

WEBINAR SERIES

SÉRIE DE WEBINAIRES

LET'S CHAT GENDER EQUITY

PARLONS-EN L'ÉQUITÉ DES GENRES

12 NOON EDT | 9 AM PDT

12 h HAE | 9 h HAP

SEPTEMBER 3 + SEPTEMBER 10

3 SEPTEMBRE + 10 SEPTEMBRE

 **SPUR**
CHANGE | **ACTIVER LE**
CHANGEMENT

 **ICN/RCC**

 En partenariat avec
Canada

**Engaging
Men & Boys**

SEPTEMBER 3



**Darcy Ataman,
Make Music Matter**



**Kamilla Pinter,
HealthBridge
Foundation of
Canada**



**Caroline Pugini,
SCORE Against
Poverty**



**Mobiliser les
hommes et
les garçons**

3 SEPTEMBRE



Healing in Harmony - Engaging men and boys in promoting gender equity



Our Mission

Make Music Matter uses the creative process as a therapeutic tool to help heal trauma and empower marginalized individuals and communities to recover, reintegrate, and reclaim their future with hope and dignity.

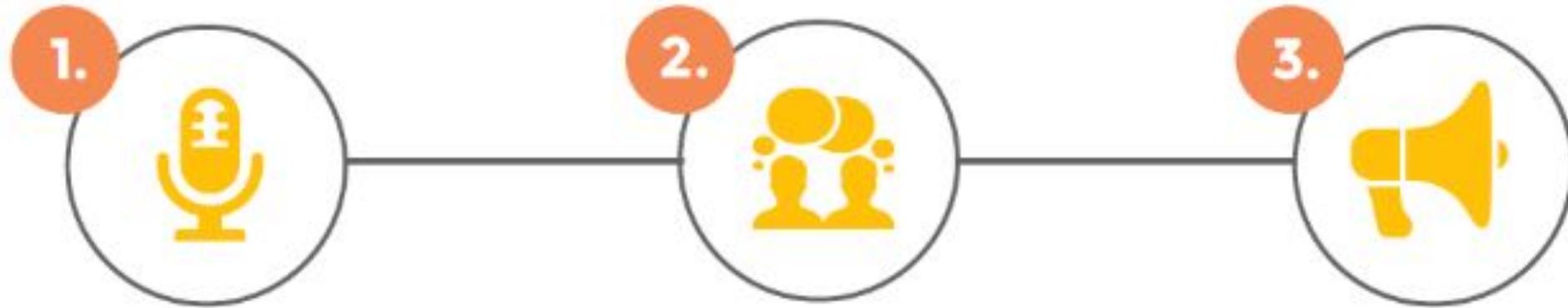
Our **Healing in Harmony** group therapy intervention is:

- An innovative combination of psychotherapy and music therapy
- A safe, non-judgmental space
- For survivors of profound trauma including sexual and gender-based violence, acts of extreme violence, refugees and displaced people, residential school survivors, survivors of intergenerational trauma and other vulnerable and marginalized groups



Image courtesy of World Vision Canada, Healing in Harmony partners in the DRC

The Healing in Harmony model



Working in tandem with a trained psychologist and music producer, participants write, record, and professionally produce songs about their emotions and experiences.

The process has a profound effect on both psychological healing and the restoration of a supportive, healing community.

Healing in Harmony artists are advocates, disseminating songs through community concerts, local radio, social media, and major digital platforms, helping to reduce stigma and spreading messages of positive change.



Where we work

Healing in Harmony has helped transform the lives of **over 18,000 individuals** in nine countries worldwide.

