Harnessing Male Engagement for Transformational Gender Behavior Change in Upper Egypt

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A two-year SBC-focused project implemented in three Upper Egypt Locations: Assuit, Sohag, Luxor
Background

Gender inequality in Egypt remains deeply entrenched, a manifestation of pervasive beliefs about gender norms held by both men and women.

The 2017 International Men and Gender Equality Survey on gender norms in the MENA region confirmed Egyptians support widely inequitable views on women’s roles in the household and community.
More than 75% of men and 50% of women support the notion that a woman’s most important role is to care for the household.

More than 70% of men and women believe wives should tolerate violence within the family unit.

Women in Upper Egypt largely perceive gender norms as rules of law that control them, with men and women responsible for distinct spheres.
Description of Intervention

Goal: Men and women in Upper Egyptian villages engage in more respectful and equitable relationships within and outside the household unit.

Objective: Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have increased capacity to design and deliver effective gender transformative programs.

Outcome 1: Community Based Organizations are supported to design and pilot male engagement strategies.
Local NGOs and CBOs worked to expand their knowledge base to tackle unequal gender power relations within the household.

In-depth assessments were conducted on male perception towards non-violent parenting and gender dynamics.
Description of Intervention

Local CBOs designed **male engagement activities** based on the trainings they received.

In-person visits with fathers to **build trust**.

Launching and testing **male engagement activities**.
Description of Intervention

Partners galvanized the **community leaders** so they could reinforce the messaging that was being delivered.

**Key messages** were reinforced among male caregivers to achieve **sustainable changes in behaviors** that disrupt the cycle of violence within and outside the household.
**Description of Intervention**

**Key messaging** was adapted from CRS’ **Better Parenting curriculum**

Examples of topics:

- Understanding Parenting
- Cultural and Social Norms
- Parenting Styles
- Child’s Temperament
- Parent-Child Communication
- Family Rules, Boundaries and Roles
- Gender and household dynamics
- Understanding and Managing Your Own Emotions
- Discipline
Messaging Examples: Gender and Household Dynamics

“When mothers and fathers jointly participate in parenting, the whole family benefits. Fathers and other male relatives do not become less valuable to their children when this happens!”

“Household chores should be shared equally among boys and girls, for example in the time needed for chores and tasks they are given.”
Description of Intervention: Duration

2 quarters
- Series of **capacity building workshops** for project partners, CBOs, and local leaders

1 quarter
- In-depth **community assessments**

2 quarters
- Piloting **male engagement strategies**

3 quarters
- **Collective activities** involving female participants
Meeting with a male participant
Individual meeting with a male participant

Collective session with a group of male participants
Interactive theater activity
Theater activity with extended family present
Joint session with project participants
Session with family therapist
Family day
Day trip
Cinema day with male participants
Results

264 male caregivers were engaged in at least one Better Parenting topic during the project period. 205 completed the full 15-topic curriculum.

93% of CBO male staff had demonstrated improvement in their knowledge to design pilot approaches to male engagement.
Results

93% of male caregivers adopted positive parenting behaviors by the end of the project.

83% of men agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that husbands and wives should make joint decisions about how to spend household income.
Lessons Learned

Visual activities involving art and theatre complement meetings and are more memorable and appeal to emotions.

The influence of extended family and community on men to continue practicing adverse behaviors remains a challenge to be considered.
Discussion/ Implications for the Field

Identify and work with **influencing groups** and understand key determinants

Include all family members in project activities, especially those who in **multi-generational** or extended-family homes

The quality of fathers’ relationship with their children was an **intrinsic reward** that motivated sustained positive behaviors

Community leaders can successfully support SBC with male heads of household

Work with staff from **sites** of project implementation
Thank you!

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Access the Better Parenting Discussion Guide and other materials here: