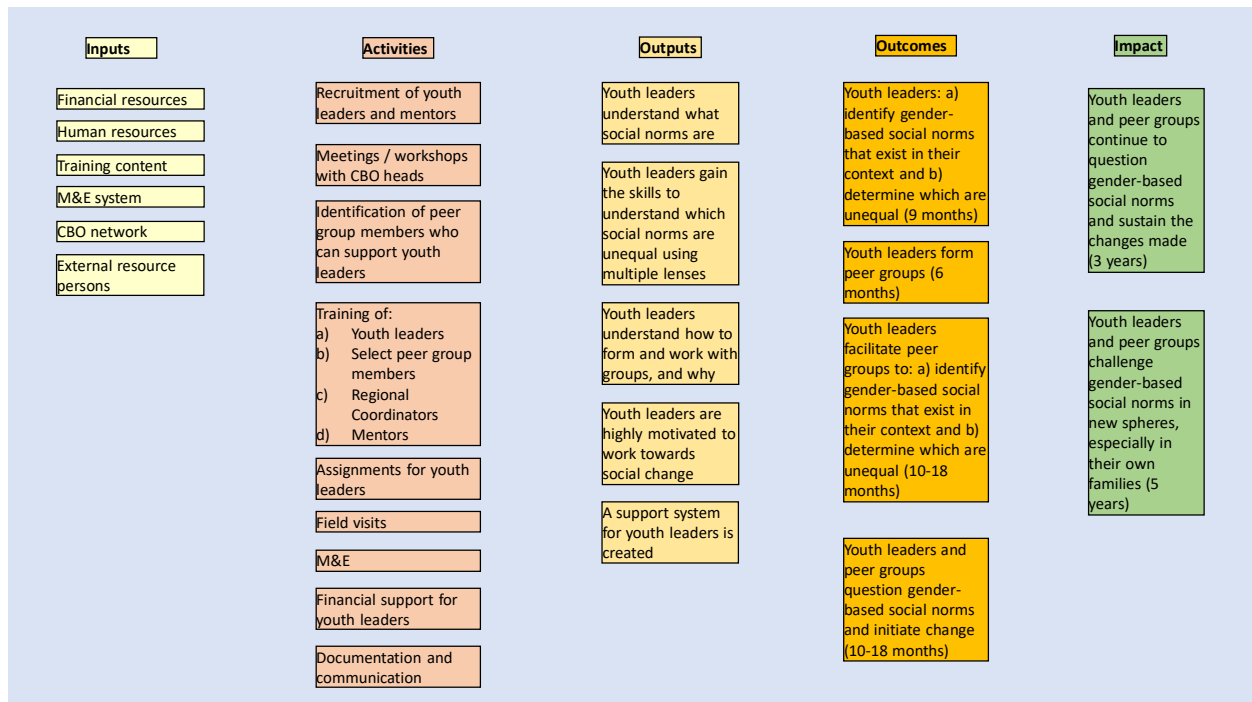
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ANNEXES

ANNEX I: THEORIES OF CHANGE FOR MALE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