AFRICA

Bukavu, DRC | Panzi Hospital and Foundation
Mulamba, DRC | Panzi Hospital and Foundation
Beni, DRC | Panzi Hospital and Foundation/World Vision DRC
Kasai, DRC | World Vision Canada and DRC
Kigali, Rwanda | Uyisenga Ni Imanzi
Conakry, Guinea | Mukwege Foundation/AVIPA
Pietermaritzburg, South Africa | Mukwege Foundation/SESHHA
Gulu, Uganda | Mukwege Foundation/Golden Women's Vision

EUROPE

Gaziantep, Turkey/Syria | SENED, BeChild

AMERICAS

Trujillo, Peru | World Vision Peru
Toronto, Canada | Aboriginal Legal Services
Kehewin Cree Nation, Canada | Kehewin Native Dance Theatre





Healing in Harmony in Mulamba



Healing in Harmony studio in Mulamba,
South Kivu, DRC

- Having witnessed the positive impact of Healing in Harmony on the women in their lives, the men themselves came forward and requested assistance to break the negative cycles in which they find themselves.
- Healing in Harmony, in partnership with Panzi Hospital and funded by FIT, provided **a safe space to discuss positive models of masculinity and gender equity**, allowing them to:
 - Address their own traumatic experiences
 - Develop therapeutic and nonviolence coping skills
 - Discuss positive models of masculinity
 - Develop their understanding of gender equality
 - Learn tools to support and empower their female family and community members who face stigmatization



Healing in Harmony in Mulamba



“The fact that men are now participating in the sessions is very reassuring for women and has given the program higher credibility in the community.”

- Dr. Bienvenu, medical doctor at the Mulamba Hospital Centre



“Being a survivor of sexual and gender-based violence is not a life sentence, but a surmountable step”

“For a more just society”



The Research

'Bouncing Back After Trauma: Music, Therapy, Gender, and Mental Health in a Post Conflict Setting' - Ali Bitenga, Denis Mukwege, et al

- Published in February 2025 via [Discover Mental Health](#)
- Conducted in Mulamba, DRC throughout 2022, the study aimed:
 - To assess the impact of introducing men to a music therapy program designed for female survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)
 - To examine the impact of music therapy on participants' mental health (specifically anxiety, depression, and PTSD symptoms)
 - To evaluate the extent to which improvement was sustained for an extended period of time, and whether there were gender differences in improvement





Research results

- [Research](#) found that the Healing in Harmony program was associated with **significant improvement of mental health symptoms for vulnerable individuals, both women and men, in armed conflicts contexts.**
- It was concluded that **men's inclusion to female psychosocial rehabilitation programs is exceptionally crucial in our efforts to establish trauma-free environments for women and men.**
- [Watch the video abstract](#)

PREVALENCE OF ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND PTSD AMONGST PARTICIPANTS IN THE HEALING IN HARMONY MUSIC THERAPY PROGRAM IN MULAMBA			
	BEFORE TREATMENT	AFTER TREATMENT	6 MONTHS POST-TREATMENT
ANXIETY	91.4	14.3	26.5
DEPRESSION	90.4	15.9	21.8
PTSD	36.7	2.1	1.0

There are some signs that men seem to have less anxiety and depression before treatment but women see greater improvement post treatment, and their improvement seems to last longer.



Healing in Harmony in Mulamba

Both women and men reported increased feelings of self-worth.

Before the program, I felt stressed and thought I was a useless person but now I feel stronger and have become happy again.

FEMALE HIH PARTICIPANT

I thought I was a 'failed man' when my wife was raped but I am feeling okay now, I can work and live in peace with my family again.

MALE HIH PARTICIPANT

When you come to the HIH program you will no longer beat your wife. You change your mind about what it means to be a man because the music therapy teaches you positive masculinity.

MALE HIH PARTICIPANT





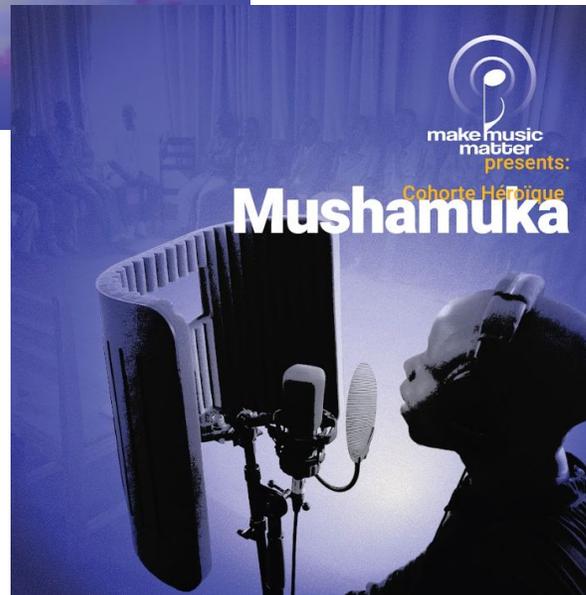
Healing in Harmony in Mulamba

Most participants attributed the improvement in their mental health to:

- the discovery of persons with similar traumatic experience within the HIH program
- the verbalisation of traumatic experiences through songs
- the inclusion of men and women in a dynamic gender-inclusive music program
- the savoir-être and savoir faire of the music therapist



Music from Mulamba



*A model man takes care of his home
A role model is someone others look to as a good example*

*No matter the difficulties at home, he is present
He gives himself to his home with all his heart x2
He loves his wife and children by making them respected in
society*

*He helps his wife with certain tasks
And supports her ideas x2*

...

*A model man worries about the future of his family
He educates all his children without any distinction
And lives in harmony with his neighbors*

-Lyrics from 'Lo Mushamuka Iwiganyo (A Model Father)'



“Thanks to this music therapy that we have known, I feel strong. I feel whole. I feel liberated.”

- Jean Claude Cishesha Maheshe, Healing in Harmony artist in Mulamba, DRC



Healing in Harmony on Idjwi Island, South Kivu

- Funded by FIT, 'Healing in Harmony On the Move' is currently testing the intervention with **couples participating in therapy together.**
- Applying a positive masculinity approach combined with a **mobile studio**, the innovation seeks to break barriers to accessing mental health care - both those rooted in gender-inequality and physical barriers that make it difficult to access support in remote areas.
- Healing in Harmony is helping to reinforce **men as allies, caring family members, agents of change, role models, and community leaders** - an essential step to end the violence and repair broken communities.



**Engaging
Men & Boys**

SEPTEMBER 3



**Darcy Ataman,
Make Music Matter**



**Kamilla Pinter,
HealthBridge
Foundation of
Canada**



**Caroline Pugini,
SCORE Against
Poverty**



**Mobiliser les
hommes et
les garçons**

3 SEPTEMBRE



**Engaging Men in Sexual, Reproductive,
Maternal and Child Health**

September 2025



Health and wellbeing for all people and communities

Livable Cities



Tobacco Control & NCD Prevention



Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health & Rights



Nutrition & Food Security



HealthBridge works to address the root causes of SRMCH and rights issues, many of which are linked to gender inequality.

What is male engagement?



Men's active participation in relationships with partners and children, encompassing the following domains ^[1,3]:

- Shared workload (including care work) and resources
- Emotional support
- Communication and decision-making
- Financial support
- Physical support
- Gender norms



Why Engage Men in SRMCH?

- 1 Men are key decision-makers and gatekeepers
- 2 Men are dominant within social structures including political and religious
- 3 Men can act as agents of change
- 4 Men have a stated interest in the health of their partners and families

Evidence suggests that male engagement has a beneficial impact on SRMCH in LMIC [2,3,4], including:

- Improved health outcomes through increased uptake of SRMNCH services
- Increased couple communication, particularly around family planning and contraceptive use, and improved relationships
- Reduced workload for mothers
- Improved nutrition for women and children
- Increased value of the girl child

Engaging men in nutrition and infant & young child feeding in Vietnam

Male Engagement Activities

- 1 Home Visits
- 2 Village Education Meetings
- 3 Cooking Demonstrations
- 4 Educational Materials & Knowledge Dissemination

Son La, Vietnam

2023 - 2025

Women and
children

Goal: Improved maternal and
child health & nutrition in
vulnerable ethnic minority
communities in Son La



- ✓ Reach men at home, in the community & through communication materials
- ✓ Challenge the stereotype that men cannot be caregivers

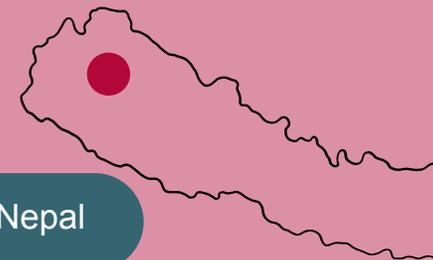
“My husband is a great cook for the kids. He makes them delicious pork, beef, and egg porridge... We share the cooking, whoever comes home earlier prepares the meal.”



Engaging men in reproductive, maternal, child health in Nepal

Male Engagement Activities

- 1 Mothers' Group Husband Meetings
- 2 Mass communication
- 3 Religious Leaders & Traditional Healers
- 4 Community Events



Karnali, Nepal

2021 - 2025

Women and adolescent girls of reproductive age

Goal: Improved health and gender equality and reduced child marriage in vulnerable communities in Nepal

- ✓ Engage with male community leaders and decision-makers
- ✓ Engage with other family members
- ✓ Challenge the stereotype that SRMCH is a “women only issue”



Best Practices & Lessons Learned

- Consider the **needs** and **desires** of men and women in the community
- **Avoid reinforcing harmful gender norms**
- Create an **enabling environment** for men to be engaged in SRMCH for example sensitivity training for health workers & waiting rooms
- Engage other **family decision-makers** including mother and father-in-law
- Engage with **community champions** and **leaders**
- Maintain a positive tone, **do not blame**

Challenges

- **Lack of a standardized measurement** for male engagement
- **Resistance** in the community to messaging around sensitive SRMCH topics



Measuring Male Engagement

What is the purpose of the tool?

Measure the level of male engagement in maternal, newborn, and child health, with a view to eventually linking these to positive health outcomes and influencing evidence-based decision making among service providers and policy makers.

How was the tool developed?

- Literature review to identify and extract male engagement indicators
- Content validation through expert consultation and in-country workshops in Vietnam & Benin
- Linguistic validation completed in Nepal

Measuring Male Engagement

How does the tool work?

The tool consists of 26 questions each for men and women in a partnership covering 3 domains:

1. Shared workload & resources
2. Emotional and supportive care
3. Communication and decision-making



What questions does the tool answer?

- To what extent are men are engaged in supportive activities?
- Are male engagement interventions working?
- Which male engagement activities are resulting in improved health outcomes for women and children?

What are the next steps?

Complete linguistic validation in other contexts and test the reliability and internal consistency of the tool



Thank You!

References

[1] Comrie-Thomson L, Tokhi M, Ampt F, Portela A, Chersich M, Khanna R, et al. Challenging gender inequity through male involvement in maternal and newborn health: critical assessment of an emerging evidence base. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. 2015 Oct 16;17(sup2):177–89.

[2] World Health Organization. WHO recommendations on health promotion interventions for maternal and newborn health 2015 [Internet]. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2015 [cited 2025 Aug 12]. Available from: <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/172427>

[3] Comrie-Thomson, L, Mavhu, W, Makungu, C, Nahar, Q, Khan, R, Davis, J, Hamdani, S, Stillo, E, & Luchters, S 2015, *Men Matter: Engaging Men in MNCH Outcomes*, Plan Canada, Toronto.

[4] Tokhi M, Comrie-Thomson L, Davis J, Portela A, Chersich M, Luchters S (2018) Involving men to improve maternal and newborn health: A systematic review of the effectiveness of interventions. *PLoS ONE* 13(1): e0191620. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0191620>

For more information contact...

Kamilla Pinter, HealthBridge Foundation of Canada Project &
Communications Officer

Email: kpinter@healthbridge.ca

**Engaging
Men & Boys**

SEPTEMBER 3

**Mobiliser les
hommes et
les garçons**

3 SEPTEMBRE



**Darcy Ataman,
Make Music Matter**



**Kamilla Pinter,
HealthBridge
Foundation of
Canada**



**Caroline Pugini,
SCORE Against
Poverty**





SCORE Men Can Cook

- Engaging Culture and Community to address and change persistent harmful gender norms and attitudes

Men Can Cook

Score

Zimbabwe, 2025

Engaging Culture and Community
to address and change persistent
harmful gender norms and
attitudes





ST. MARY'S ROAD
UNITED CHURCH
(SMRUC)

SCORE AGAINST
POVERTY

MEN CAN COOK

**DIALOGUE & SKILLS-
ONBOARDING MEN IN AN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP
FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE BEHAVIOR**

BUILDING STRONGER FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

A TESTING PROGRAM OF:



Fund for Innovation
and Transformation

Fonds pour l'innovation
et la transformation

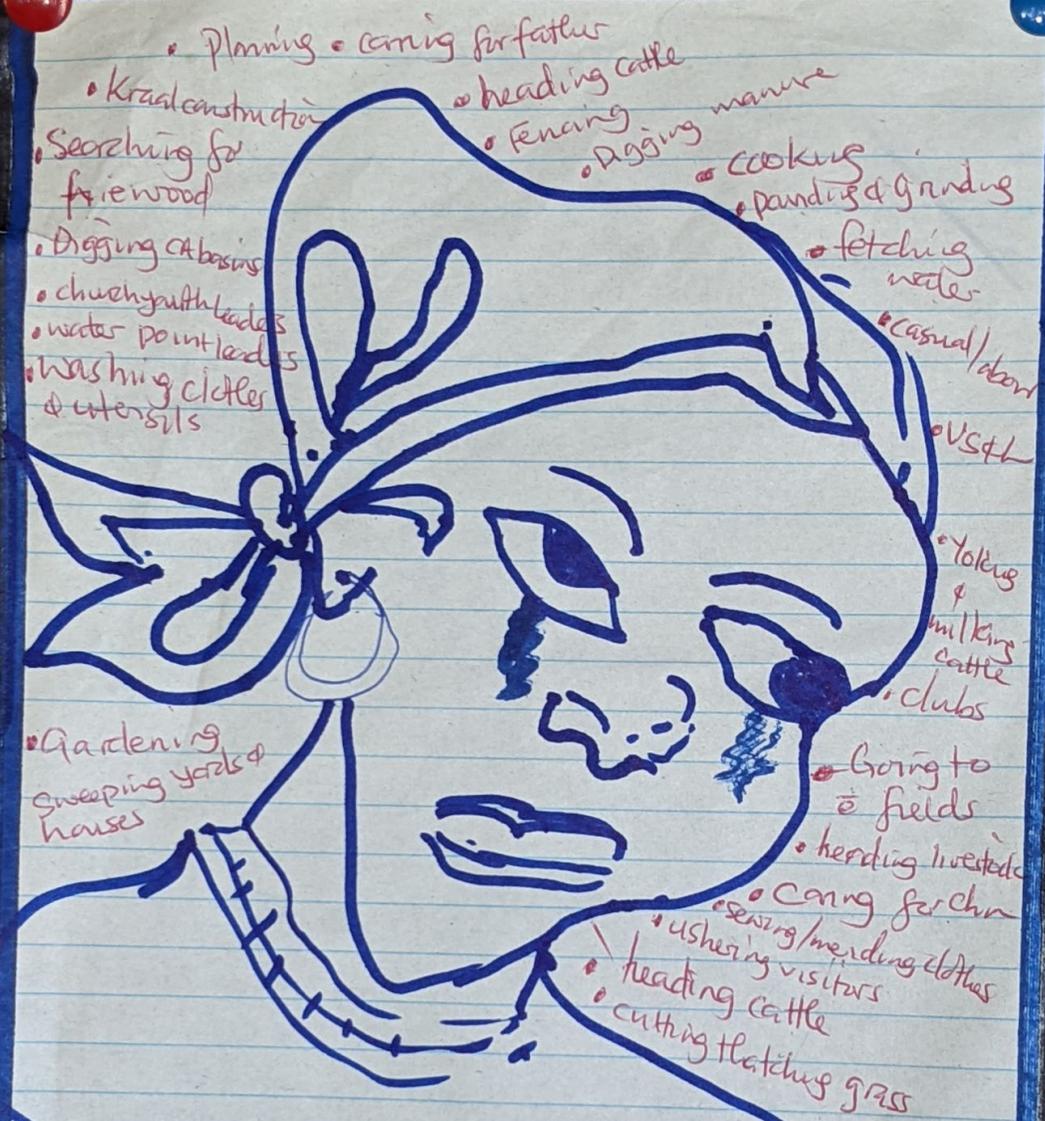


In partnership with
Canada



MINISTRY OF WOMEN
AFFAIRS, COMMUNITY
SMALL AND MEDIUM
ENTERPRISES
DEVELOPMENT

**inter-council
network**
Provincial & Regional Councils
for International Cooperation



Work
No. 1

- Planning • coming for father
- Kraal construction
- Searching for firewood
- Digging at basins
- churning milk
- water point
- washing clothes & utensils
- heading cattle
- fencing
- digging manure
- cooking
- pounding & grinding
- fetching water
- casual/don
- US&L
- yoking & milking cattle
- clubs
- going to fields
- heading livestock
- coming for chin
- sewing/mending clothes
- ushering visitors
- heading cattle
- cutting thatching grass

