Changing masculinities: insights on sexual harassment from an evidence review

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Our study

- Part of broader evidence review
- Conducted as part of DFID-funded Gender & Adolescence Global Evidence programme
- Other topics included intimate partner violence, couple communication, gender roles
Overview

- 12 non-formal education programmes with impacts on sexual violence
- 22 programmes with recorded impacts on sexual relationships
- Varied programme designs and age groups targeted
- All had gender awareness at core
- Initiatives spanned all low and middle-income regions
What norms of masculinity did programmes aim to change?

- Boys must be tough
- (Hetero)sexual activity is the mark of a real man
- Boys/men don’t express their feelings
- It’s OK to beat/harass a woman or girl in certain circumstances
- Men are the ultimate decision-makers in a household
- If someone insults you, you should fight back
Sexual harassment
All studies recorded positive change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of change</th>
<th>Number of studies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change in attitudes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in behaviour</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change in attitudes and behaviour</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
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Quantitative findings

- 2 initiatives (Pakistan and China) led to less accepting attitudes towards sexual violence
  - Specifically: reduced agreement that women and girls provoke assault by dressing in a ‘sexy’ manner
- 2 initiatives (South Africa, Kenya) led to reduced perpetration of sexual violence
  - 1 of these also recorded a reduction in transactional sex (South Africa)
Shift away from young men seeing sexually harassing women and girls as a fun way to pass time.

- Earlier the boys had their favourite places where they would sit in groups and tease or pass comments to girls and women passing by. (Mentor, India)

- Before I participated with my friends in actions like sexual harassment because it was fun for us. But now, I have completely changed ... and I advise others ... [on how to make similar changes].

- Young man, Ethiopia
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Pathways to change:

increased empathy

“Earlier when I used to go out with my friends, then I used to also tease girls using vulgar words. But after participating in Yaari-Dosti, my thoughts have changed. I feel now that the girls who are teased by the young boys suffer a lot. We should respect them.”
(young man, Mumbai, India)

“I cannot stand such men; torture or atrocity is not right. Even I have mother and sister; this can be the case with them as well.”
(Bihar, India)
Pathways to change:
knowledge of the law

“Now, if I go to the market and see that a boy is harassing a girl, then I scold the guy. If I see someone doing wrong to a girl then I go to them and tell them that if you don’t stop such thing then you will be behind the bars. I explain to them”

(Young man, Bihar, India)
Knowledge gaps

- Relative impact of different programme approaches, especially more granular analysis on single and mixed gender approaches
- Added value of particular approaches and curriculum content; would greater use of mass media be effective?
- Long-term impacts and what contributes to lasting change
- Cost-effectiveness of non-formal education vs school-based comprehensive sexuality education
Key take-aways

- **Quality of mentoring** was very important.
- **Longer initiatives** typically achieved greater change.
- **Combining social activities/ drop in space** with courses encouraged greater space to explore masculinities, commitment to initiative and to behaviour change.
- **Boys/ young men valued male only spaces** but coming together with girls and women helped change perspectives.
- Changes were often greater in cultures with **less sticky norms**.

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