

CARING FOR EQUALITY



A World Vision Armenia manual to work with men, women and youth in the promotion of gender equality and the prevention of prenatal sex selection



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About World Vision

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision's work in gender and development focuses on relationships among men and women, boys and girls in the context of their families and communities and shares Christian ideas of reconciliation and justice. www.worldvision.org or www.wvi.org.

About Promundo

Founded in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1997, Promundo works to promote caring, non-violent and equitable masculinities and gender relations internationally. Promundo works to achieve this mission by conducting applied research to build the knowledge base on masculinities and gender equality; developing, evaluating and scaling-up gender transformative interventions and programs; and carrying out national and international advocacy to achieve gender equality and social justice. Promundo's work focuses on transforming gender norms and masculinities in the institutions where they are constructed (such as schools and the workplace), in high-violence and post-conflict settings; and by promoting men's involvement as gender-equitable caregivers and involved fathers, as partners in women's economic empowerment, and as advocates in the prevention of sexual exploitation and violence. www.promundoglobal.org

About MenCare

MenCare is a global campaign coordinated by Promundo and Sonke Gender Justice to promote men's equitable involvement as caregivers in the lives of their partners and children. MenCare's partners work at community, national, and regional levels by advocating for more gender equitable policies related to caregiving and developing and adapting programs to work with fathers and their partners to prevent violence against women and children. www.men-care.org

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Introduction and Background to Prenatal Sex Selection

Prenatal sex selection—choosing to continue or terminate a pregnancy based on the baby’s sex—is one of the most blatant forms of gender-based violence (GBV). Like other forms of GBV, prenatal sex selection is complex. It is rooted in patriarchy—where men receive unearned rights and privileges over women, cultural preference for sons, and harmful, strict ideas about the roles and responsibilities that men and women can fulfill in society.

Research shows that three preconditions must be met in order for prenatal sex selection to occur: first, a preference for having boys as opposed to girls, second, access and use of prenatal sex determination technology (example: sonograms), and third, a declining birth rate. In Armenia, all of these preconditions are met.¹

Sex ratio at birth is considered to be skewed when it exceeds the biological norm of 104-106 male births per 100 female births. Unequal sex ratios at birth were first documented in South and East Asian countries in the 1980s and have been on the rise in the South Caucasus since the 1990s. The current sex ratio at birth in Armenia remains at the shockingly high level of 114 male births per 100 female births—one of the most imbalanced sex ratios at birth in the world.²

Every year, more than 1,400 girls are unborn in Armenia because of this practice. If the country’s prenatal sex selection rates remain unchanged, 93,000 women will be missing by 2060.³ For a small country with a population of just over 3 million, this can have a serious negative social, demographic, and health implications.

In other countries, prenatal sex selection has led to bitter consequences, including forced prostitution, trafficking for the purposes of marriage or sexual exploitation and other human rights violations, overall increase in crime, and a rising migration of men looking for female partners.

Global evidence shows that social norms related to higher male authority and female obedience strongly correlate to the levels of GBV.⁴ The intensity of traditional patriarchal norms in a society is linked with higher level of male births, varying between regions even within one country.⁵

¹ UNFPA Armenia, 2013. [Factsheet on Sex Imbalances at Birth in Armenia](#).

² Guilmo, Christophe Z., 2013. [Sex Imbalances at Birth in Armenia](#)

³ UNFPA Armenia, 2013. [Study on Gender Imbalances at Birth in Armenia](#)

⁴ Heise, Lori L., 2011. [What Works to Prevent Partner Violence: An evidence overview](#)

⁵ Guilmo, Christophe, 2012. [Sex selection, son preference, and kinship structures in Viet Nam](#)

While decades of socialism in Armenia promoted some forms of gender equality, like universal access to education and employment, it did little to reduce inequalities within the family. So, what are families' reasons for preferring sons?

In World Vision's research, Armenian men and women strongly emphasize the role of a male offspring in continuing family's lineage, as provider of income for the household, and as a supportive resource for aging parents. Sons are viewed as assets and pillars of the household, whereas daughters are often considered liabilities who cease to belong to their native family after marriage.

To combat prenatal sex selection, World Vision's work in Armenia focuses on examining and challenging harmful gender attitudes and practices that support son preference. In partnership with Promundo, World Vision has developed this curriculum to work with men, women, and youth to examine, question, and transform social norms.

By participating in a series of carefully structured group sessions, participants find space for personal reflection, respectful dialogue, and activities that challenge harmful beliefs about gender and power, promote shared decision-making between couples, and encourage men's engagement in caregiving. In these sessions, participants are also encouraged to discuss what they have learned with their family members and peer groups, further spreading the positive messages promoted from within the group setting.

Prenatal sex selection is harmful for men and women, hindering progress toward gender equality and contributing to human rights violations. To shift attitudes, change behaviors, and reverse this trend, men and women must be thoughtfully involved in examining, questioning, and changing norms in their society, family, and selves that contribute to this destructive practice.

About the Manual

Why is this manual helpful... when working with men and boys, alongside women

and girls on the prevention of prenatal sex selection? World Vision in Armenia aims to engage men and boys alongside women and girls as an integral part of its approach to prevent harmful practices and promote the overall well-being of their communities. However, resources providing a programmatic approach to doing so were lacking, particularly with regard to the prevention of prenatal sex selection and the engagement of men and boys. Thus this manual was developed by Promundo based on its own best practices and with input from World Vision Armenia's key stakeholders.

When hearing the phrase “gender equality” most think of empowering women and girls, and for good reason. Women and girls suffer disproportionately and are more at risk for harmful practices including early marriage and prenatal sex selection, and are more likely to face intimate partner or gender-based violence. But more can be done to propel the advancement of gender equality forward. The engagement of men and boys as part of the solution is imperative for two reasons.

The first is that in order for the empowerment of women and girls to continue advancing socially, politically, economically, and educationally, men and boys must see themselves as allies in the process. As those with often the most power in Armenian society, men can use their influence to ensure that women and girls share access to and control over opportunities and resources that contribute to a successful future. As caregivers, men can teach their sons and daughters about equality. As partners, they can learn to resolve conflict with intimate partners without using violence, and make decisions together that benefit the family as a whole. As activists, men can challenge communities' inequitable perceptions of daughters versus sons, and interrupt the cycle of violence against women, including the harmful practice of prenatal sex selection.

The second reason is that men and boys stand to gain a lot when harmful gender norms are challenged. For example, men who believe that physical force is needed to assert dominance over others, and that men should not cry or seek help, perpetuate gender inequalities that affect men's own well-being. Men as beneficiaries of gender equality are in a unique position to break down these harmful stereotypes by working with other men and boys. By creating spaces for men to critically reflect on harmful ideas around masculinity, the objective of this manual is to give men and boys alongside women and girls the skills and awareness they need to redefine for themselves healthier, more positive versions of manhood.

What does this manual contain? This manual contains 14 activity-based sessions to implement with couples and young men and women (ages 14-18), which have been adapted to the Armenian context. These sessions can be implemented with mixed-gender groups, provided the facilitator is trained on how to ensure safe spaces for women and girls in these settings.

(Tips can be found on the following pages and at the beginning of each session regarding the facilitation of mixed gender groups.) Specific topics addressed in this manual include gender and power dynamics, caregiving and shared household decision-making; and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, including the prevention of pre-natal sex selection.

Additionally, this manual includes a support worksheet following the final activity, designed to guide those participants who want to effect gender norms change at the community level and transform how their societies value sons over daughters. It outlines 10 steps to design and launch a community mobilization campaign. These steps can be adapted to various contexts.

Finally, this manual is accompanied by a journal, which can be printed out and distributed to participants, or recreated using available paper or notebooks. Each participant is encouraged to keep a journal throughout the 14 sessions in order to reflect on key personal takeaways during or after the session, as well as to record reflections from assigned homework. When the group ends, this journal will serve as a valuable keepsake, to remind participants of what they have learned and discussed, to take with them into their own lives.

How was it developed? Promundo developed this manual with guidance from World Vision Armenia and World Vision United States. In June 2014, Promundo and World Vision United States led an introductory gender training with World Vision Armenia staff and facilitators on the topic of engaging men in gender equality and the prevention of prenatal sex selection, attended by World Vision staff and partners. This training served to introduce participants to gender transformative program approaches, present research findings on the topic of prenatal sex-selection, to build participants' facilitation skills and to test and solicit feedback on a variety of activities designed to promote critical reflection on the root causes of prenatal sex selection. Feedback from this training was utilized to identify key audiences, recommended activities and adaptations that was then incorporated into a draft manual.

Between July and December 2014, each of the selected sessions was then field-tested amongst World Vision Armenia staff themselves, as well as with both youth and couples in Yerevan and Amasia, Armenia. The feedback from this field-testing was then provided to Promundo who used it to further refine the sessions, as well as the 'General Guidelines' provided. The full manual was, then reviewed by World Vision staff in Armenia and United States, finalized by Promundo, and translated and edited into Armenian.

Who is it for? This manual is designed to be used by facilitators and peer educators who are implementing group education with couples and young men and women (ages 14-18) in Armenia. These facilitators may work on issues related to gender equality, gender-based violence prevention, fatherhood and caregiving, as well as on related issues such as sexual and reproductive health and maternal health.

Because of the challenging nature of facilitating group education on these topics in a way that promotes personal reflection, respectful dialogue and changing attitudes and behaviors, facilitators should participate in a training of trainers and a supervised practicum in addition to receiving this manual. At the beginning of each of the activities, there are important notes for facilitators that serve as valuable background information for the accompanying activities. Furthermore, these introductory pages have been created specifically to provide additional background information for trainers and program coordinators.

How should it be used? This manual has been divided into three separately-themed sections (see following pages). Each section contains anywhere from 3 to 5 activities, or sessions, that explore that specific theme. These themes can be consulted altogether or separately, depending on the needs of the organization. However, it is highly advised that the first section, on ‘Gender and Power Dynamics,’ be included in any varying implementation of this manual. Additionally, the first session, entitled ‘The Intro Session – Why am I here?’ can be used as the introductory session to any program.

It is important to note that this manual does not take an exhaustive look at each of the themed sections. Should the user of this manual wish to add additional activity-based sessions, Promundo’s website (www.promundoglobal.org) offers a variety of activities and resources for young men and women (Program H and Program M) as well as for expectant fathers and couples (Program P). The sessions themselves can be freely adapted to reflect local needs and experiences, though many of them have already undergone adaptation to fit the Armenian context.

What is the goal and main objectives of this manual? This manual’s overall goal is to contribute to the prevention of prenatal sex selection in Armenian families and communities. Many of the activities, which can be conducted with both youth and with couples, seek to address the underlying roots of son preference by challenging harmful gender norms, specifically around masculinity; by promoting the inherent equality of girls and boys and value of girl children; as well as by thoughtfully engaging men and boys as allies in gender equality. More specifically, it aims to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards gender equality, and the understanding of gender equality as a “win-win” for all (women, men, boys and girls), by deconstructing harmful masculinities and femininities.
- Build men’s and boys’ skills to redefine for themselves what it means to be a man - a definition that rejects violence, respects women and girls, and shares decision-making power.
- Create safe spaces for cross-gender dialogue between men and women in order to build mutual understanding of the challenges (and opportunities) each face in their day-to-day lives.

- Encourage men and boys and women and girls to become – either now or in the future – involved, active parents who participate in creating gender equal households for both daughters and sons; fostering open and emotional connections between themselves and their partners as well as with their daughters and sons.
- Work with men and boys as allies with women and girls in the fight to end all forms of gender-based violence and prenatal sex selection.

Section and Purpose

Introductory Activity: The facilitator and participants make introductions and discuss ground rules and format for carrying out future activities. This session aims to promote trust, confidentiality and respect within the group.

Section 1: Gender and Power Dynamics (3 sessions): Participants reflect on how society and culture influence ideas of what it means to be men and women, and begin to redefine for themselves healthier versions of manhood and womanhood while gaining an understanding of how power inequalities between men and women perpetuate harmful practices including prenatal sex selection and violence.

Section 2: Parenting, Caregiving and Shared Decision-making (5 sessions): Participants learn the importance of creating emotional connections between themselves and their partners and children, reflect on the uneven burden of domestic work and child care on women, and begin to understand the importance of shared decision-making with their partner.

Section 3: Violence, Peaceful Families and Communities (4 sessions): Participants learn what violence is – including violence against women and prenatal sex selection, gain new skills in communicating with intimate partners and resolving conflict peacefully, and gain the courage to speak out against daily injustices.

Closing Activity: The facilitator and participants reflect on the previous sessions and plan how they will promote the messages and the experiences of gender transformative change with the larger community.

An Ecological Model Perspective

Though this manual aims to transform harmful norms around gender and masculinity with individuals and couples, it is important to recognize that these transformative messages should be reinforced via the implementation of other types of interventions as well. Using the Ecological Model, program designers can better understand how harmful practices and gender inequality are perpetuated at multiple levels of society, and the potential impact of various prevention strategies.

Some examples of how group education methodologies such as those provided in this manual could be coupled with larger awareness-raising activities:

- Staging dramas or other types of performances in the community that depict the harmful effects of using violence against women, including the practice of prenatal sex selection
- Creating posters that promote positive images of men caring for children (both boys and girls) and their partners (see the Global MenCare Campaign – www.men-care.org)
- Going door-to-door as peer educators to share information on ways to promote gender equality and end prenatal sex selection
- Influencing religious leaders and community chiefs to spread positive messages

The Supporting Worksheet for Activity 14: After the Group – Creating a Community Campaign, provides ten steps necessary to launch a community mobilization campaign.

This manual can also be used at the **institutional level** by:

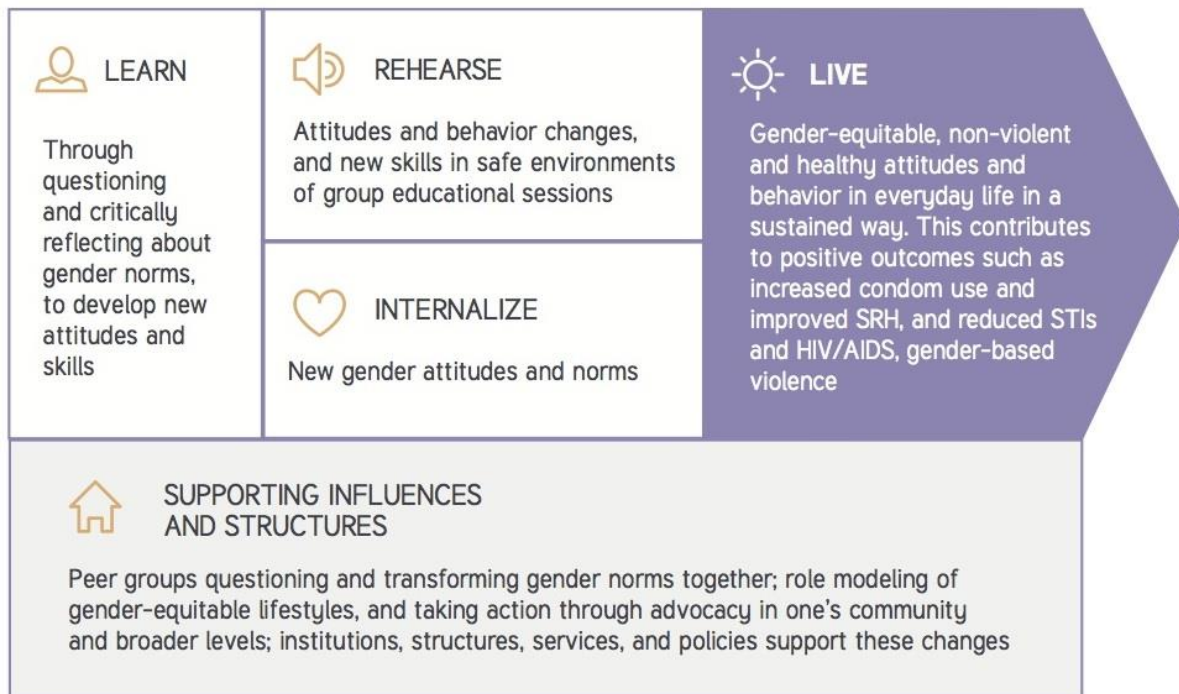
- Training and sensitizing health care providers on the responsibility of men as supportive partners in ensuring a healthy pregnancy; and to promote messages of gender equality with expectant mother and fathers
- Sensitizing teachers on the importance of speaking out if they witness incidents of sexual exploitation and violence against students even if committed by their colleagues; and on the importance of treating both male and female students with equal respect and opportunity to thrive in the classroom
- Sensitizing government officials on the importance of gender equality and men's engagement, as well as on specific policies, which may seek to advance the gender equality agenda (through accountability for perpetrators of violence, economic and educational opportunities, specifically for women, and policies that encourage the provision of men's caregiving, etc.)

In short, group education should not be done in isolation, but in addition to other initiatives that aim to raise and broaden awareness around gender equality issues. These efforts should also be done in collaboration with other stakeholders including other organizations including women's rights organizations working on complementary topics and issues. This increases the probability that positive messages about gender equality will be echoed from multiple spaces.

Below is a **Theory of Change model** that hypothesizes, from an ecological model perspective, how gender transformation happens.⁶ According to this model, men and women (1) learn through questioning and critical reflection about gender norms, (2) rehearse equitable and nonviolent attitudes and behaviors in a comfortable space, and (3) internalize these new gender attitudes and norms, applying them in their own relationships and lives. Supporting institutions and structures reinforce these gender equitable norms and messages and provide individuals and organizations involved with the tools to become agents of change for gender

⁶ Adapted from a model created by Sophie Namy at the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).

justice and social justice. Ultimately, this process contributes to gender equity and attitude and behavior change.



For Program Coordinators and Managers: *General Guidelines for Implementing the Manual*

1. Understand and ‘buy into’ the following when seeking to engage men and boys in gender equality⁷

- Women and men are equal. It is important to fully support gender equality and women’s empowerment. A more equal world benefits women, men, girls, and boys.
- Men can change and have a capacity for nonviolence. When women and men work together, it is possible to find peaceful solutions to conflicts between people, groups and countries.
- Like women, many men are made vulnerable by unhealthy beliefs about manhood. From a young age, boys and young men are punished both physically and emotionally for not conforming to harmful stereotypes of manhood.
- In order to achieve gender equality, men must be part of the solution.

2. Pick effective facilitators

It is important to remember that a facilitator is not someone who has all the answers. Instead, he or she is someone who can create a safe environment, listens and who can encourage respectful, honest discussion. In order to accomplish this, the facilitator should be trained to manage group dynamics and conflicts within the group, and create a safe, trusting environment. In addition though, they must have a solid understanding of basic concepts on gender and masculinity, and basic knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and caregiving. To ensure that all facilitators are prepared and informed, implementing organizations and qualified trainers should conduct a training of facilitators, and should include a “practicum” where new facilitators practice leading group sessions with support and supervision.

Prior to implementing groups, it is also important for facilitators to have participated in their own systematic process of self-reflection and awareness-raising to examine and expand their own beliefs and behaviors on these topics. Many of the activities that are included in this manual touch on participants’ personal qualities and sensitive life experiences. Therefore, groups should be led by facilitators who are comfortable working with these issues, have experience in working with parents and/or youth, and have the support of their organizations and/or other professionals.

The facilitator should also be alert to the possibility that participants may require specific attention apart from the group and, in some cases, may require referral to professional services and guidance counseling.

⁷ Inspired by text from the MenEngage Alliance (www.menengage.org)

3. Male or female facilitators?

Ideally, sessions should be carried out by two facilitators—one male and one female. This models for the group that men and women can work together respectfully. However, this is often not possible. So, consider the needs of the group and the skills of your facilitator. For example, men may find it difficult to open up in the presence of a female facilitator and vice versa. In either case, it is important to have a facilitator who will listen and serve as a model for gender equitable behavior and attitudes, who can motivate the group and encourage self-reflection—regardless of whether the facilitator is a man or a woman.

4. How many sessions should there be? How long should a session last?

If all sessions are conducted, the entire program should span 14 weeks with group meetings held once per week. Each session should be no more than two hours long in order to respect participants' time and availability.

The duration of a group education program can range from a single discussion group to ongoing weekly sessions. The practice of conducting several sessions, with a brief rest period of a few days to a week between each session, seems to be the most effective; it allows participants time to reflect and apply the topics discussed in real life scenarios, and then return to the group and continue the dialogue.

5. Where should the groups take place?

The venue where the groups take place should be neutral and convenient for participants. For example, never have a meeting at the home of an authority figure, or in a space that is unfriendly to female or male participants. Carry out sessions in a safe and quiet environment where others cannot listen in as they walk by and where no group member will claim ownership over the space or have control over others. Consider arranging use of rooms in churches, community centers (if there are any), or the waiting room of a health clinic during off hours.

6. What is the ideal number of participants?

Groups of 5 to 15 participants are recommended. If classes are inclusive of couples, a minimum of 4 couples and a maximum of 10 should be invited to participate. If there are more, consider adjusting the activities to encourage more small group discussion to allow everyone space to share and voice opinions.

7. Group composition: Mixed or separate groups for men and women?

All of the sessions in this manual can be done with youth or couples, mixed separate groups for men and women, and each session contains targeted tips for working with mixed groups. All options are fine, and educators, facilitators, teachers and professionals must encourage interactions that promote respect and equality regardless of the composition of the group.

Mixed groups allow women and men to hear each other's perspectives. They can also serve to bridge the communication gap between men and women by providing the opportunity for both

to collaboratively explore and understand their relationships and personal gender attitudes with the guidance of a skilled facilitator.

Although mixed groups provide unique advantages, in some cases it is best to work with men and women separately. Some men may feel more comfortable or safer discussing topics such as sexuality and violence, or expressing their emotions, without the presence of women; and similarly some women may feel more comfortable talking about intimate matters in single gender environments. On the other hand, there are also some young men and women who may be more engaged in discussing certain topics if both men and women are included in the discussion.

In summary, experience has shown that both mixed and separate groups can have a positive impact. Therefore, the model should be chosen in response to the needs of the specific context in which the program will be implemented and the needs of the participants themselves. In either case, ideally groups will include participants coming from a variety of household and family dynamics, which will also help to enrich discussions. For example, those coming from families that: only have boys, only have girls, have both boys and girls, or those where the wife is working, and the man is not, where the family lives with grandparents, and vice versa can help bring a diversity of experiences to the group.

Prior to facilitating mixed groups it is essential that trainers and facilitators take steps to ensure the safety and security of female participants. Without proper preparation and training, there is the potential for group members to (re) victimize women and girls (either purposefully or unintentionally).

During the training, trainers and facilitators can work together to ensure this safe space for women and girls by:

- Prior to implementation, conducting a focus group with women and girls from the community on what would make them feel safe and listened to in these sessions;
- Practicing effective listening skills in the training of trainers events and building that into the sessions themselves;
- Consulting women-led NGOs that engage men and boys in their programs on how to create safe spaces in mixed gender settings;
- Consulting other gender transformative manuals and publications such as resources available at www.menengage.org for additional guidelines on mixed group sessions;
- Gathering feedback from the female participants separately from the men at the end of each session to understand how they felt that particular session went, and how you can improve as a facilitator to manage these group dynamics;
- Reviewing the ground rules at the beginning and during each session.

Additionally, take time to do some brainstorming with the trainers and facilitators to gather further ideas on how to create these safe spaces for dialogue and reflection.

For Facilitators:

Additional Tips and Running Each Session

1. Getting those who are quiet to speak up and others to respect their fellow participants' time

Encourage everyone to participate. This is one of your main jobs as a facilitator. It is up to you to get those who need to listen and those who ought to speak to do so. Encourage people to share their experiences, and learn to identify when people want to speak, but may be too shy to say something unless called upon.

If a participant begins to take over a group by spending too much time with a story, find an opening and kindly say, "It sounds like you have a lot of valuable experiences to share with the group. That is great! Do others have similar or different stories they would also like to share?" This technique can be used in any session.

2. Talking about sensitive and difficult issues

It is important that you feel comfortable talking about sensitive and personal issues. For this reason it is recommended that you participate in self-reflection exercises prior to each activity to ensure that you are prepared and comfortable to discuss key topics. Aside from causing discomfort, some activities can have a serious emotional impact on participants and facilitators because violent experiences or other traumatic life events, such as abandonment may be recollected. Therefore, it is important to give the participants emotional support during this process. Generally, this can be achieved by respectfully listening to the participants, without judging or pressuring them. For those who share traumatic or difficult experiences, acknowledge the fact that they were able to press on and continue with their lives despite facing such adversity.

If a participant begins to break down and cry in front of the group, normalize the experience by giving them room to express that emotion. Consider saying, "*Thank you for being brave and trusting us with that story. I'm sure many of the people in this room have had similar experiences like yours.*" Others in the group may also feel the need to support this person, and encourage them to do so if it feels appropriate. Often, these moments are what binds a group together. Additionally, explain that you are available and willing to have a separate conversation in private with any participant who requests it, and offer more personalized support by referring those who may need it to professional counseling or therapy. Recommend to all that they take care of themselves (especially immediately following the session), take time to rest, take a shower and drink enough water. The confidentiality commitment established in Activity 1 should also be reiterated to remind participants not to comment or repeat what was shared during the session with others outside the group.

Running Each Session

- 1. Review the activity and guidance.** Prior to each session, review the 'Materials Needed', 'Preparation' and 'Important Notes for Facilitators' – as well as the activity itself. This will help to ensure that you are prepared to facilitate each activity, and will allow time to gather additional materials and become more informed regarding the topic, if necessary.
- 2. Prepare the space.** Read the 'Preparation' section prior to the session in order to understand any special requirements for the activity. When arriving to prepare the space, always arrange chairs in a circle for all sessions unless otherwise noted.
- 3. “Check-in” at the beginning of each session.** It is important to begin each session by warmly welcoming back the group and checking in. A check-in provides time for group participants to share any thoughts, personal experiences and comments they had based on the discussion from the last session, and to discuss reflections from their homework assignments. Spend several minutes checking in prior to beginning the day's session.

In order to have time for the session activities, keep check-ins brief and without responses or discussion. Once the group becomes comfortable with each other and the interactive format of the sessions, check-ins can lead to extended storytelling and group discussion.

- 4. Review the ground rules.** Most of the sessions will ask group participants to share personal experiences. In order to create safe spaces for participants, at the beginning of every session review the ground rules that were established by the group in 'Activity 1: The Intro Session – Why am I here?'. This promotes the trust and confidentiality within the group.
- 5. Introduce each session's theme and objective.** Let participants know what the session will focus on and what the main goals are (which are listed at the top of each session), so that they will be prepared for the activity to follow. Remember to keep these in mind throughout the session to ensure that the group does not go too far off topic.
- 6. Use “ice-breakers” and energizers.** *Ice-breakers* are short activities that help participants to build trust in the group, usually in a lighthearted way. They are a great way to open a session, allowing participants to move around, share and become comfortable with one another.

Energizers are short activities that are most helpful when the group appears to have low energy or interest, or is not responding to the activity. These help to change the routine, get people in motion, and relieve fatigue and boredom. They take only a few minutes.

Example ice-breaker: “Who, like me...?” Form a circle and have all participants stand up. Explain that spontaneously, one by one, participants can move to the center of the circle asking the question, “Who, like me...?” They will complete the question with a detail about their family situation or experience of fatherhood, for example, “Who, like me, has twins?” In this example, all men who also have twins would join the man in the center of the circle.

As the facilitator, start the activity from the center of the circle by asking, “*Who, like me...?*” Then encourage others to move to the center and ask their own “Who, like me...” questions.

Example energizer: Get in motion. Ask group members to stand. Ask them to shake their right arm, then their left arm, then their right leg and then their left leg. Now, tell participants that you will count to 10 while they shake each limb.

They will shake their right arm 10 times, then their left arm 10 times, followed by their right leg 10 times, and their left leg 10 times – you can count out loud for each one (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)! As soon as participants have shaken each limb 10 times, go through the cycle again, but only count to 9. Proceed, counting to 8, then 7, then 6, then 5 and so on until participants only shake each limb once. To make the energizer more exciting, you can count faster and faster as you go.

- 7. Carry out the activity and discussion.** Each activity contains a series of steps for you to take the group through and questions to prompt discussion. The structure proposed in this manual for the implementation of activities should serve as a general guide to action; it is not necessary to apply it verbatim. Facilitators can change the order of certain activities’ elements, or alter the listed examples, to make them more relevant to the reality of their group and to reflect their own knowledge and skills.

If the topics and examples presented in these activities come across as too abstract or removed from the reality of the facilitators themselves, facilitators should adapt them to resemble more closely their daily lives and experiences, so that they will be more emotionally involved and identify more closely with the material. Issues should be addressed as specifically as possible, and should focus on the current circumstances of group members (as individuals and members of their group, family, institution and community) rather than projecting too far into the future.

- 8. Closing the session.** At the end of the session, summarize what happened in the session, relate the ‘*Key Closing Messages*’ and remind participants of any homework assignments for the next week. The key closing messages are important to share with the group in order to help the participants wrap up the activity, put what they have learned into a larger context, and to begin reflection with regard to participants’ homework assignment, which will reinforce what they have learned. Also encourage participants to write their key messages and takeaways in their journals.

Definitions and Key Concepts

- **Caregiver:** A key figure, such as a significant other, or other family member, who provides unpaid assistance in caring for an individual, whether it is a young child or disabled parent.
- **Domestic work:** Work performed for the purpose of maintaining a home including cooking and cleaning.
- **Femininity:** How women are socialized and the discourses and practices that are associated with the different ways of being a woman. In short, what it means to be a woman.
- **Gender:** Refers to relations of power and the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.
- **Gender Equality:** Refers to the fact that women and men, regardless of their biological differences, are entitled to justice and equality in the use, control and benefit of the same laws, goods and services in society.
- **Gender roles:** Roles, beliefs and expectations that people associate with being male or female. These roles are socially constructed. In other words, we learn these roles from the example and expectations of our parents, family, cultural groups and social context. How men and women are expected to behave and be varies in different cultures and communities and these roles can change over time. In most communities, however, gender roles are very specifically defined, and are different for males and females. More often than not, these differences result in equalities or power differences between men and women.
- **Masculinity:** How men are socialized and the discourses and practices that are associated with the different ways of being a man. In short, what it means to be a man.
- **Power:** Having control, possession or influence over others.
- **Prenatal Sex Selection:** The practice of terminating a pregnancy based upon the predicted sex of a baby. This practice often manifests itself through the deliberate elimination of girls.
- **Sex:** This refers to the physical and biological differences between men and women, including the different sex organs, hormones, etc.
- **Violence:** The intentional use of physical force or power, either as a threat or actual act, against oneself, another person, a group, or community, that is likely to result in injury, death, psychological or developmental harm, or deprivation. The definition encompasses interpersonal violence, suicidal behavior, and armed conflict. It also covers a wide range of behaviors that go beyond the physical, such as threat and intimidation that compromises the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.⁸

⁸ Krug, E.G., et al. (Eds.). (2002). World Report On Violence and Health. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important to identify and adapt appropriate measures in monitoring and evaluating initiatives that aim to promote positive gender norms. There is a number of different of tools that can be used to measure changes in attitudes and social norms. This chapter includes examples of such tools that can be used in measuring personal and group norms and attitudes related to gender equality and gender-based violence.

Scales

Researchers often use gender scales to measure gender norms and attitudes. This is done by aggregating several indicators to reflect an overall concept. Because gender has so many different facets, it is challenging to use single indicator to measure change. For this reason, multiple measures (as outlined below) are often used to measure gender norms. The following scales can be used to assess changes in gender-related attitudes and beliefs among participants. A questionnaire adapted from the scales below can be administered to participants before and after the group goes through the activities in this manual. In addition, these scales can be used in developing baseline, midterm and end-of-project evaluation tools.⁹

Attitudes on Son Preference:

(Response options: 1=strongly agree, 2= agree, 3=disagree, 4=disagree)

- It is important to have a son to carry on the family name or lineage.
- It is important to have a son to take care of you in your old age.
- Fathering a male child shows you are a real man.
- A couple can terminate a pregnancy if they learn it is a girl child.

Gender Attitudes¹⁰

(Response options: 1=strongly agree, 2= agree, 3=disagree, 4=disagree)

- A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family.
- There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.
- A woman should tolerate violence to keep her family together.
- Changing diapers, giving kids a bath and feeding kids are the mother's responsibility.
- A should have the final word about decisions in his home.
- A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together.
- To be a man, you need to be tough.

Fatherhood Behavioral Questions¹¹

(Response options: 1=never, 2=rarely 3=occasionally, 4=frequently, 5=very frequently)

- How often do you play with children in your home?

⁹ For additional indicators and measures, please see the [*Compendium of Gender Scales*](#)

¹⁰ Selected from the [*Gender Equitable Men Scale*](#)

¹¹ This scale is for men with children. For women, the questions would be rephrased as, "How often does your partner..."

- How often do you cook or fix food for children?
- How often do you change diapers or clothes of your children?
- How often do you give a bath to your children?
- How often do you wash your children's clothes?

Focus Groups

Focus group discussions are a great way to collect qualitative information about people's perceptions, beliefs and attitudes. Staff who have been trained as facilitators can use illustrative questions below in facilitating focus group discussions:

- What participants learned about the other gender regarding their personal experiences of being a (young) man/woman, and how learning this affected their own attitudes about gender expectations;
- Participants' views on how power is used negatively to control and subjugate others including prenatal sex selective, and how power and 'being a man' are connected;
- Explore how (young) men now define what it means to be a father or male caregiver, and any new practices which they will take up;
- Exploration of the positive actions they will take to prevent prenatal sex selection in their communities, and promote gender equality in their own lives.

Photovoices

Photovoices is a grassroots participatory methodology that engages community members in recording and reflecting on their communities' experiences. It is an excellent tool for engaging youth and children in monitoring and evaluation processes. It has three primary objectives:

- To help those who are often unheard gain a voice, enabling them to record and reflect on their experiences and their communities' conditions, both positive and negative.
- To encourage critical consciousness. Through choosing, discussing, and reflecting on the subjects of their photographs, the photographers can come to a clearer understanding of their circumstances and the economic, social, psychological, and political forces that shape them.
- To bring about change that will improve conditions and enhance lives by reaching and influencing policy makers.¹²

Since this project aims to engage couples with children and youth, Photovoices can be an effective way for those children and youth to express themselves through a different medium and demonstrate how the project is impacting their lives.

¹² The Innovation Center, Collective Leadership Works, [Photovoices](#)

Introductory Activity

In this first session, the facilitator and participants will make introductions and discuss ground rules and format for carrying out future activities. This session aims to promote trust, confidentiality and respect within the group.



ACTIVITY 1: THE INTRO SESSION – WHY AM I HERE?

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Understand how to promote trust and respect in the group*
- *Know the personal beliefs of their fellow group members when it comes to women's and men's roles*
- *Know the overall objectives of this program*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

Oftentimes, due to socialization, many men are used to asserting their opinions, while women are expected to listen. If you are doing this session with couples, pay special attention to ensure that women are given space to participate. You can do this by calling on women who may be too shy to raise their hand, or asking “What do the women in this group think about this response?”

RECOMMENDED TIME:

Two hours

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Flipchart paper
- Colorful markers
- Tape
- A room with enough open space to walk around
- Attendance sheet (*optional*)

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR:

The first session sets the tone for the rest of the program. Take time to practice facilitating the activities in this session with other colleagues *before* implementing it with the expected participants.

The main challenge in this session will be to promote a safe space where participants feel comfortable sharing their feelings and experiences. The best way to promote this safe space is through the development ground rules (in Part 3). Take time to remind participants of these rules at any point in this or any future sessions.

At the same time, if a participant verbally assaults another participant, or speaks out of turn do not hesitate to intervene while reminding the group of the ground rules that they all agreed to. In general, remember that the sharing of participants' experiences is the most important ingredient for the success of these groups. They are more likely to change their attitudes and behaviors when they are sharing and analyzing their own experiences and

those of others rather than passively listening to the facilitator. Do not be afraid to “step back” and let the participants discuss issues freely.

PREPARATION:

- Write the word “WELCOME” in large, colorful letters on a piece of flipchart paper, and hang it visibly where participants coming in can see it.
- Arrange chairs in a circle (*Note: Should be done for all sessions!*). If chairs are not available, pick an area where participants can comfortably sit down in a circle.
- On three separate sheets of paper, draw three faces: one sad face, one happy face, and one confused face. Hang these on the wall.
- *Optional:* Make enough copies of the journal where participants will record their homework assignments provided at the end of each session.

RUNNING THE SESSION:

Part 1 – Introducing ourselves (15 minutes)

1. As group members walk into the room, greet them warmly and say, “Thank you for coming. My name is _____. What is your name?”
2. Hand participants a contact information sheet to keep track of attendance, and get in touch with them in the future (*optional*).
3. Once everyone has arrived, introduce yourself to the group (name, organization, personal background, role within the group) and state the overall purpose of the sessions by using the following talking points:
 - *“The purpose of these sessions is to promote more positive and equal relationships among partners, our sons and daughters (and families as a whole!), friends and other members of the community”;*
 - *“We will do this by exploring topics such as what it means to be a man (also known as “masculinity”) or woman (also known as “femininity”), fatherhood and caregiving, and how to prevent violence”;*
 - *“Having harmful beliefs towards women and girls such as believing sons have more value than daughters negatively impacts girls’ lives before they are even born. In Armenia, son preference contributes to gender-biased sex selection where families choose to end a pregnancy when they discover that they will have a girl”;*
 - *“These harmful beliefs also negatively impact the lives of men and boys themselves, which we will further explore in these sessions”;*
 - *“In the end, we all want **both** boys and girls, and men and women, to have equal opportunities and rights to health, education and overall happiness”;*

- *“Both (young) women and men should be equally involved in ensuring the overall wellbeing of families”.*

Also make the following points:

- You are happy that that they have joined the group
 - These sessions will be fun and interactive
 - This is not a classroom. In these groups, we all sit in a circle because everyone is equal and each opinion is valuable and respected.
4. Ask if anyone has any questions or concerns about the overall purpose of these sessions.
 5. Go around the circle and ask each person to share:
 - Name
 - Where they are from
 - What they look forward to learning while in the group
 6. Ask for a volunteer to start, and then go around in a circle.
 7. After each person has spoken say, *“Welcome”* or *“Thank you”*.

Part 2 – Ice Breaker Activity, “Who Like Me...” (10 minutes)

1. Explain that you will all do an activity called, *“Who like me...”* as the first exercise of the session, which is performed as follows:
 - Have all participants stand up and form a circle.
 - Explain that spontaneously, one by one, participants can move to the center of the circle asking the question, *“Who like me...?”* They will complete the question with a detail about their family situation or another personal detail. For example, *“Who like me is 16 years old?”* In this example, all who are 16 years old would join the person in the center of the circle.
 - Examples of other questions: *Who like me has siblings? Who like me is left-handed? Who like me was born in February?* Those who moved to the center of the circle would then return back to their places in the larger circle.
2. As facilitator, start the activity from the center of the circle by asking the question, *“Who like me...?”*
3. Encourage others to move to the center and ask their own questions, *“Who like me...?”*
4. Thank everyone for participating, and ask them to sit back down.
5. Explain that in the next group sessions, more personal experiences will be shared. For this reason it is important to establish ground rules so everyone knows how to respect others in the group.

Part 2 (continued) – Establishing Ground Rules

1. Tell the group it is important that they have rules so everyone feels comfortable and safe to share.
2. Ask the group what are some ground rules they would like to have. Write these down on a flipchart paper. Make sure to include the following:
 - **Confidentiality** - What is said in this group, stays in this group
 - **Use only “I believe/I think” statements** – Do not assume that your viewpoint is shared with everyone else in the group
 - **Practice empathy** - Put yourself in the other person’s shoes
 - **Speak one at a time** – Do not speak one on top of the other. Everyone’s viewpoint is important so we need to make sure everyone is heard.
3. Once you’ve finished, re-read the ground rules.
4. Ask if everyone agrees to the ground rules. Ask if anyone disagrees by raising his/her hand. If someone feels uncomfortable ask him/her how to change the rules to make them feel more comfortable.
5. Hang the ground rules where everyone can see them. Explain you will refer back to them at the beginning of every session.

Part 3 – Gender Values Clarification (1 hour)

1. Ask everyone to stand up where they are.
2. Explain to the group that you will read aloud a few statements one by one. After each sentence is read, they should walk to the side of the room that best represents their own **personal** opinion. If they agree with the sentence, they should walk to the corner with the “happy face”. If they disagree, they should walk to the “sad face”. If they’re unsure, they can walk over to the “confused face”.
3. To begin, everyone should stand in the middle of the room.
4. Start out by reading out any **one** of the sentences below. Repeat it to make sure everyone understands.
 - *To be a man you have to be tough.*
 - *A woman’s most important role is to take care of the children and the home.*
 - *Sons are more able than daughters to provide financial support to their family.*
 - *A man should feel ashamed if he cannot earn enough money to support his family.*
 - *A strong man does not cry.*

- *The birth of a son enhances a man's status, while that of a girl lowers his head.*

Optional Sentences:

- *Sons personify authority and strength*
- *After a girl gets married, she no longer belongs to her parents' family*
- *Girls have fewer opportunities in life/in society than boys*
- *A daughter is not a source of future support to her parents in old age*
- *Making investments in girls is good for the future of the country*

6. Ask participants to think about the sentence and then walk to the corner of the room that best represents their opinion.
7. Once everyone has chosen a corner, give them a few minutes to explain their response.
8. Do not respond to their statements with your own opinions. However, do look for patterns in the responses. Do men tend to answer in one way and women another, for example? Share these observations with the group and ask them why they think men and women might have different opinions (or some groups of men think one way and another group of men think another, for example). Encourage participants to pose questions to those who have opposing views.
9. After each side has had a chance to explain their response, ask if anyone would like to change their answer. If anyone decides to change a side, ask what led them to change their mind.
10. Repeat steps #3 through #9 for the rest of the sentences.
11. If there is time, ask others to create new sentences.
12. Thank everyone for their participation and ask them to sit down.

KEY CLOSING MESSAGES: The exercise today, like the ones to come, asked everyone to share and discuss their personal opinions with the group. Over the next several sessions, participants will explore why it is important to think more deeply about many of the statements discussed today such as, "To be a man you have to be tough," or "A woman's most important role is to take care of the children."

It is important that, as (young) men and women, we question some of these ideas about manhood and womanhood because they can sometimes cause a lot of harm to the people we care about as well as ourselves. On the other hand, other ideas about manhood such as the importance of being respectful help men to have better relationship with others.

The group also established ground rules for respecting each other and preserving confidentiality. Note that you will review these rules in every session in order to continue build trust and safety in the group.

Thank the participants once more for their time and participation in today's session. Tell them that you look forward to seeing them in the next session.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today's session. Write these on a flipchart marked "Session 1"

HOMEWORK:

For couples: Ask the couples to go home and discuss the following questions:

- What are some values that you have in common with each other?
- What is one value that you disagreed on during the exercise? Discuss why each of you hold the opinion that you do. Do not attempt to come to an agreement, but rather listen to the other's perspective.

For youth: Share one to two things you learned today with one other person either in your family, or a trusted friend. Also, consider starting a discussion about gender values with other peers and share any new opinions you formed while in today's session.

Participants record these experiences in their journals (*optional*) and come back to the next session ready to share the outcomes of these discussions.

Section 1: Gender and Power Dynamics

In the following three sessions, participants will reflect on how society and culture influence ideas of what it means to be men and women, and begin to redefine for themselves healthier versions of manhood and womanhood while gaining an understanding of how power inequalities between men and women perpetuate harmful practices including prenatal sex selection and violence.



ACTIVITY 2: WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED GENDER?

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Reflect on how gender norms influence (both positively and negatively) the lives of and relationships between men and women, and girls and boys.*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

When using the discussion questions, you can encourage equal participation from men and women by creating a “fishbowl,” asking women to sit in a circle, and their partners to sit around them in a larger circle. Facilitate the discussion with women first while men stay silent and listen. After 20 minutes of discussion, have them switch places where men sit in the inner circle and women sit in a larger circle around them. See “Important Notes” in Activity 4 for additional guidance. However, if some people feel uncomfortable with such an arrangement, facilitate the two groups separately and then after some time, ask the men and women to come back together to share their reflections with the larger group.

RECOMMENDED TIME:

Two hours

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Flipchart paper
- Colorful markers
- Tape

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR:

Before carrying out this activity, it is important that the facilitator 1) understands the difference between sex and gender, and 2) is aware of his or her own gender biases and beliefs.

For the first point: **Sex** is biological. It includes the reproductive organs and hormones - things that we are born with as men and women. **Gender** is how we are socialized – our attitudes, thoughts and behaviors – based on what society associates with being a man or woman. These characteristics are *learned* through socialization (i.e. interaction with friends, teachers, family members, religious institutions, politics, etc.). The practice of prenatal sex selection is firmly based on the belief that gender identity flows “naturally” from biological sex. For example, sex selection assumes that a female fetus will identify as a girl and later adopt stereotypical feminine traits (example: submissiveness) and preferences (example: wanting to wear pink clothing). In this session, the group will share personal opinions and attitudes about what it means to them to be a man or a woman. For this reason, it’s important to highlight throughout the activity that many of these characteristics have been constructed by society, and are not necessarily a part of a man’s or woman’s biological

make up. This exercise is designed to help participants question characteristics and roles that are assigned to men and women by society.¹³

Emphasize that not all characteristics associated with being a man or woman are bad. For example, “strong” – a characteristic usually associated with men – can also mean standing up for the rights of others, or being strong enough to show affection towards one’s son or daughter despite what others may say.

For the second point: Take time to practice this activity with other facilitators or colleagues prior to facilitating it with your target group. Think critically about both your personal and societal assumptions of what it means to be a ‘real’ man and ‘real’ woman. Pay particular attention to which of these assumptions are harmful and promote gender inequitable ideas such as that men are more valuable to society than women. Rehearse how you would respectfully challenge common myths or misunderstandings with your group members, and respond to questions.