• Gardening
sweeping yards of houses

Planning, Caring for father, Herding cattle, Fencing,
Digging manure, Cooking, Pounding and grinding,
Fetching water, Kraal construction, Searching for
firewood, Digging CA basins, Church youth leaders,

The workload is too much

Going to fields, Gardening, Sweeping yards and
houses, Herding livestock, Caring for children, Sewing
and mending clothes, Ushering visitors, Cutting
thatching grass...

Shona Culture locks in Gender Roles

- **Women** have no access to decision making
- **Men** are raised to protect and defend this idea
- **Women** participate in their own oppression by raising girls to believe in inequity
- **Men** are happy to perpetuate this bias in their favour.



Change through culture

We challenge the status quo by

**Thinking differently while respecting
culture**

How?



- Support the community's ability to solve their own problems with existing resources where possible
- Walking alongside the community to generate the content of a project/activity.
- Serving the community, not the project.



**What if men can be actively engaged in a
community-designed program that**

respects their culture

and

recognizes and reinforces their importance to the
family/community in new ways

???



Components of the Test



Men's Forum on Gender
+ Women's Curriculum
Development Groups



Cooking Skills for Men
Assisted by Wives and
Home Ec. Teachers



Regular Community
Visits















Important Elements of Men Can Cook

- Men and women were involved in every activity
- Topics of gendered assets and advocacy were wrestled with.
- Champions modelled the effectiveness of **viewing wives as partners, not just reproductive assets**



Results

Couples began to see and experience the positive
impact on their family life
both emotionally and economically.

Co-production of knowledge

Started by cooking together, but continued into everyday aspects of life with larger than expected results.



Cultural “locality”

- A safe place for discussions
- Time spent together by couples
- Modeling by gender champions
- Meeting the different skill needs of both genders
- A belief in the cultural/ancestral knowledge of the community

“It is what we make out of what we have, ...not what we are given, that separates one person from another.”

Nelson Mandela



An approach, not just a project.

Because it was an *approach*, its impact was wider than just more equity in the household chores.

At every level, there were direct & indirect elements of conflict resolution, advocacy for equity, decrease in violence.

Leading to an end result of harmony and well-being, characteristics of peace in the household.