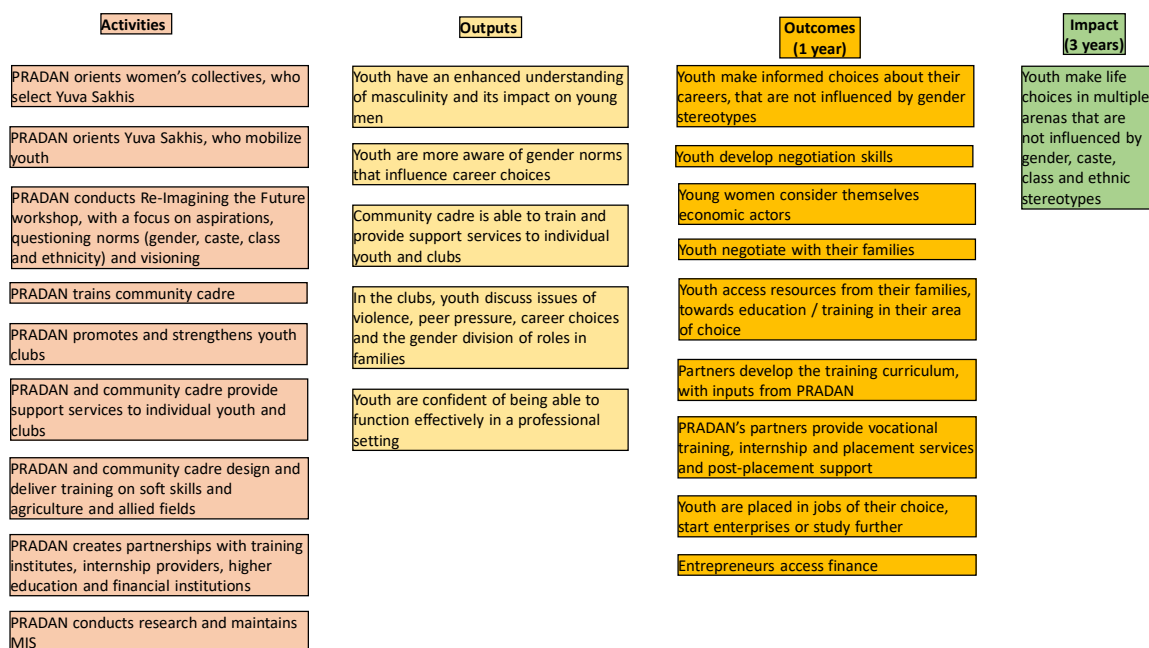
CORO's Theory of Change: Results Chain Diagram



The assumptions that are key to this Theory of Change are:

- CORO is able to select youth leaders who: a) are motivated, b) are retained, and c) identify strong peer group members and communicate effectively with them
- Youth leaders reinforce their own learning by working with peer groups
- CORO's training and delivery are effective enough for all leaders to achieve the outcomes and impacts described in the Theory of Change
- Without the support of CORO, youth leaders and peer groups will continue to work towards social equality if they have the support of their families, CBOs and other institutions in the community

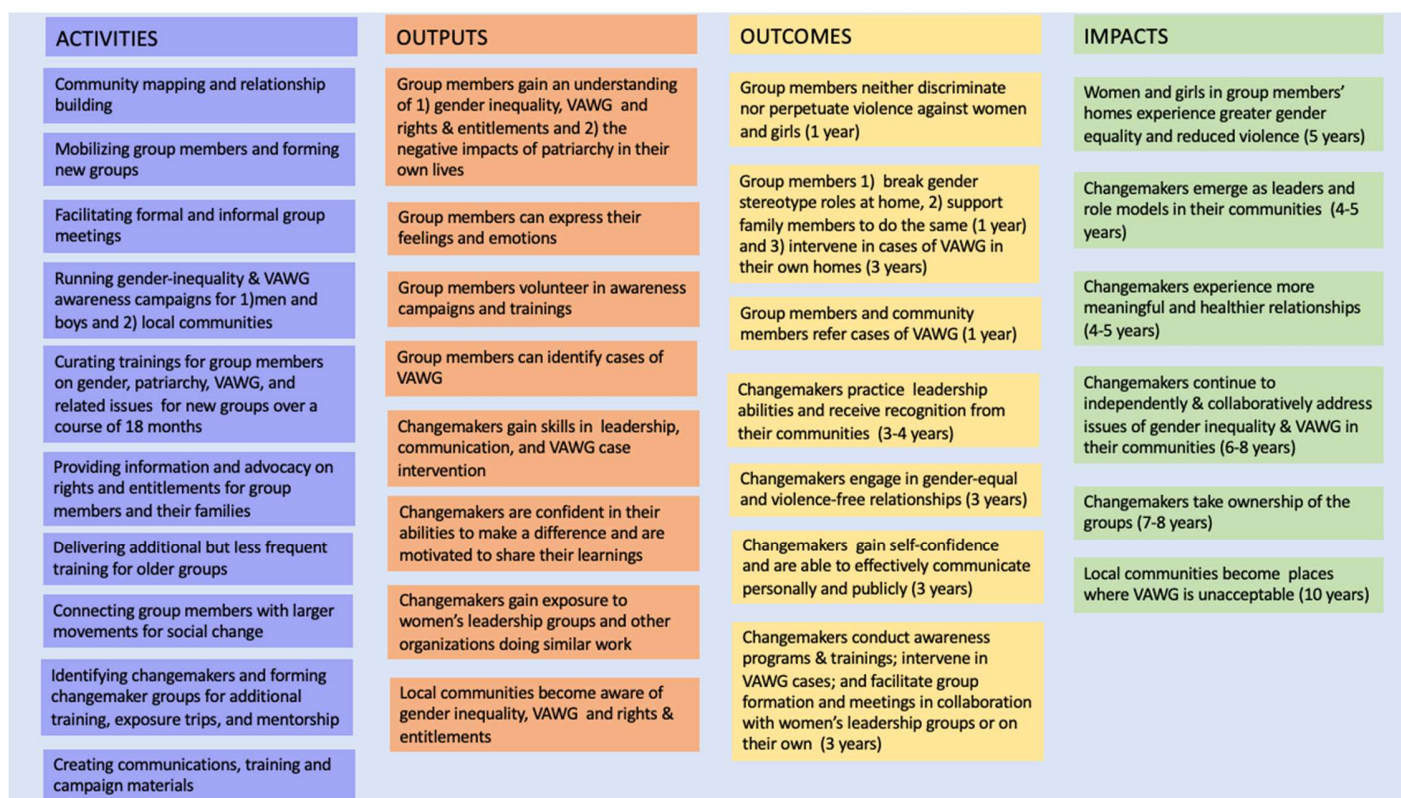
PRADAN's Theory of Change: Results Chain Diagram