PREPARATION:

See “Important Notes to the Facilitator” on facilitating a practice session prior to carrying out this activity.

RUNNING THE SESSION:

1. Review the homework assignment from the previous session.
2. Ask participants, what is the difference between the words “gender” and “sex”?
3. After a few have responded, explain that in today’s session they will learn about the differences between these two words.
4. Draw two columns on a piece of flipchart paper (or two large pieces of paper).
5. In the first column write the word ‘Man’. On the second column write the word ‘Woman.’
6. Ask the participants to each say a word or phrase that they associate with being a man. Write these in the ‘Man’ column. The responses can be positive or negative. Help the participants name both social and biological characteristics. They do not have to raise their hands, they can say their answers aloud as they think of them.

¹³ Though not a primary objective of this manual, it should also be understood by the facilitator that treating the relationship between biological sex and gender as a given also perpetuates the belief of gender as binary – meaning only man and woman. Facilitators should be able to recognize the diverse personalities, preferences, identities and orientations, and support the fair and just treatment of all people regardless of these differences.

If not mentioned by participants, include the following for the “Man” column (*optional*):

- “Obligation” (to provide physical care for elderly parents)
- “Breadwinner” (to earn income to support family)
- “Provide a sense of usefulness” (to parents when sons have children of their own)
- “Continue family lineage”
- “Must have at least one son”

7. Repeat the same for the column for ‘Woman’.
8. Read aloud the words listed from each column.
9. Cross out the word ‘Man’ with an ‘X’ and write ‘Woman’ and vice versa.
10. Ask participants, “*Can a woman also be [Male characteristic]?*” Go down the words listed in this column one-by-one.
11. Do the same for the second column.
12. In your own words, explain the following concepts:
 - **In these sessions, “Sex”** means the biological characteristics of men and women. For example, women have a vagina and men have a penis. These characteristics determine whether a person is male or female.
 - **“Gender”** is how we *learn* to become boys and girls, and then men and women. We all learn from a very early age what it means to be a man and woman. We learn this by talking with our family members, and our friends, from television, the workplace, from our culture and history and many other places. Some gender norms are healthy, while others are unhealthy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Note: As stated at the beginning of this session, consider using a “fishbowl” format for discussion if this is done with couples or mixed groups.

Use the following questions to guide a discussion on society’s expectations of what it means to be a man and a woman in society. As each person responds, take time to repeat back what he/she said in your own words to make sure you understood what he/she said. Ensure that you give space for everyone to respond, and do not allow one or two people to dominate the discussion.

- *What does it mean to be a (young) man?*
- *What characteristics of how to be a man are viewed as negative by society? Positive?*
- *What does it mean to be a (young) woman?*
- *What characteristics of being a woman are viewed as negative by society? Positive?*

- *Do you think sons and daughters are raised the same way? Why or why not?*
- *What would it be like for a (young) man to assume some of the characteristics traditionally associated with women? What about for young women to assume characteristics associated with men?*
- *How do our family and friends, history and culture influence our ideas of what it means to be men? To be women?*
- *How does the media (radio, television, newspapers, internet) influence the roles men and women should take?*
- *How do these expectations affect your daily lives? Your relationships with your partner? With young women? With young men?*
- *How can you challenge some of the harmful expectations from society of what it means to be a man or woman?*
- *What did you learn from this activity? Is there anything that we can apply to our own relationships?*

If there is time, share some of the relevant findings from the prenatal sex selection study conducted by World Vision Armenia. Ask if these findings reflect the attitudes of members in their community. Which of these attitudes harmful to the well-being of girls? Boys? Where do these attitudes come from?

KEY CLOSING MESSAGES: Throughout their lives, women and men receive messages from family, media, and society about how they should act and how they should relate to each other. It is important to understand that although there are differences between men and women, many of these differences are constructed by society, and are not part of their nature or biological make-up.

These messages men and women receive from society can have fundamental impacts on their daily lives and relationships with their sons and daughters, and other family members. For example, a common belief that “the fireplace is always warm for those who have sons” and that “parents give away the warmth of their home to others” if they have daughters, perpetuates societal beliefs that girls do not have the same value as boys. As we become more aware of how gender stereotypes can negatively impact our lives and communities, we can think constructively about how to challenge them and promote more positive gender roles and relations with our families and communities.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today’s session. Write these on a flipchart marked “Session 2”.

HOMEWORK:

For youth and couples: Ask participants to discuss with their partner or trusted family member the following questions:

- How does society's ideas of what it means to be a man and women (i.e. gender) affect your relationships with your son and/or daughter? With your father or mother? With your girlfriend or boyfriend?
- Do you treat them differently? The same? How so?

Participants record the outcomes of these discussions in their journals (*optional*) and come prepared to the next session ready to discuss these with the larger group.

ACTIVITY 3: HOW WOMEN AND MEN EXPRESS THEMSELVES

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Reflect on how gender norms influence the ways women and men express themselves.*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

This activity works well for mixed groups and couples as well as with groups of young women or men so limited adaptations are necessary.

RECOMMENDED TIME:

Two hours.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Flipchart paper
- Colorful markers
- Plenty of space

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR:

This activity is recommended by facilitators because it allows participants to move around and encourages dynamic role-play, which is a powerful way for participants to think about abstract concepts (gender and expression) in more concrete and visible ways.

In Activity 2, participants will have learned the difference between sex and gender: that although there are differences between men and women, many of these differences are constructed by society (gender), and are not part of their nature or biological make-up (sex). Young men and women learn from society, family and friends, history and culture how to act and behave in ways appropriate to their gender. The way boys and girls are raised has a large impact on how they learn to express themselves as men and women in their relationships, work lives and at home. Girls are often raised to express emotions and attributes that are 'typically feminine,' while boys are encouraged to enact those that are more 'typically masculine'. This exercise is designed to take a deeper look at the result of these gendered types of expression: what effects they have on the way men and women relate to each other, as well as how they may perpetuate harmful practices.

PREPARATION:

No preparation is necessary for this activity.

RUNNING THE SESSION:

1. Review the homework assigned from the previous session.

2. Remind participants about what they learned in Session 2 using “Important Notes for the Facilitator”.
3. Explain that in this session they will explore how they personally experience gender in their own lives.
4. Ask the participants to begin walking around the room in silence. As they walk around the room, tell them to walk “hard,” “soft,” “quickly,” then “slowly.” Tell them to pay attention to the movement of their body when they walk (feet, legs, arms, hands, torso, neck and head). This will help the participants to become more relaxed, and also, to begin thinking about how they can use their bodies to express certain words and actions.
5. Next, ask the participants to form two lines facing each other.
6. Tell them that you are going to say a word and that the two lines should make themselves into statues that represent that word. *LINE 1* should make statues representing how *women* would express the word, and *LINE 2* should make statues representing how *men* would express the word. Note: Men and women can and should be represented in both lines.
7. Ask participants to close their eyes before you say each of the following words.
 - *Beauty*
 - *Strength*
 - *Anger*
 - *Attractiveness*
 - *Gentleness*
 - *Love*
 - *Power*
 - *Motherhood*
 - *Fatherhood*
8. After the participants make statues for each word, they should open their eyes and observe and comment on the similarities and differences between themselves and the statue made by the person across from them.
9. Once you have finished, ask the lines to switch roles, and repeat the words.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Use the questions below to further explore the similarities and differences between the female and male statues and the links to participants’ lives and relationships.

- *What was it like to try to express yourself like a man, like a woman? Which was more difficult?*
- *What was the most difficult word to represent and why?*
- *What similarities and differences did you notice between the ‘female statues’ and the ‘male statues’?*
- *During which words did you see the most differences? During which words did you see the most similarities?*
- *Thinking back to Session 2, how do these similarities and differences relate to societal expectations of what it means to be a man or woman?*
- *How do these similarities and differences influence intimate relationships between women and men in terms of how they make decisions together?*
- *How do these similarities and differences influence societal preferences for sons versus daughters?*
- *Which of these similarities and differences are harmful to the wellbeing of men? To women?*
- *What would happen if women expressed themselves as men do and men as women do?*
- *What have you learned in this activity? Have you learned anything that can be applied in your own life and relationships?*

KEY CLOSING MESSAGES: The ways girls and boys are raised, and the expectations that society places on them, often influence how they express themselves. From a very early age, we are taught how to appear and behave. For example, girls are often taught that it is okay to cry and to be gentle, while boys are taught that they should never cry and should always be tough. Girls are also taught to sit with legs closed or crossed, to not be too loud or rough, or even play sports. These expectations can perpetuate harmful stereotypes about men and women and limits the ways they express themselves and the roles they can play in society. It is important, however, that both women and men do not feel limited in their self-expression. For example, when women are able to show strength and resilience and men gentleness or care, they become more confident individuals who can more easily relate to each other and the world around them.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today’s session. Write these on a flipchart marked “Session 3”.

HOMEWORK:

Think about the last question in the discussion, “Have you learned anything that can be applied in your own life and relationships?” Share with your partner or another trusted family member or friend, one thing you learned from this session and will put into practice in your own life. Record the outcomes of these discussions in your journal (optional) and come ready to share this discussion in Session 4.

ACTIVITY 4: THE GENDER FISHBOWL

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Through listening, understand how men and women are personally and uniquely affected by gender socialization – their experiences of growing up as a boy or girl - and how those experiences have the potential to negatively impact one’s own well-being*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

If working with a single-sex group, form one circle instead of two using the discussion questions appropriate for those present.

MATERIALS:

None

RECOMMENDED TIME:

Two hours

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR:

Take care to ensure that the views of each participant are respected in this mixed-gender session. For many men, this may be the first time that they are actively listening to the voices and experiences of women. Also, it may be the first time that the men are openly sharing their personal feelings and experiences, and they may feel vulnerable in doing so. Go over the ground rules before starting this activity, emphasizing the importance of respect, which includes not sharing the personal experiences of others outside of the group. Respect is also given by:

- Keeping phones off
- Avoiding side conversations
- Not laughing
- Staying in one’s seat for the entire conversation

PREPARATION:

No preparation is needed for this activity.

RUNNING THE SESSION:

1. Review the homework from the previous session.
2. Explain to the group they will do an activity called “The Gender Fishbowl.” The purpose of this activity is for men and women to learn about the others’ childhood and adulthood experiences of what it is like to be a man or woman.

3. Divide the men and women into separate groups.
4. Ask the women to sit in a circle in the middle of the room.
5. Ask the men to form an outer circle around the women and sit down facing in.
6. Explain to the group the women are now the “fish,” and the men are the “bowl.” Say that the “bowl’s” job is to stay silent and listen to the women’s or “fishes’” answers to the questions below.
7. Once the women finish discussing the questions (about 20-30 minutes), close the discussion. Then, have men and women switch places.
8. Say that the men are now the “fish” and the women are the “bowl”. Facilitate a discussion with the men using the questions below.

Questions for Women

- ***Reflect back on your experiences of being a girl. When did you first realize that you were a girl?***
- ***What did you like about being a girl? What was the most difficult part?***
- ***Now that you are an adult, what is the best part about being an Armenian woman? What is the hardest part?***
- ***What do you find difficult to understand about boys and men?***
- ***What would you like men to know to better understand women?***
- ***What are ways men can support women and girls to achieve their goals?***
- ***Imagine yourself and your family 5 years from now. What are your hopes and dreams for the future?***

Questions for Men

- ***Reflect back on your experiences of being a boy. When did you first realize that you were a boy?***
 - ***What did you like about being a boy? What was the most difficult part?***
 - ***Now that you are an adult, what is the best part about being an Armenian man? What is the hardest part?***
 - ***What do you find difficult to understand about girls and women?***
 - ***What would you like women to know to better understand men?***
 - ***Reflecting on what the women said, is it feasible for men to support women and girls to achieve their goals? Why or why not?***
 - ***Imagine you and your family 5 years from now. What are your hopes and dreams for the future?***
-

9. Once both groups had a chance to discuss the questions in their fishbowl, reflect on the overall activity by asking the following discussion questions:
- How did you feel being the “fish”?
 - How did it feel being the “bowl”?
 - We reflected on how gender affects us from the time we are very young. In some ways, this process of learning how to become men and women can be helpful, and in other ways it can be harmful. How do the harmful aspects perpetuate son preference in our society?
 - How can we change some of the harmful practices in raising boys in our own families? In raising girls?
 - **Men:** Did you learn anything new by listening to the women?
 - **Women:** Did you learn anything new by listening to the men?
 - **Men:** Why is it important in our daily lives to “keep our ears open” to women and girls, particularly when looking to promote equality?
 - **Women:** How can you encourage and support men to promote equality and respect?
10. At the end of the discussion, draw attention to any patterns that you saw in the differences between men and women’s responses. For example, when women turned a certain age they often remember that they were told to stay at home to help their sisters or mothers to cook and clean. For men, as boys they may have faced increasing pressure to earn an income to support the family causing them frustration and anxiety. Ask participants what they think about these differences and what they say about gender expectations.

KEY CLOSING MESSAGES: Thank everyone for their meaningful participation and for being respectful to one another.

We all learn how to become men and women beginning from a very early age – in some cases before we are even born (example: speculations of a baby being a boy or girl depending on what foods are eaten, how the pregnant woman “feels”, or how the belly “looks”)! As stated previously, some of these learned ideas are harmful while others are helpful. The harmful ideas can negatively impact the opportunities girls have in life, and contribute to gender inequalities between boys and girls. As parents and as individuals we must recognize and leave behind some of these harmful ideas in order to ensure that both boys *and* girls are given equal opportunities for success in life.

Thank the men for keeping their ears open to the women. This is something – men listening actively to women – that must happen more often outside of this group, because women provide unique and valuable perspectives. Also thank the women for keeping their ears open to the men. Acknowledge how difficult it is for men to talk openly and share personal experiences because of harmful beliefs about what it means to be a man. Thank them for having the courage to do so.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today's session. Write these on a flipchart marked "Session 4".

HOMEWORK:

Thinking about what you learned today, (1) discuss with your partner or a trusted family friend or peer the following questions and (2) carry out the corresponding action:

- For couples and youth: In what ways can raising sons and daughters equally increase their chances of future success and well-being?
- For couples: What is one thing you can do differently to promote gender equality with your children? Do it this week.
- For youth: What is one thing you can do to treat your male and female peers (such as a classmate, a sibling or cousin) more equally? Do it this week.

Participants record the outcomes of their discussions and actions in their journals (optional), and come ready to discuss these actions in the next session.

Section 2: Parenting, Caregiving and Shared Decision-making

In the following five sessions, participants will learn the importance of creating emotional connections between themselves and their partners and children, reflect on the uneven burden of domestic work and child care on women, and begin to understand the importance of shared decision-making with their partner.

ACTIVITY 5: HOURS IN A DAY

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Reflect on the differences between men and women with respect to the amount of time they each devote to various tasks in a 24-hour day;*
- *Understand the value of an equitable distribution of housework;*
- *Make one to two commitments to share housework more equitably*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

Have couples reflect on the differences and similarities between their respective 24-hour days prior to engaging participants in a large group discussion. Afterwards, ask couples to share their paired reflections with the larger group.

MATERIALS:

- Flipchart paper
- Markers (enough for all participants)
- Sheets of blank white paper (enough for all participants)

RECOMMENDED TIME:

Two hours

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR:

The absence of men from caregiving and domestic housework is related to the way economies are divided – into “low value” (unpaid care work) versus “high value” (paid labor outside the home) work. This is strongly connected to gender dynamics where women are seen as primary providers of care in the home, and men as the economic providers outside of it. This fuels inequalities between men and women and reinforces the perception that men have more value than women in society – a key factor contributing to the practice of prenatal sex selection.