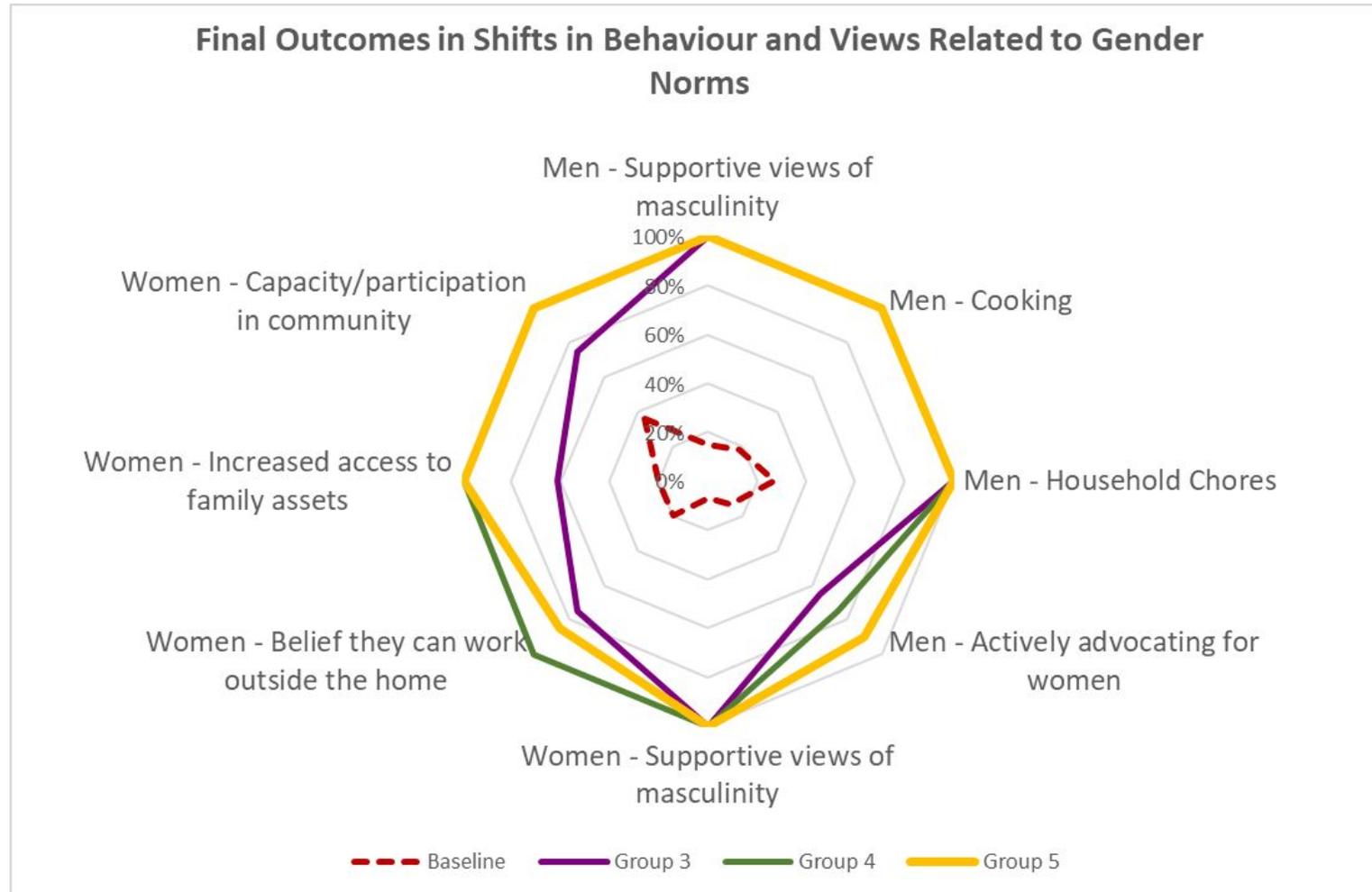
Confirmation of hypothesis

The results confirm that, **transformational gender equity can be dramatically increased in a short period of time**, when basic “locality” and gender equity components are carefully implemented.

The approach led to:

- Increased cooking skills
- Increased understanding of women’s role in family
- Increased understanding of women’s workload

Final Outcomes





Unanticipated Outcomes verified by relatives and community leaders

Social Dividend

- A positive multi-generational impact on gender equity.
Increase family social/emotional well-being

Empowerment/Development dividend

- Women are encouraged to participate on village committees and appreciated by leaders when they do so.



Unanticipated Outcomes verified by relatives and community leaders

Peace dividend

- Gender based Violence decreased significantly as a result of the program
 - Cases were often resolved at the family level
 - Children commented on the family being more peaceful.
- Men are now advocating on behalf of women in various situations

Economic Dividend

- All the families participating found that it positively affected their family's economic status

A background image showing a rural landscape with a thatched hut, trees, and a fence. The title is overlaid on this image.

Role of Social Disruption in peace building

Why was it that **men** learning to cook impactful?

Cooking by **men** was a social disruption, a passive act of advocacy.

- When freeing up wives to do other things, men were setting alternative examples.
- When the gender specialist and champions dialogue, teach and interact together, there was a model of an alternative way of viewing women.
- When wives teach husbands in a supportive atmosphere, there was learning on the part of women that they could teach and could model behaviour to men.
- By cooking at home, the men are opening up themselves to questions by the community which wants to know why they were doing this.

Thus, there is an interesting, unintended spill over effect of husbands being slowly drawn into more supportive behaviour and even advocacy on some levels.



True peace is not merely
the absence of tension;
it's the presence of
justice.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JNR

@madame_la_presidente



Thank You