The assumptions that are key to this Theory of Change are:

- RIF and the support services provided are sufficient for youth to make informed choices about the careers that they would like to pursue. In addition, because PRADAN demonstrates the breaking of stereotypes, youth are confident of being able to do so in their own careers.
- If youth are able to negotiate for their career choices logically, and have the support of an organization with credibility in their village, parents will provide resources towards their education or training.
- Partnerships with placement services will result in jobs for youth, in their areas of choice (placement services are able to cater to the choices of all or most youth, and ensure jobs).

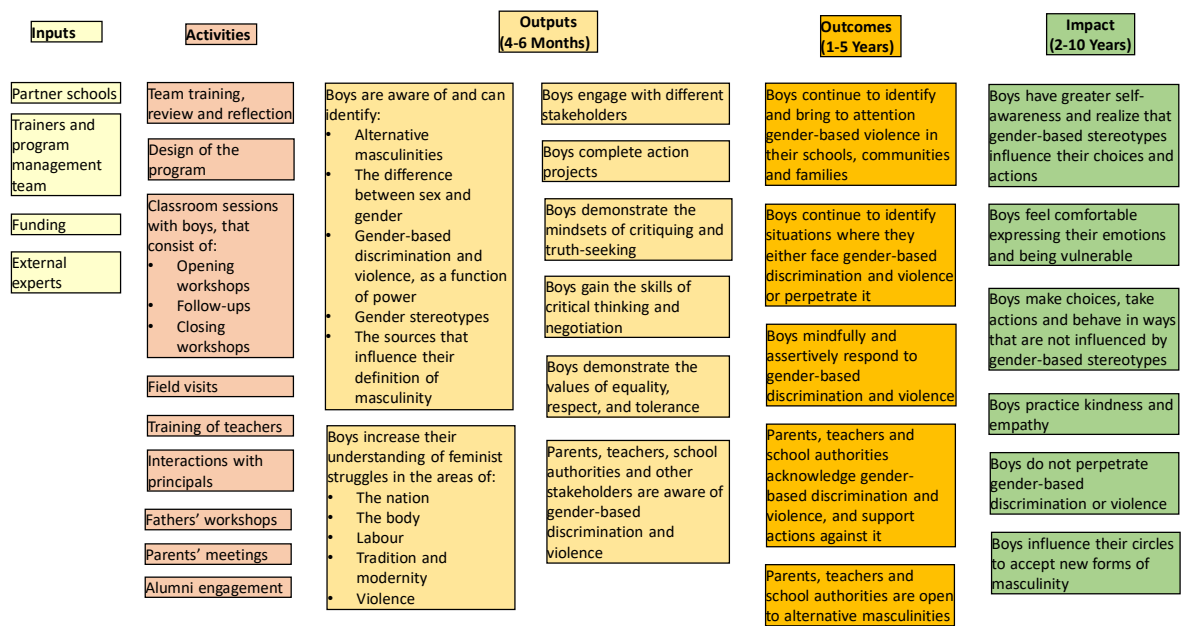
Swayam's Theory of Change: Results Chain Diagram



The assumptions that are key to this Theory of Change are:

- Changemakers who participate in all types of activities with Swayam are able to navigate the following constraints and/or contestations: time, opportunity (to practice), personal motivation and family opposition.
- The risk of staff turnover will not be substantial, so that Swayam is able to consistently invest in changemakers.
- The secular, constitutional-rights based approach of Swayam will make changemakers and group members receptive to the trainings.
- Using a secular, constitutional-rights based approach, Swayam staff will show changemakers how to negotiate and adapt strategies, and not abandon their work when faced with political or religious opposition.
- In the context of an unfavourable political climate in a local community, Swayam staff will not completely disengage with group members. Rather, they will adapt the frequency and locations of their activities—among other strategies—to continue to support group members.

The Gender Lab's Theory of Change: Results Chain Diagram



The assumptions that are key to this Theory of Change are:

- Because boys feel restricted by the choices currently available to them, they are willing to give up the power that patriarchy gives them for the freedom to make choices that do not conform to traditional notions of masculinity.
- Through doing projects boys internalize (better understand and practice) what they have learnt. In turn, boys who internalize what they have learnt through the program then make choices in their everyday lives and career aspirations that do not conform to traditional notions of masculinity.
- Boys complete projects due to the following factors: a) their own motivation, b) support / pressure from peers, parents and schools, and c) because they personally connect with the workshop content.

ANNEX II: THE CURRICULUM OF CORO'S YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Training Modules:

- The self and one's context - This module focuses on understanding the self and one's socio-cultural context, including the prevailing gender perspectives. This involves writing one's own story and also the socio-physical mapping of one's community. It undertakes a construction, deconstruction of gender and on locating spaces of intervention for reconstruction within the lived context of the fellows.
- Gender and Constitutional Rights - This module focuses on a deeper understanding of gender, power relations and the patriarchal structure in society. It explores the manifestations of gender discrimination and understanding gender rights. It builds awareness on constitutional rights and responsible citizenship.
- Relationship, Sexual Health and Gender Based Violence - This module focuses on understanding the body and the mind, sexuality, diversity, importance of relationships and emotions management. It examines sexual anxieties and risk-taking behaviour as this was observed as a significant concern among young men. Linkages between gender, gender-based violence and sexuality are also explored.
- Leadership and Societal Contribution - This module focuses on motivation, qualities of leadership and on value-based leadership while emphasising the need for working at the level of the 'mental construct' rather than external events and patterns. The development of 'process proposals' over 'project proposals' for long term social change is introduced and practised.
- Life Skills – Essential skills in communication, research, community mobilisation, and team building are covered. Stress and emotions management are given priority. The module also introduces fellows to the need, ways and skills for advocacy. Specialised topics of participatory communication, participatory research and the Right to Information (RTI) act are also covered.

ANNEX III: THE CURRICULUM OF THE FOUNDATION STAGE OF ECF'S ACTION FOR EQUALITY

Modules	Content
1-2	Game Events
3	Understanding Expectations
4	Human Rights Are For Everyone
5	Understanding Gender
6	Gender Equality
7	Adolescent Changes
8	Gender and Sexuality
9	Gender and Health
10	Violence and Manhood
11	Sexual Violence
12	Healthy Relationships
13	Reflection
14	Preparation for Action Event
15	Action Event