These gender roles are limiting and create barriers for both men and women. It restricts access to opportunities for women to fulfill their own aspirations and also prevents men from taking on meaningful and gender equitable roles in the lives of their sons, daughters and partners.

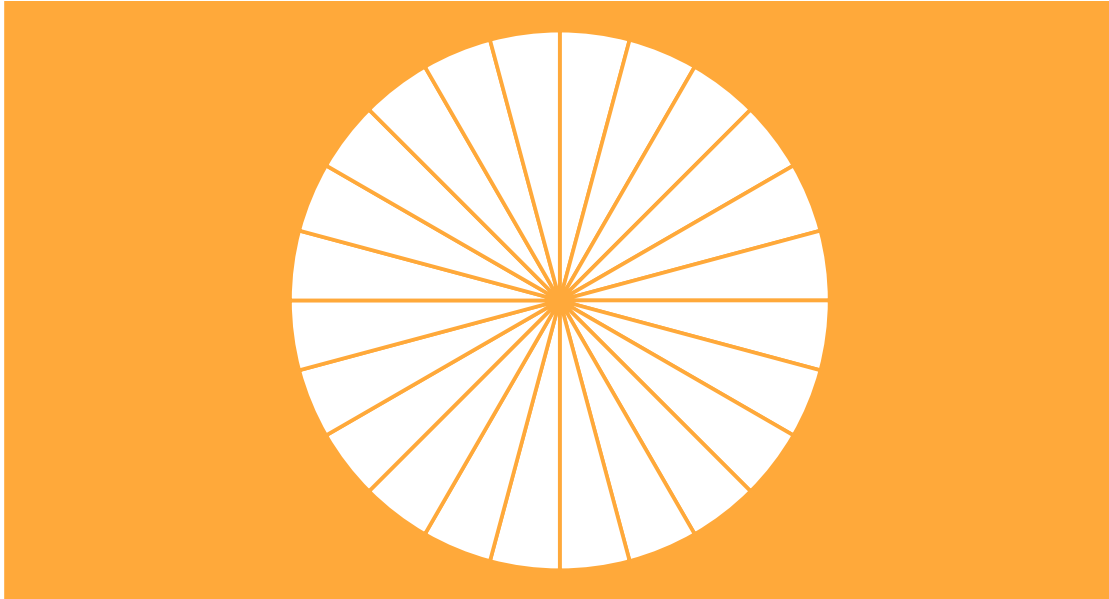
PREPARATION:

No preparation is necessary for this activity.

RUNNING THE SESSION:

1. Review the homework from the previous session.
2. Pass out colored markers and a blank sheet of paper to each participant.

3. Draw a large circle on flipchart paper. Explain to group members that this circle represents the 24-hour day. Divide the circle into 24 equal slices. Each slice represents an hour of the day. See the example below.



4. Tell participants to draw this same image on their own sheet of paper.
5. They must now think of all the different activities that they do in a typical 24-hour day. For example, eating, sleeping, working and caring for children. They should then color in the number of slices based on the amount of time they spend on each activity. For example, color in 6 slices to show that they spend 6 hours sleeping. They should repeat this for every activity they do in a typical 24-hour day. Give them 5-10 minutes to complete this step.
6. After they have finished, have them compare their typical 24-hour day with a person of another gender, or in small mixed groups. Give them about 10 minutes for this discussion.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

In the large group, use the following discussion questions to reflect on the gender differences within the 24-hour day.

- *What are the differences (if any) between how men and women spend their 24-hour day?*
- *Why do these differences exist? Are women “naturally” better at housework than men?*
- *How much time do men and boys spend caring for their children and families in general? Is this enough time, or not? What about on cooking and cleaning?*
- *Why is it that men on average, tend to spend less time doing housework than women? How do our family members such as mother-in-laws play an influencing role?*
- *How does this inequitable distribution of labor limit opportunities for women and girls (to work outside the home, for example)?*

- *There are studies that show that women who have male partners that share the housework are more sexually satisfied in their relationships. Why is this? What are other benefits men receive in sharing the household chores?¹⁴*
- *Some say that gender expectations change over time. If we were to do this drawing over again, but for our parents, how would it be different? How would it be the same?*
- *What is one thing you can do to better manage your time in order to equitably share household responsibilities with other members of your family?*

CLOSING KEY MESSAGES: It is important that men spend an equitable amount of time providing care, education to children and in carrying out household chores. “Equity” in this case means “fairness.” Sometimes it is not possible for each partner to distribute tasks *equally* so it is important that these discussions take into account the family’s situation. The key is to negotiate, communicate and consider the obligations of each person within and outside the home. The benefit of re-prioritizing time in a day is that it often affords men more opportunities to spend time with their children, and shows that they recognize the value of “invisible” work such as cooking and cleaning.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today’s session. Write these on a flipchart marked “Session 5”.

HOMEWORK:

Thinking about what you learned today, observe how household chores are distributed among yourselves and partners (or parents) at home. Perform one activity that you usually never engage in such as cooking. What is the reaction of your partner or others in the household?

Participants record these experiences in your journal (optional), and come back to the next session with reflections to share.

¹⁴ Barker, G., Contreras, J.M., Heilman, B., Singh, A.K., Verma, R.K., and Nascimento, M. *Evolving Men: Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)*. Washington, D.C.: International Center for Research on Women and Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Promundo. January 2011.

ACTIVITY 6: OBJECTS, PLANTS, ANIMALS AND PEOPLE

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Have an increased awareness of the various forms caregiving can take in their daily lives, and the different ways they care for objects as well as individuals.*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

This activity works well for mixed groups and couples, but can also be used with separate groups of young women or men. When working with couples, or mixed groups, make sure that both men and women are represented in each small group (see Step 3).

MATERIALS:

Four large plastic garbage bags (Note: The bags can be replaced with boxes, envelopes or any other available packaging)

RECOMMENDED TIME:

One hour

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR:

The previous sessions have focused on learning about the differences between gender and sex, how it impacts the various roles men and women are expected to play, how these beliefs perpetuate the unequal treatment of boys versus girls (and the practice of prenatal sex selection), as well as reflecting on men's and women's personal experiences of growing up as a girl or a boy. This session marks an introduction to the theme of caregiving and parenting and its relationship to gender expectations. It is designed to highlight the different forms that caregiving can take in participants' daily lives, what it means to give care, or to take care of something or someone, including ways they may not have thought of before.

Regardless of gender, both men and women have many opportunities in their lives to provide care. During the discussions, participants may identify ways in which taking care of people is different from taking care of objects, as well as differences in the ways that men and women participate in and experience caregiving. This activity will set the stage for later activities that are more explicitly focused on taking care of children, during which participants will discuss their roles in caregiving and parenting more deeply.

PREPARATION:

No preparation is required for this activity. However, if you prefer, rather than having participants imagine their 'presents,' you may bring images, toys or objects that represent 1) a bicycle or car, 2) a dog, 3) a plant, flowers or tree, 4) a girl and 5) a boy, along with a bag for each object.

RUNNING THE SESSION

1. Review the homework from the previous session.
2. Explain to the group they will do an activity called, “Objects, Plants, Animals and People.” The purpose of this activity is for men and women to learn about and reflect on the different forms that caregiving (i.e. caring for others) that people perform in their daily lives.
3. Divide the participants into 5 groups.
4. Give a bag to each group and tell them it is a present from Santa Claus.
5. If you have brought objects with you, hand each group a bag with one of the objects below inside. If not, tell the groups that they should imagine that the bags are filled with a specific object or person:
 - Group 1 – will imagine a bicycle or a car
 - Group 2 – will imagine a dog
 - Group 3 – will imagine a plant, flowers, or a tree
 - Group 4 – will imagine a girl
 - Group 5 – will imagine a boy
6. Ask the groups to open the respective bags and carefully take out what they have been given.
7. Encourage the participants to “tell a short story” about what they were given, by asking them to discuss the following questions:
 - *How big is this bicycle or car? What color is it?*
 - *How old is this person? What is his/her name?*
 - *What breed is the dog? Is it male or female?*
 - *How big is this plant? Does it have flowers and fruit?*

Ask more questions to help groups to develop a full picture of what is inside their bag.

8. Next, to continue the story, ask the group to imagine that this object/animal/person has a problem: for example, the bicycle or car is broken, the plant is dying, the boy or girl is sick and the dog doesn’t want to eat.
9. Ask the group to imagine how they would react. Encourage them to act out what they would do.
10. When they have finished, ask them all to form a large circle and open the discussion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Use the following questions to guide reflection on the different ways men and women take care of objects and people in their day-to-day lives. The conversation will help participants to better understand the process of giving care, as well as the differences between caring for different types of objects, or between caring for a girl and a boy.

- *Are there any differences in caring for a plant, a boy, a girl, a bicycle/car or a dog? What are they? Why?*
- *Which is the easiest to care for? Why?*
- *Which is the hardest to care for? Why?*
- *Which is the most pleasant to care for?*
- *Which is the most unpleasant to care for?*
- *What happens if you don't care for the bicycle? Plant? Dog? Boy? Girl?*
- *Are we born knowing how to care for people and things, or do we learn later?*
- *Do men and women care for things/people in the same way? In your experience, how do men traditionally care for things/people?*
 - Examples: Men are expected to remain at home to care for elderly parents, provide an income to support family members when they can no longer work, they “care” for their family lineage by having sons, they “care for a nation” by becoming soldiers.
- *How do women traditionally care for things/people?*
 - Examples: Women are expected to stay at home to cook and clean, care for the health and wellbeing of their children, move to her husband's home to care for him and her in-laws.
- *How do these differences in the way men and women are expected to care for others impact their roles and status in society?*
- *Is there a relationship between these gendered “caring roles” and son preference? What is the relationship?*
 - Examples: Having a son is preferred because it is assumed they will take care of elderly parents socially and economically; segments of Armenian society value a strong military – often a male dominated profession - to protect national interests; Daughters are sometimes less preferred because they are not expected to earn a sizable income to support family members, or will be expected to dedicate support to her husband's family.
- *In what ways can you challenge the gendered nature of care in your own life? What are the benefits of doing so?*

KEY CLOSING MESSAGES: In this session, participants explored how both men and women have the capacity to care for others, but often do so in gender specific ways. As learned in the previous session, these **gender differences contribute to gender inequalities** between men and women in terms of the value they have in the eyes of society, and opportunities they have to succeed. It is important that individuals challenge the gendered nature of care where only women are seen as those that care and men and boys are “carefree.” Both men and women have the capacity to perform all types of caring roles.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today's session. Write these on a flipchart marked "Session 6".

HOMEWORK:

Thinking about what you learned today, carry out the following actions:

- For couples with children: Perform one caregiving activity this week that you do not do already, either with an object or with your child. Participants should come ready to discuss these actions in the next session.
- For couples without children and youth: See Homework Assignment: "Caring for the Family" at the end of this activity.

Participants record the outcomes of these experiences in your journal (optional) and come prepared to discuss them in the next sessions.

For Session #6: Ask all participants to bring a toy that their child uses, or that they used as a child to the next session (optional). Facilitators can also bring gender specific toys to this next session.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT: “CARING FOR THE FAMILY”

This is an excellent activity to carry out either as a homework assignment over a period of several weeks, or to assign at the beginning of a later session and discuss at the end of that same session.

BY END OF THIS ACTIVITY, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Reflect on caregiving based on practical experience*

MATERIALS:

- Balloons filled with water or plastic water bottles
- Soft tipped markers

RECOMMENDED TIME:

From one to twelve weeks.

STEPS TO ASSIGNING THE HOMEWORK:

1. Hand out a balloon to each participant.
2. Tell them that they are now fathers or mothers, and the balloon is now their child.
3. Ask them to draw the face of their child on the balloon. They should draw hair, a nose, ears, mouth, etc.
4. Encourage participants to “give life” to their child by giving it a name.
5. Develop the group’s commitment to their balloon babies by taking them home and never leaving them alone. They must take their balloon with them wherever they go.
6. Set a day for them to bring their balloon babies back to the session.
7. Discuss the group’s experiences while taking care of their balloon babies. Possible discussion questions include:
 - *How did the balloon baby interfere with your everyday life?*
 - *What feelings were aroused?*
 - *What difficulties did you face?*
 - *What did you like most about caring for your balloon baby?*
 - *Did you ask anyone for help?*
 - *When you couldn’t be with the “baby” what did you do?*
 - *What if the balloon had been a real child, what would this experience have been like?*
 - *If the balloon was a sick relative, what would this experience have been like?*

ACTIVITY 7: GENDER AND TOYS

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Understand how toys can reinforce harmful gender norms with children*
- *Reflect on the importance of play as another important form of caregiving*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

If you are carrying out this session with couples, provide time for these parents and/or parents-to-be to reflect and discuss how they currently, or will in the future, play with their sons and daughters. Does play differ based on the gender of the child? How can parents and children work together to teach gender equality through play?

MATERIALS:

- Several stereotypical masculine (ex: toy guns or soldiers) and feminine (ex: plastic cooking utensils) toys.

RECOMMENDED TIME:

Two hours.

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR:

The previous session provided an introduction to caregiving and explored how men and women are expected to care for others/things in gender specific ways (reviewing the homework from the last session will help to revisit this idea). In this session, participants will discuss how caregiving also involves play. The way parents play with children often differs depending on whether the child is a boy or a girl. This can affect their ideas of what it means to be a woman or man later on in life. For example, if parents only give plastic baby dolls and cooking utensils to girls, and toy soldiers and guns to boys they are influencing their children's ideas of gender and the roles they will be expected to fulfill as adults.

The second objective of this session is to reflect upon the importance of play as a form of caregiving that both men and women should be engaged in. Playing opens up opportunities to educate children about equality.

PREPARATION:

In the previous session, you asked that participants bring a toy that their child plays with (*optional*). Facilitators can also bring toys to the session. Bring a variety of toys for participants, i.e. toys that are popular, and viewed as suitable for one gender over the other. For example, some toys marketed to boys include toy guns, balls and video games, while girls are given toy irons, dish sets and baby dolls. Be sure to bring a selection of these types of toys so that each group may have one. Alternatively, you can also print or cut out images of toys from magazines or the Internet.

RUNNING THE SESSION:

1. Review the homework from the previous session.
2. Explain to the group they will do an activity called, “Gender and Toys.” The purpose of this activity is for men and women to reflect on the different ways in which we play with, treat and educate our children based on their gender. The activity will also explore how these differences may affect what girls and boys think is appropriate behavior.
3. Ask participants to bring out the toys they brought (part of the optional homework from the last session), and place all toys in the middle of the room. Alternatively, the facilitator can bring in the toys or images he or she brought.
4. Ask participants to think of a game they like to play with their children, or with other children in their lives (ex: sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews, etc.), or that they used to play when they were children. Give them a few minutes to reflect on this.
5. Ask participants to form pairs and assign the role of (1) “child” and (2) “father”/ “mother” to each person in the pairing.
6. Instruct each pair to select a toy to play with.
7. Give participants five minutes to role-play a parent and child playing with a toy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Ask each pair to describe the toy they played with to the group. After this initial sharing, use the questions below to guide a discussion on gender and toys.

To those who played the “child”:

- *Describe the game you played with your partner/ “parent.” How did it feel to play this activity?*
- *Did you play the role of a girl or boy? Why did you choose this gender? In what ways did the toy you selected influence this?*

To those who played the “father” or “mother”:

- *How did it feel to play this activity?*
- *How would you have played with your partner differently if he/she had been a boy rather than a girl (or vice versa)?*

For all group members:

- *What do these toys tell us about social expectations of being a man or a woman?*
- *How can these social expectations be harmful to girls? And to boys? Example: Toy guns – boys are given tools to practice using violence with others; baby dolls – If only marketed and given to girls, reinforces that only women can be emotionally and physically caring.*

- *Is it ever okay for a boy to play with “girl” toys such as dolls? Why or why not? What would be the benefits of this?*
- *Is it okay for girls to play with “boy” toys? Why or why not? (Note: It may be important to emphasize here that toys that encourage the use of violence should not be used to play with young children).*
- For parents: *What do you think your child learned/is learning about how to be a girl or boy during playtime? As fathers and mothers, how can we communicate positive messages about equality to our children through play? “Equality” meaning that our daughters have the same opportunities for a successful future as our sons do (i.e. have access to quality health services, education, good employment, an environment free from violence, etc.); and, for example, that sons are free to show their feelings as girls can, including pain and vulnerability.*

KEY CLOSING MESSAGES: The manner in which we play with boys and girls is a socialization process that, if gender roles are rigidly enacted in play, can foster unequal and unjust relationships later between grown men and women.

At the same time, we all play when we are children; it is only as we grow older that we forget how to play. Games are a very important part of life and part of caregiving. They are crucial for our own well-being helping us to forge more meaningful connections with our children. Games/playtime also provide special opportunities to educate children. As parents and future parents, it is important to remain conscious of how to promote important messages about equality in these interactions.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today’s session. Write these on a flipchart marked “Session 7”.

HOMEWORK:

Thinking about what you learned today, (1) discuss with your partner or a trusted family friend/peer the following questions and (2) carry out the corresponding action:

For couples with children: Each parent should play with their son(s) and/or daughter(s) and think about whether they are reinforcing harmful gender roles or not.

Afterwards, ask your sons and daughters what games they prefer to play and why. Share with them what you learned in this session (for example: how something as simple as playing with toys can influence ideas about manhood and womanhood). Ask them what they think about this? Do they agree? Disagree? Why?

For youth and couples without children: Think about your favorite childhood toy or game and reflect on whether it reinforced harmful norms, or if you played games outside of your gender

role (e.g., girls play soccer/football, and boys play with dolls). How do you think that game or toy influenced your idea of what it means to be a man or a woman?

Participants record these discussions and observations in their journals (optional) and come ready to discuss these in the next session.

ACTIVITY 8: THE BABY IS CRYING

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Have a better understanding about the difficulties and conflicts in caring for children;*
- *Reflect on common fears and concerns of having daughters*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

If you are carrying out this session with couples, provide time for these parents and/or parents-to-be to discuss how they determine who will care for and comfort their children, and what they will do if one parent needs more support in caring for the baby.

MATERIALS:

- A doll (Note: The doll can be replaced by a ball or another available object, for example, a balloon or water bottle.)

RECOMMENDED TIME:

One hour

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR:

This activity is designed to continue the conversation on caregiving, particularly addressing the challenges and frustrations that can arise when caring for a baby. Caring for a newborn can be an exciting, but also exhausting and stressful period in mothers' and fathers' lives. A baby cannot express himself or herself with words, so they cry. Some babies cry a lot, while other babies cry less. Many times, babies do not even know why they are crying! The most important thing a parent can do is provide warmth through physical affection (e.g. hugging, cradling, and rocking the child), and try his or her best to figure out what the baby needs. In this session, promote messages that men are capable of caring for babies and can satisfy all their babies' needs (except for breastfeeding). Many of the roles usually assigned to mothers and fathers are constructed by society; with enough practice, any man or woman can become a competent caretaker.

Also included within this session is reflection on common fears and anxieties with regard to having daughters and exploration of where these concerns come from. Often, they are deeply rooted in cultural and gender expectations. The facilitator should encourage participants to dig deeply to explore these root causes.

PREPARATION:

No preparation is necessary for this activity.

RUNNING THE SESSION:

1. Review the homework from the previous session.
2. Explain to the group they will do an activity called, "The Baby is Crying." The purpose of this activity is for men and women to have a better understanding about the difficulties and conflicts in caring for children.
3. Invite all the participants to sit in a circle.
4. Give the following instruction: let us imagine that this doll is a child.
5. Ask the group: Is it a boy or a girl? What is his/her name?
6. Say that the child is crying a lot.
7. Ask the group to imitate the sound of a baby crying.
8. Pass the doll to one of the participants and ask him to calm the child. The rest of the group continues crying.
9. After two minutes, if the baby (the group) is no longer crying, ask the participant to pass the baby on to the next person and proceed in the same way.
10. Pass the baby onto at least 3 participants.
11. Afterward, open up the discussion, exploring the comments of the group and their doubts in relation to childcare.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *What did you feel when the baby would not stop crying?*
- *Have you gone through a situation like this in your own life?*
- *What did you think was wrong with the baby? Why do babies cry? What can we do to get them to stop crying?*
- *Do women have greater skills or abilities for caring for babies? Why?*
- *Who do you think should be responsible in a family for soothing a crying baby? Why?*
- *Are there differences in the way girls versus boys are soothed or taken care of when they are upset or scared? If so, what are they?*
- *Many couples become concerned if they have trouble conceiving a son. Why do some couples fear having a baby girl?*
 - *Where do these fears come from? What does gender have to do with it? Family? Culture/tradition? Religion? The state?*
- *What are actions we can take to challenge these concerns and misperceptions?*

KEY CLOSING MESSAGES: Childcare is a less complex activity than we usually think, but more tiring and time-consuming than we often imagine. It is important to remember that both men and women can be successful and nurturing caregivers for their babies, and that this is not something rooted in biology. We learn to care for babies through practice, but it is important to have discussions with those who have already experienced similar parenting and caregiving situations. It is also important to maintain open communication with your partner, and to consult books, doctors and other care providers for more information on the subject.

At the same time, as individuals we each have the power to influence positive ideas about gender equality – that both baby girls and boys have equal potential to thrive and become important and supportive members of the family as they grow older. It is important to challenge concerns and misperceptions about having daughters in order to promote positive change.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today's session. Write these on a flipchart marked "Session 8".

Homework:

For couples with young children: This week, when your baby cries, think about how you and your partner share the responsibilities of soothing the baby. Challenge yourselves to try something new: for example, if the mother is the one to wake up and soothe a baby in the middle of the night, the father should take on this activity.

For youth and couples without children: Carry out one small action to challenge the concern or anxiety of having a daughter in your family or community.

Participants record these experiences in their journal (optional), and come ready to discuss these actions in the next session.

ACTIVITY 9: MY PARENTS' LEGACY

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Understand how their own parents or parental figures such as a grandmother, stepfather, or uncle influenced their understanding of caregiving and parenting practices.*
- *Reflect on how to build upon positive experiences of being cared for and how to improve their own caregiving practices.*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

No adaptations are necessary for this activity.

MATERIALS:

- None

RECOMMENDED TIME:

Two hours

Important Notes for the Facilitator

Although all participants have surely experienced both positive and negative instances of being cared for when they were children, we recommend that facilitators frame the discussion for this activity as a recollection of **positive** caregiving experiences or influences. If negative (or emotional) experiences do surface throughout the discussion, it is important to give the participants emotional support. Generally, this can be achieved by respectfully listening to the participants, without judging or pressuring them. As facilitator, your role will be to validate the sharing of personal experiences. If a participant begins to cry in front of the group, normalize the experience by saying something such as, "Thank you for being brave and trusting us with your story." Others in the group may also feel the need to support this person. Encourage them to do so if it feels appropriate. Often, these are the moments that bind a group together. In cases where a participant may require additional support outside of the group, have referrals on hand on where they can seek professional counseling or therapy.

As necessary, remind participants of the confidentiality commitment to which they agreed to in Session 1 to further reinforce this atmosphere of respect and safety. Additionally, take care to say that the sharing of personal experiences in this session (as well as all sessions) is completely voluntary. This means that no one should feel pressured to share if it makes them feel uncomfortable.

PREPARATION:

As noted above in "Important Notes", have referrals on hand where participants can seek outside professional counseling or therapy.

RUNNING THE SESSION:

1. Review the homework from the previous session.
2. Explain to the group that they will do an activity called “My Parents’ Legacy” to reflect on the influence that their own mothers and fathers had on them as children growing up. Tell them that although they surely will have had both positive and negative experiences in their childhood, in this activity they will think about how they can learn from the positive aspects of their parents (or parental figures) in raising their own children. Explain that if they do not feel comfortable, or are unable to recall instances of positive parenting with their own mothers or fathers, to think of an extended family member (such as an aunt, uncle, or grandparent) or a positive role model in their own lives (such as a teacher, coach, older friend, sibling, etc.)
3. Tell the group that they will first think about the positive influences their fathers or another man who was important to them during their childhood (example: an uncle, grandfather, older brother, etc.) had on them.
4. Ask everyone to close their eyes and think about an object that they associate in a fond way with their father (or male figure). It can be a tool, a book, or a piece of clothing.
5. Tell the group to spend a few minutes focusing on the relationship between the object that they identified and a positive moment or memory that they shared with this man. What emotions does this object recall for them? Ask participants to write their reflections down on paper.
6. After two minutes, ask the group to open their eyes. Tell them to turn to the person sitting next to them and explain the object they identified, or to share what they wrote down on their piece of paper if they feel comfortable enough to do so. Ask them to share how this object relates to the relationship they have with their father, or main male figure. Give them 5 minutes to share.
7. Once everyone has finished sharing, read the statement below out loud:
 - “One thing that my father, or male parental figure, did that I want to repeat with my own children is...”
8. Explain that they should think about how they would complete this statement. They can either simply reflect on this, or they can write these reflections down on paper.
9. Ask them to share their thoughts with the person sitting next to them for 10 minutes.
10. Invite participants to share those reflections with the larger group.
11. Repeat Steps 3 - 10, but this time ask participants to think about their mothers, or another important female figure from their childhood.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Discuss the following questions with the whole group:

- *What are the positive things about your relationship with your father (or male parental figure) that you would like to put into practice or teach to your children? That you would like your partner to have or to teach your children?*
- *What are practices that you would improve upon in order to teach about equality?*
- *What are the positive things about your relationship with your mother (or female parental figure) that you would like to put into practice or teach to your children? That you would like your partner to have or to teach your children?*
- *What are practices that you would improve upon in order to teach about equality?*
- *What do you look forward to in becoming a mother, or what do you currently enjoy about being a mother?*
- *What do you look forward to in becoming a father, or what do you currently enjoy about being a father?*

KEY CLOSING MESSAGES: As we have explored in previous sessions, we learned that we were often cared for differently because of our gender in ways that can be harmful to one's own wellbeing. If these harmful practices are repeated, it can negatively impact the wellbeing of our (future) sons and daughters, especially when it comes to preventing boys from expressing emotions such as pain or fear, and girls from having equal opportunities as boys. However, each of us also has positive memories and lessons learned gathered from either a parent or a parental figure that we would like to replicate with our children.

The way our parents and loved ones have cared for us impacts the way we care for others. For this reason, reflections such as what was done in this session provide opportunity for personal development, and to improve upon these past experiences and repeat the good practices we learned.

After this session, go home and take care of yourselves. You can do this by taking time to rest, drinking water or taking a walk.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today's session. Write these on a flipchart marked "Session 9".

HOMEWORK:

Thinking about what you learned today, (1) discuss with your partner or a trusted family friend/peer the following questions and (2) carry out the corresponding action:

- For couples: Imagine your child is all grown up. You are about to celebrate his or her 20th birthday. What kind of person do you hope your child will be? What kind of relationship do you want with your child? If it is a boy, how can you ensure that they will grow up to treat women and girls with respect? If it is a girl, how can you ensure she is given equal

opportunity for success alongside her male peers? With your partner, discuss the ways you can work together to achieve this vision.

- For youth: What is one thing you learned from your caregivers that you would like to do in your own life? Put this into practice this week.

Participants record these experiences in their journal (optional), and come ready to discuss these actions in the next session.

Section 3: Violence, Peaceful Families and Communities

In the following four sessions, participants will learn what violence is – including violence against women and prenatal sex selection, gain new skills in communicating with intimate partners and resolving conflict peacefully, and gain the courage to speak out against daily injustices.



ACTIVITY 10: WHAT IS VIOLENCE?

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Be able to identify different types of violence and discuss the particular types of violence that most commonly occur in families and intimate relationships*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

No adaptations are necessary for this activity.

MATERIALS:

- Flipchart paper, pens, paper, tape and selected stories from the “Case Studies”

RECOMMENDED TIME:

Two hours

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR:

Prenatal sex selection is one of the major forms of gender-based violence in Armenia. It is rooted in patriarchy – a hierarchical system that affords privileges to men over women – and other gender norms that place higher value on sons over daughters. There is no single factor that causes violence. By examining prenatal sex selection from a gender lens, it allows the facilitator to engage both women and men in questioning the norms that underlie this discriminatory practice.

PREPARATION:

Review the case studies and select up to four to discuss during the activity. The case studies depict diverse examples of violence, including men’s violence against women, women’s violence other women, and parent’s use of violence against children. If necessary, you can make adaptations to these case studies or create new ones. If the group can dedicate more than one session to this activity, you might consider discussing all of the case studies over two or more sessions.

Before presenting this and the other activities on violence, you should research locally relevant information concerning violence, including existing laws and social supports for those who use and/or suffer from violence. Also be prepared to refer a participant to the appropriate services if they reveal that they are suffering violence or abuse.

RUNNING THE SESSION:

1. Review the homework from the previous session.
2. Explain to the participants that the objective of this activity is to talk about different types of violence that exist.

3. Divide the participants into three to four smaller groups. Each of the groups will receive a large sheet of paper. Explain to the participants that they are to write a definition of violence, reflecting on what it means to them.
4. Ask the groups, one by one, to present their definitions of violence. On a large sheet of paper or on a chalkboard, highlight common ideas and key concepts from the various groups.
5. Introduce the idea (highlighting the group definitions) that acts of violence can be divided into the following categories:
 - Physical: using physical force such as hitting, slapping, or pushing.
 - Emotional/Psychological: often the most difficult form of violence to identify. It may include humiliating, teasing, threatening, insulting, pressuring, and expressions of jealousy or possessiveness such as the controlling of decisions and activities.
 - Economic: Many men try to use their money to control their partners, e.g. keep them from going out, meeting their friends, or even leaving them. In this way, the exertion of power through the control of money can also be a form of violence.
 - Sexual: pressuring or forcing someone to perform sexual acts (from kissing to sex) against their will or making sexual comments that make someone feel humiliated or uncomfortable. It does not matter if there has been prior consenting sexual behavior.
6. Explain that violence can happen to a person before they are even born. In Armenia, many families choose to terminate a pregnancy because the baby is female instead of male. This is known as prenatal sex selection. In fact, Armenia has one of the highest rates of prenatal sex selection in the world. There are many contributing factors to this practice, and one of the most important factors is rooted in how our society values a higher value on boys than girls. Prenatal sex selection is a major form of violence that girls, in particular, experience.
7. Give each group a story. Ask each group to read the story and discuss the types of violence represented. Allow them 15-20 minutes to discuss the story.
8. Ask each group to present their story and reflections and then open up the discussion using the questions below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Are these situations realistic?*
- *Are there types of violence that are related to a person's gender? What is the most common type of violence practiced against women? Against men?*
- *Are only men violent, or are women also violent? What is the most common type of violence that women use against others?*
- *What are the most common types of violence that occur in intimate relationships?*
- *Does a person, man or woman, boy or girl ever "deserve" to suffer some type of violence? Why or why not?*

- *Is there a relationship between power and violence? Explain. (Encourage the participants to think of the different types of power (i.e. economic, older family members who have more power than younger family members, physical) that a person can have over another, and the link to violence).*
 - *What are the consequences of violence, particularly prenatal sex selection on individuals? On relationships? On children? On communities?*
9. Ask the same groups to act out the same story they were assigned in a 5-minute role-play. This time, however, the conflict in the story should be resolved without using any kind of violence.

KEY CLOSING MESSAGES: At its most basic level, violence is a way to control or have power over another person. When people talk about violence, they think mainly of physical aggression. It is important, however, to also think of other forms of violence as well as the different settings and circumstances in which violence happens. Prenatal sex selection is a form of gender-based violence aimed at controlling the biological sex of a fetus. Whether enacted against women, children, men, elderly people, individuals of different religious backgrounds, sexual orientations, or against children before they are even born, violence is always a violation of human rights and is rooted in power imbalances.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today's session. Write these on a flipchart marked "Session 10".

HOMEWORK:

What have you learned in this activity? Have you learned anything that can be applied in your own life and relationships? Record these experiences in your journal (optional), and come to the next session prepared to share what you will do differently with the new knowledge and reflection gained in today's session.

Case Studies

CASE STUDY #1, “MARIAM AND HARUTYUN” Mariam has been dating Harutyun for a few months. Recently, Harutyun has started asking her questions all the time: such as: who she talks to in class, why she isn't home when he phones, why she spends so much time with her girlfriends when she could be seeing him, and so on. Mariam has tried to not pay much attention to these questions, but lately Harutyun has started to get pushier and angrier. He has been yelling at her in the hallways at school and calling her names. Afterwards, he usually apologizes but once, he even hit her. He says he is upset because he loves her so much and she is “driving him crazy” with jealousy.

CASE STUDY #2, “GAYANE AND SUREN” Gayane has been with her boyfriend, Suren, for almost a year. Recently, he has started telling her that she is overweight and that he is too embarrassed to go anywhere with her. He makes comments all the time about other women's bodies and how much sexier Gayane would be if she lost weight. He hardly lets her eat. He says that when she is thinner, they can get engaged.

CASE STUDY #3, “LIANA AND ARMAN” Liana and Arman are married and have three children. Arman returns home late from drinking heavily with his friends almost every evening. Liana asks Arman to spend time with their children, but Arman argues that the children do not listen to him. These arguments sometimes escalate with Arman hitting Liana in front of the children. Liana worries that when the children become adults they will enter into similar relationships and replicate their behavior.

CASE STUDY #4, “ARTUR AND LUSINE” Lusine has a very creative and energetic 5-year old son. However, he is always getting into trouble at school. Lusine's husband, Artur, often blames her for their son's bad behavior, saying that she spends too much time at her job when she should be at home. One day Lusine and her husband get into a heated argument and he hits her. Hurt and angry, Lusine yells at the child, telling him that he is an ungrateful son and only brings her problems.

CASE STUDY #5, “MOTHER-IN-LAW” Mary and Armen are married and live with Armen's mother. Mary has been working outside the home since she was in school, but when their first child was born Armen's mother wanted Mary to quit her job. Armen's mother begins to put pressure on Mary, and convinces Armen that he should not allow his wife to work. As a result, Mary quits her job to stay at home with the baby, and has even stopped communicating with her friends and former colleagues.

CASE STUDY #5, “DAVIT AND ANNA” Davit and Anna are a young, happy couple expecting their second child. Their first child is a girl, so they are hoping that the second child will be a boy. One day, Davit accompanies Anna to see the doctor to learn the sex of the bay. In this visit, they learn that they will have another girl. Davit is disappointed and upset. He tells Anna that they must have a son. Together, they decide to terminate their pregnancy hoping that the next time they will have a boy.

ACTIVITY 11: PRENATAL SEX SELECTION AS A FORM OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Identify (and carry out) realistic and actionable community-based solutions to promote gender equality and prevent the practice of prenatal sex selection.*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

No adaptations are necessary for this activity.

MATERIALS:

- Flipchart
- Markers

RECOMMENDED TIME:

Two hours

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR:

The previous session on violence explored the connection between power and the use of violence where some people use violence in order to have power and control over others. This kind of power negatively affects the wellbeing of women and men, boys and girls in communities. In today's session, participants will brainstorm how to promote a "power with" approach in order to prevent the practice of prenatal sex selection.

PREPARATION:

Review key research findings from UNFPA and World Vision studies on the practice of prenatal sex selection in Armenia (optional: show the UNFPA video on the Study of Sex Imbalances at Birth in Armenia)¹⁵. Key findings include:

- Nearly 93,000 women will be missing in Armenia by 2060 if the country's high prenatal sex selection rate remains unchanged;
- With 114 boys born for every 100 girls in 2012, Armenia has one of the most skewed sex ratios at birth in the world;
- The patriarchal structure of Armenian society, which favors sons over daughters, is one of the reasons for the heavily skewed sex ratio in the country, according to key experts;
- Armenia's low birth rate also plays a role, according to the study. As parents have fewer children as a result of economic conditions, repeated pregnancies is no longer the preferred solution to ensure the birth of a son;
- The deficit of young women will make it difficult for men to find partners and may lead to increased emigration levels among young males.

¹⁵ UNFPA video on the Study of Sex Imbalances at Birth in Armenia available in [English](#) and [Armenian](#)

RUNNING THE SESSION:

1. Review the homework from the previous session.
2. Explain to participants that in the previous session they explored how the practice of prenatal sex selection is a form of violence against women and girls. Present key facts about this practice and why it is a problem for Armenian society.
3. On flipchart paper, create 4 boxes (minimum) with each box having one of the following titles: (1) Cultural Practices and Beliefs; (2) Household Decision-Making Dynamics; (3) Economic Opportunities; (4) Laws and Policies. It should look something like this:

CULTURAL PRACTICES AND BELIEFS	HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING DYNAMICS
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES	LAWS AND POLICIES

Feel free to add in other boxes such as “Popular Media” if they are relevant.

4. Ask participants to think about their community and what gender norms and power dynamics need to change in order to eliminate the practice of prenatal sex selection. This brainstorm can be done in small groups or altogether. Touch upon the topic areas in each box and use the examples below to start the discussion:
 - Cultural practices and beliefs – Examples could include beliefs that only men can carry on the clan’s lineage and family name; traditionally, it is more acceptable for men to inherit property; beliefs that biological sons should be responsible for preparing funeral arrangements; that caring for children and the home are primarily a woman’s responsibility.
 - Household decision-making dynamics – Examples could include married women often being subservient to both their male partners and mothers-in-law; men dominating family planning decision-making.

- Economic opportunities – Examples could include women being forced to leave their jobs once they have children limiting their earning potential; women not being considered as competent or competitive as men in the job market.
- Laws and policies – Examples could include lack of family friendly policies that encourage men to take on paternity leave or policies promoting equal hiring opportunity.

You may find some participants balk at some of the norms to be challenged saying that they are part of their culture, and cannot be changed. Ask if anyone has a different viewpoint. After receiving a few comments, affirm that culture and tradition form an integral part of a community's identity. At the same time, they are not static – they do evolve over time. The purpose of this exercise is not to say that tradition and culture are bad, but rather to identify some beliefs that are actually *harmful* to men and women and challenge those.

5. Break participants into groups of 3-5 and ask them to prepare and perform a short role play that addresses at least one of the issues brainstormed above, as well as the following questions:
 - Who needs to change (Example: male or female policy makers, husbands, wives, male church leaders, mothers-in-law)?
 - How would this change happen? What is the solution? (Example: Identification of gender equality champions, talking with family members, men-talking-to-men group discussions, parent training courses, community campaigns).
6. Write the key messages (who needs to be involved, how will the change happen) from each role-play on flipchart paper.

Note: There is the option to develop a community campaign together with group participants at the end of these group sessions. See Session #14. Use the solutions presented in this session to inform this activity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Are the solutions presented realistic? Why or why not?*
- *Who needs to be involved to carry out these solutions?*
- *What is one (or more) solution(s) you can carry out this week?*

CLOSING KEY MESSAGES: In this session, solutions were developed to address gender inequalities and unequal power dynamics to prevent the practice of prenatal sex selection. It is especially important for men to use their power and privilege to speak to other men about these solutions.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today's session. Write these on a flipchart marked "Session 11".

HOMEWORK:

Carry out one of the solutions to prevent the practice of prenatal sex selection. Record these experiences in your journal (optional), and come ready to discuss the reactions of others in your community to this action.

ACTIVITY 12: WHAT DO I DO WHEN I AM ANGRY?

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Recognize when they are angry and how to express their anger in a non-destructive way.*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

No adaptations are necessary for this activity.

MATERIALS:

- Blank pieces of paper
- Pens or pencils for everyone in the group

RECOMMENDED TIME:

Two hours

FACILITATOR NOTES:

In the session “What Is Violence?” the facilitator leads a group discussion on different kinds of violence and its root causes. This session builds upon this and provides opportunities for participants to identify ways they can prevent violence from happening in their intimate relationships in the first place.

RUNNING THE SESSION:

1. After reviewing the homework, introduce this activity by explaining that many of us confuse anger and violence, thinking that they are the same thing.

Make it clear to the group that anger is a natural and normal emotion that every human being feels at some point in life.

Violence is a behavior, a way to express anger. But there are many other ways to express anger – and more positive ways – than violence. It is important to learn how to express our anger than allowing it to bottle up inside us. When we allow anger to build up, we tend to explode. Additionally, healthier ways of expressing anger can lead to better results or ensuring everyone “gets what they want”.

2. Explain to the group that you will now talk about how to react to anger.
3. Ask participants to relax and close their eyes. Say “*think of a situation when you were angry with your partner (for couples) or a parent (for youth, though could also be used with couples in relation to a mother-in-law). What happened? Don’t say it out loud. Just think about it.*” Give them a few minutes to think silently.

Alternatively, pass out sheets of paper and pens to everyone in the group. Ask that they write one or two sentences about a situation where they felt angry.

4. Next, say, *“In this situation, try to remember what you were **thinking and feeling**”*.

Alternatively, they can write down one or two feelings they felt when they were angry.

5. *“Very often after we feel angry we begin to react with violence. This can happen even before we realize that we are angry. Some men and women react immediately: shouting, throwing something on the floor, hitting something or someone. Sometimes, we can even become depressed and silent.”* Think about the incident where you felt angry. **How did you demonstrate this anger? How did you behave?**

Alternatively, they can write a sentence or a few words about how they reacted.

6. Divide participants into groups of 4 or 5 at the most. Ask them to share what they wrote or thought about in the group. Allow 20 minutes for this group work.
7. After 20 minutes, ask each group to brainstorm:
 - Negative ways of reacting when we are angry with a partner, or parent.
 - Realistic and positive ways of reacting when we are angry with a partner or parent.

They may choose to write these down, or simply discuss them.

8. Ask each group to write out their lists and then ask each group to present their answers.

NOTE:

It is likely that, on the list of the “Positive Ways” of reacting, one will (1) take a breath of fresh air, or count to 10; and (2) use words to express what we feel without offending. It is important to stress that to “take a breath of fresh air” does not mean going out to a bar and drinking lots of alcohol, or getting in a vehicle and driving around at high speed exposing oneself to risk.

To take a breath of fresh air is simply getting out of the situation of conflict, and away from the person who is making you angry. One can count to 10, breathe deeply, take a walk, or do some kind of physical activity, trying to cool down and keep calm. One should also explain to the other person that he/she will go outside to take a breath of fresh air because he/she is feeling angry. They can say: *“I’m really angry, and I need to take a breath of fresh air. I need to do something like go for a walk so I don’t feel violent or start shouting. When I’ve cooled down and I’m calmer, we can talk things over.”*

To use words without offending is to learn how to express two things: (1) To say to the other person why you are upset, and (2) to say what you want from the other person, without offending or insulting. For example:

I am angry with you because _____.

I would like you to _____.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Discuss the following questions with the group:

- *Is it difficult for men to express their anger without using violence? Why?*
- *Do we react differently when we are angry depending on who we are angry with? How?*
- *Very often we know how to avoid a conflict or a fight without using violence, but we don't do so. Why?*
- *Is it possible to "take a breath of fresh air" to reduce conflicts? Do we have experience with this? How did it work out?*
- *Is it possible to use words without offending?*

9. If there is time, using the role plays from Activity #10 ask participants to form new groups and prepare a 5-minute skit using the positive methods of communicating anger to resolve the conflict learned in this session.

CLOSING KEY MESSAGES: In general, boys and men are socialized not to talk about their feelings. When men are sad or frustrated, they are encouraged not to talk about it. Very often by not talking, the frustration or anger builds up until it is expressed through physical aggression or shouting. In the event of conflict, use words, but don't offend.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today's session. Write these on a flipchart marked "Session 12".

HOMEWORK

With a partner or a parent/caregiver, role play a realistic scenario that would usually provoke an angry outburst and practice an anger management technique learned in today's session.

ACTIVITY 13: HOW READY ARE YOU?

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Be able identify and be encouraged to take action that promote equal and healthy relationships*
- *Challenge and take responsibility for men's violence against women*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

No adaptations are necessary for this activity.

MATERIALS:

- Index cards
- Pens/pencils
- Long piece of string.

RECOMMENDED TIME:

Two hours

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR:

Throughout these sessions, participants learned and discussed new and positive behaviors that they would like to take on in their own lives: these may include caring for others, supporting both boys and girls equally, not using violence, replicating positive behaviors from their own upbringing, and more. Even after deciding to take on these new actions, feeling confident to perform them in the outside world can be challenging. This activity will allow participants to think more about how they can take what they have learned throughout the sessions, and overcome potential anxieties and obstacles, to practice these behaviors at home and in public, even after the sessions end.

PREPARATION:

Place a long piece of string on the ground. Place an index card next to one end of the string with the words: "I Am Not Ready," the middle of the string with "I am Somewhat Ready," and the opposite end of the string with "I Am Ready."

RUNNING THE SESSION:

1. Introduce the session by explaining that in the past sessions they have been exploring how gender and power inequality between men and women can harm well-being. This activity will now explore the different ways in which the participants can take action in their everyday lives to prevent violence against women and girls and promote good relationships in the community. Some of these actions will require more readiness than others. Ask a few participants to define what "being ready to take action" for gender equality and preventing prenatal sex selection means to them and come to an agreement in the group. (Sample

definition of being ready to take action: the ability to do something that frightens you, to be bold and brave, to face difficult challenges with inner strength).

2. Read the first sentence from the list below out loud to the group:

For Couples: How ready are you...

- *To interfere when witnessing physical abuse of a child? (a woman, a man)*
- *To interfere when hearing the voices of quarrel from neighbors' house?*
- *To raise boys and girls equally (when it comes to their education and social choices)?*
- *To share what you've learned about gender equality with friends, or other members of your family?*
- *To talk to another family about the value of girl children?*
- *(If you are a man) To support your wife's wishes if she chooses to work outside the home (other options: To drive a car? To decide for herself how to dress?)*
- *(If you are a man) To make financial decisions jointly with your wife?*
- *(If you are a man) To help your wife with house chores/work even when she is not sick?*
- *(If you are a man or woman) To respectfully tell your mother or mother-in-law not to interfere in your joint decision-making*
- *(If you are a woman) To let your husband take on more of the house chores*
- *(If you are a woman who works) To take on more leadership responsibilities in the workplace traditionally assigned to men*

For Youth (Boys): How ready are you...

- *To choose profession that is usually meant for a girl or a woman?*
- *To stop others from laughing at a person based on his looks or behaviors?*
- *To give space to a girl to express her thoughts honestly?*
- *To express your feelings openly?*
- *To speak openly about your faith?*
- *To share what you have learned in these sessions with your friends?*

For Youth (Girls): How ready are you...

- *To choose a profession that is usually meant for a boy or a man?*
- *To speak openly about your faith?*
- *To speak about your boyfriend with your parents?*
- *To take on a leadership role at school?*
- *To share what you have learned in these sessions with your friends?*

3. Ask participants, "How ready are you to do this action?" or, "How much courage does it take...?"

4. Ask each person to discuss with at least two others how ready they are to carry out the action. Then ask everyone to stand on the part of the line that best represents their level of readiness.

5. If people are standing in different places, ask them to explain why.
6. Repeat Steps #2 - #5 reading out loud each relevant statement in the box.
7. Ask the following questions:
 - *What is the easiest action to carry out? Why?*
 - *What was the most difficult? Why?*
 - *What kinds of support do men and boys in particular need to take these actions that require the most readiness? What kinds of support do women and girls need?*
8. Next, ask participants to get into groups of 3 to 4 people.
9. Explain that each group will pick an action they are the *least ready* to carry out. They will prepare a role-play that shows how men and women, or boys and girls can work together to carry out such an action. Give them about 15 minutes to prepare a 5-minute role-play.
10. Ask for each group to volunteer and let the rest of the groups provide feedback.

CLOSING KEY MESSAGES:

Most men care deeply about the women and girls in their lives. However, there are men who undermine women and girls' rights by committing violence, controlling all the decision-making in the household, or along with some women by valuing their sons more than their daughters.

Men can play a critical role in setting a positive example for other men and boys by treating women and girls with respect, and by challenging other men's harmful attitudes and behaviors. For example, men commit the vast majority of domestic and sexual violence and therefore have a special responsibility to end the violence. It is, in other words, men's work to end male violence, and work in partnership with women to promote healthy family well-being and equal gender relations.

KEY MESSAGES:

As a last step, ask participants to volunteer 3-5 key messages from today's session. Write these on a flipchart marked "Session 13".

HOMEWORK:

For youth and couples: Ask participants to commit to at least one action they can take to promote gender equality in their own lives. They should discuss this action with a close member of the family and decide when this action will take place. They should record these reflections in their journal (optional) and come prepared to discuss them in the next session.

Tell participants that you will be preparing a contact information sheet for everyone so that they can stay in touch after the group ends (the next session is the very last session). If anyone

would like to add additional contact information such as Facebook or another mobile number, or would not like to share their contact information, they should see you after today's session is over.

Closing Activity

In this final activity, the facilitator and participants will reflect on the previous sessions and plan how they will promote the messages and the experiences of gender transformative change with the larger community.



ACTIVITY 14: THE SPIDER WEB

BY END OF THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- *Reflect on the key messages and actions they have undertaken while participating in this group*
- *(Optional) Develop a community campaign that will mobilize the community to take action to promote gender equality and prevent prenatal sex selection*

GROUP COMPOSITION:

No adaptations are necessary for this activity.

MATERIALS:

- Thick piece of long string, or colored yarn
- Copies of a contact sheet for all participants
- Flipchart papers
- Post-its from previous 13 sessions on “Key Messages”.
- If participants were keeping journals, ensure they bring them to this last session.

RECOMMENDED TIME:

Two hours

PREPARATION:

Prepare enough copies of the contact sheet for all participants (see homework from previous session)

Post the key messages from the previous 13 sessions on the wall in a visible part of the room.

Review the recommendations for closing the group listed at the end of this session. Pick the appropriate activity from the list or come up with your own.

RUNNING THE SESSION:

1. After checking in on the homework, tell participants that this will be the last session that you will have together. Thank them for the time they spent sharing and exchanging personal experiences with one another. Say that in these sessions, participants were able to gain new knowledge and awareness about how gender influences the roles, practices, and attitudes men and women have in society. While some of these expectations are good, others can be harmful and negatively impact the lives of both men and women. With this new awareness and skill, participants have the ability to challenge these norms and determine for themselves what it means to be a man or woman, and communicate these new values to their own (future) children. Transforming these gender norms in a positive way benefits the communities and societies they live in.

2. Bring the group's attention to the Key Messages from the last 13 sessions. Ask a few people to volunteer to read the key messages from each session.
3. Ask participants to volunteer how they feel about all they have reflected, discussed and debated these past sessions. Are there any other key messages that are missing from these sessions?
4. Ask participants to stand up in the same circle.
5. Grab the ball of string or yarn. Ask participants to think about how they would complete the following phrase: "Something I did while participating in this group that I feel proud of is..."
6. You will begin by completing phrase. Then holding onto one end of the string or yarn, you will throw the other end to another person in the circle. This person will then say one thing they have learned, then holding onto their end of the string, throw the yarn to another member of the group. This will continue until everyone has had a turn to speak.
7. Once everyone has had a turn, a spider web will have formed. Explain that this web represents the sum of all the positive actions this group has taken to promote equality within their families and communities. If each participant continues to perform these positive actions into the future, this will translate into long-lasting transformation.
8. Ask if anyone would like to share any last thoughts.

CLOSE:

Now we have the opportunity to take what we have learned and practiced together into our communities, our households and in our relationships. The changes within ourselves create a ripple that affects everyone around us.

Proceed with one or more of the following recommendations in the box below to close the group.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO END THIS SESSION:

1. Cut the spider web into pieces to make bracelets for each of the participants to remind them of their commitments.
2. Present certificates of completion to each participant in a graduation ceremony.
3. Invite a local leader to close the session with remarks about the importance of gender equality.
4. Pass out printed copies of contact information for all participants so that they can continue to stay in contact with one another.
5. Engage participants in the development of a community campaign using the next chapter on Creating a Community Campaign, as a support worksheet for Session #14.

Creating a Community Campaign

Activity 14 Supporting Worksheet

To promote large-scale, gender norms change in how our societies value sons over daughters, it is necessary to combine individual-level methodologies - such as what we have done in these sessions – with community mobilization and advocacy. This has the power to raise social consciousness and awareness by utilizing the energy, voices, opinions and influence of the community as a whole.

This Supporting Worksheet will help those participants who want to engage in community mobilization by promoting positive messages about gender equality with the larger community. This exercise is meant to complement the activities in this manual and can be carried out with couples or with youth.

Steps to Creating a Community Campaign

Below, you can find the steps necessary to launch a community mobilization campaign. These steps can be adapted to various contexts.

STEP #1: SET A GOAL.

It is essential to start the process by defining the key desired changes and the key desired impacts or ‘goals’ of the community campaign. Determine 1-3 goals that the community campaign will hope to accomplish.

STEP #2: BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership-building is the key to creating effective and sustainable community campaigns. Through partnerships, the collective voices of individuals, in combination with organizations and stakeholders can command attention from the government, the media and the general public on the importance of working with men.

STEP #3: PROMOTE DEBATE ON THE TOPIC WITH PARTNERS

Before creating a campaign and solidifying its themes, it is important to encourage debate on the issues of gender equality, involved fatherhood, violence prevention, prenatal sex selection, and women's rights with your key partners, as well as with any other relevant NGOs, social networks, government bodies that are interested or influential in working towards gender equality. The purpose of this is to promote shared values on gender equality as well as to challenge those who may hold gender inequitable beliefs.

STEP #4: CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Conduct focus groups and one-on-one interviews with key members of the community, such as parents and children, to determine what specific issues need to be addressed in the community in terms of achieving a community where girl and boy children are

valued equally. What do they believe? Where do these beliefs come from? What do they want to learn about how to be better mothers and fathers?

STEP #5: DEVELOP A PROFILE OF A "TARGET" GROUP

Acknowledging the unique situations of all men, women and children interviewed in the needs assessment (Step 3), use the collected data to identify some common characteristics of the campaign's target group: the group of men, women and children that you most want to reach.

STEP #6: MAP THE SOURCES OF INFLUENCE AND INFORMATION

This step involves identifying and understanding the different sources of information that influence men's and women's attitudes and behaviors related to girl and boy children. For example, where do men get their information? The newspaper? The internet? From work colleagues?

STEP #7: DEFINE CAMPAIGN THEMES

When considering a campaign related to gender equality, it is necessary to identify more specific sub-topics or sub-themes. These themes should fit under the umbrella of the campaign's established goals, and will act as desired "outcomes" of the community mobilization effort. This will help develop more targeted messages for the campaign. A sub-theme could be promoting girls' engagement in science and other traditionally male-dominated professions. Another sub-theme could be promoting men's involvement in house and care work.

STEP #8: DEVELOP KEY MESSAGES FOR EACH OF THE THEMES OF THE CAMPAIGN AND ACCOMPANYING SAMPLE MEDIA

These key messages will help refine the themes, and present them in a more tangible way, providing specific activities and models of action. These messages will represent the campaign's themes in action. For example, a sub-theme of the campaign is men's involvement in teaching children. The key message for this sub-theme is, "You teach me about equality. You are my father."

Develop sample media which incorporates positive imagery such as men engaging in care work. See the MenCare Campaign website www.men-care.org for ideas! Brainstorm about other kinds of community engagement that could also communicate these key messages such as street performances, television advertisements and interviews, etc.

STEP #9: PRE-TEST THE MESSAGES AND IMAGES WITH MEN, WOMEN, AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE COMMUNITY

After you have created sample media which incorporates positive imagery and the key messages, it is important to make sure that the selected themes and messages work together and make sense based on the community's needs. Conduct focus group

interviews with your key stakeholders to see if the campaign's messages and images resonate with the group. Revise as much as possible based on their feedback.

STEP #10: PUT YOUR CAMPAIGN INTO ACTION!

Now you have a goal, themes and key messages that resonate with the community: individuals, men, women and others. You understand your target audience. You have mapped out the proper outlets to disseminate your messages, and have brainstormed creative venues through which to promote them. Now, it's time to take action. Based on your budget and the sources of influence mapped in Step #6, determine how you will launch your campaign, and over what period of time.

Participant Journal

Please find here a format for a journal. You may print this out, or recreate it using available paper or notebooks. Each participant should be advised to keep a journal throughout the 14 sessions.

This journal can be used for several purposes:

1. Each participant should use this space to reflect during or after the session **on key personal takeaways**. Ask yourself, “What did I learn or take away from this session?” and “What do I want to remember about this session and take with me?”
2. This space can also be a helpful place to record reflections from **homework tasks**.

When the group ends, this journal will serve as a valuable keepsake, to remind participants of what they have learned and discussed, to take with them into their own lives.

References

Activity 2: What is This Thing Called Gender?

Adapted from: Instituto Promundo, Salud y Género, ECOS, Instituto PAPAI and World Education. (2006). Program M: Working with Women: Empowerment, Rights and Health.

Activity 3: How Women and Men Express Themselves

Adapted from: Promundo, Instituto PAPAI, Salud y Género and ECOS. (2013). Program H|M|D: A Toolkit for Action/Engaging Youth to Achieve Gender Equity. Promundo: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Washington, DC, USA.

Activity 4: The Gender Fishbowl

Adapted from: Promundo and UN Women Liberia. (2014). Engaging Liberian Men and Boys in Gender Equality: A UN Women Liberia Manual. Promundo: Washington, DC, USA; UN Women: Monrovia, Liberia.

Activity 5: Hours in a Day

Adapted from: Promundo, CulturaSalud and REDMAS. (2013). Program P – A Manual for Engaging Men in Fatherhood, Caregiving, Maternal and Child Health. Promundo: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Washington, DC, USA.

Activity 6: Objects, Plants, Animals and People

Adapted from: Instituto Promundo, PAPAI, ECOS and Salud y Género. (2002). Program H: Working with Young Men Series. Support from the Pan American Health Organization and International Planned Parenthood Federation/WHR.

Homework Assignment: “Caring for the Family”

Adapted from: Instituto Promundo, PAPAI, ECOS and Salud y Género. (2002). Program H: Working with Young Men Series. Support from the Pan American Health Organization and International Planned Parenthood Federation/WHR.

Activity 7: Gender and Toys

Adapted from: Promundo, CulturaSalud and REDMAS. (2013). Program P – A Manual for Engaging Men in Fatherhood, Caregiving, Maternal and Child Health. Promundo: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Washington, D.C. USA. and *Adapted from:* Promundo, Instituto PAPAI, Salud y Género and ECOS. (2013). Program H|M|D: A Toolkit for Action/Engaging Youth to Achieve Gender Equity. Promundo: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Washington, DC, USA.

Activity 8: The Baby is Crying

Adapted from: Instituto Promundo, PAPAI, ECOS and Salud y Género. (2002). Program H: Working with Young Men Series. Support from the Pan American Health Organization and International Planned Parenthood Federation/WHR.

Activity 9: My Parents' Legacy

Adapted from: Promundo, CulturaSalud and REDMAS. (2013). Program P – A Manual for Engaging Men in Fatherhood, Caregiving, Maternal and Child Health. Promundo: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Washington, DC, USA.

Activity 10: What is Violence?

Adapted from: Instituto Promundo, Salud y Género, ECOS, Instituto PAPAI and World Education. (2006). Program M: Working with Women: Empowerment, Rights and Health.

Activity 11: Prenatal Sex Selection as a Form of Gender-Based Violence

Adapted from: Instituto Promundo, Salud y Género, ECOS, Instituto PAPAI and World Education. (2006). Program M: Working with Women: Empowerment, Rights and Health.

Activity 12: What Do I Do When I am Angry?

Adapted from: Promundo, Instituto PAPAI, Salud y Género and ECOS. (2013). Program H|M|D: A Toolkit for Action/Engaging Youth to Achieve Gender Equity. Promundo: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Washington, DC, USA.

Activity 13: How Ready Are You?

Adapted from: Sonke Gender Justice. One Man Can: Workshop Activities Talking to men about gender, domestic and sexual violence and HIV/AIDS.

Activity 14: The Spider Web

Adapted from: Promundo, CulturaSalud and REDMAS. (2013). Program P – A Manual for Engaging Men in Fatherhood, Caregiving, Maternal and Child Health. Promundo: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Washington, DC, USA.

**Creating a Community Campaign
(Activity 14 Supporting Worksheet)**

Adapted from: Promundo, CulturaSalud and REDMAS. (2013). Program P – A Manual for Engaging Men in Fatherhood, Caregiving, Maternal and Child Health. Promundo: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Washington, DC, USA.



CARING FOR EQUALITY



PARTICIPANT JOURNAL



ACTIVITY 1: THE INTRO SESSION – WHY AM I HERE?



- For couples: Discuss the following questions: What are some values that you have in common with each other? What is one value that you disagreed on during the exercise? Discuss why each of you hold the opinion that you do. Do not attempt to come to an agreement, but rather listen to the other's perspective.
- For youth: Share one to two things you learned today with one other person either in your family, or a trusted friend. Also, consider starting a discussion about gender values with other peers and share any new opinions you formed while in today's session.

Record your experiences below.

(Notes)

ACTIVITY 11: PRENATAL SEX SELECTION AS A FORM OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Carry out one of the solutions to prevent the practice of prenatal sex selection. Record your experiences below.

(Notes) _____

ACTIVITY 13: HOW READY ARE YOU?



Ask participants to commit to at least one action they can take to promote gender equality in their own lives. Discuss this action with a close member of the family and decide when this action will take place. Record your experiences below.

(Notes) _____
