

LEARNING SUMMARY

A Longitudinal Evaluation of Women for Women International's Men's Engagement Program in Nigeria



Since 2002, Women for Women International (WfWI) has conducted men's engagement programs (MEP) in Nigeria to engage men as allies in support of gender equality and women's empowerment. Now offered in all WfWI countries as a complement to WfWI's core 12-month social and economic empowerment training program for women, our MEP has provided group education sessions to over 26,000 men to explore issues such as the value of girls and women, female participation in decision making and in the economy, violence against women, and personal and family health.

WfWI's MEP is grounded in the idea that women and men are partners who should work together to achieve gender equality. By educating men about women's rights and their unique needs, men can play a positive role in advocating for and improving women's lives, their own lives, and society overall. In this view, women's empowerment is not solely the domain of women, but a social change effort that requires both men and women.

WfWI secured a three-year grant from the Department for International Development's (DFID) Global Poverty Action Fund (GPAF) from 2014 to 2016 to support our work in Nigeria. The grant's activities included training 50 male community leaders on women's rights and value in the community, who in turn trained 500 additional male community members (primarily family members of female participants of WfWI's 12-month social and economic empowerment program), and engaging an additional 1,000 male community members to educate them on these rights. As part of this grant, WfWI worked with an independent research partner to carry out a longitudinal evaluation of our men's engagement activities to learn how best to work with men for gender equality.

The MEP used a two-level step-down training model, combined with community meetings. The Level 1 (L1) group targeted 50 male community leaders with three days of group education sessions. Each L1 graduate then trained another ten men, for a total of 500 community leaders in Level 2 (L2), expanding

the program's reach. In Level 3, community meetings brought together an additional 1,000 men to discuss ways to implement and spread ideas from the training throughout the community. Radio jingles supplemented the program by broadcasting information about the training topics and resources for women and families.

Evaluation Study Design

WfWI contracted American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct a mixed-methods, longitudinal, nonexperimental study over two years, funded by DFID and the Millby Foundation. WfWI was interested in learning about the implementation of the program and its effects on outputs and outcomes to use results for program improvement. This study was not intended to be a rigorous impact evaluation.

The study incorporated both a process evaluation and an examination of outcomes, using quantitative data gathered through surveys and qualitative data through focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs). The treatment community, Enugu-Ezike, received the MEP in 2015, during the time of this evaluation. The comparison community, Mbu, was scheduled to receive the MEP in 2016, after the conclusion of the evaluation. Fifty L1 trainees were identified in each community and 500 L2 trainees were identified in the treatment community only, for the purpose of this evaluation. The evaluation team used quantitative surveys to learn from the full sample of 100 L1 male trainees in the treatment and comparison groups and 10% of the sample of L2 trainees in the comparison group ($n = 50$)¹. The same study participants participated in the survey at baseline in 2014 and endline in 2016.

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Training women alone will make little or no change. When a woman knows her rights and her husband doesn't know she has such rights, conflicts will arise. ”

- L1 MEP participant

¹ In addition to the surveyed men, 50 selected women from the treatment and comparison communities were surveyed at baseline and endline. This brief is focusing on the methodology and learning from male participants.

In addition, AIR collected qualitative data through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews in the treatment and comparison communities. At baseline, FGDs were conducted in both communities with L3 trainees, women with relatives participating in the MEP, and women without relatives receiving MEP to gain rich, nuanced explanations of the dynamics between men and women.

At endline, FGDs were conducted with all three levels of male trainees, women with relatives participating in the MEP, and women without relatives receiving MEP. This qualitative endline research constituted the process evaluation, and therefore, was limited to the treatment community (Enugu-Ezike).

KEY FINDINGS

Outcome Results

The theory of change behind the MEP is that different levels of training involving influential male leaders coupled with community forums and meetings will increase men’s knowledge about women’s rights and eventually change their attitudes towards women, which will then lead to behavior changes that will increase women’s empowerment and rights.

The quantitative survey included a behavioral index that measured men’s adherence to traditional norms of masculinity, negative reproductive and sexual health behaviors, the use of physical and verbal violence within the household, and behavior concerning household chores and family care within the reference period of 12 months. On this index, a higher score reflected less negative behaviors towards women. Results from the program evaluation showed a statistically significant increased score (6%) in

the intervention group compared to those in the comparison group.

This survey included the GEM attitudes scale, which was developed by Population Council and Promundo to measure attitudes towards gender norms. The study found the difference in scores between the intervention and comparison groups on the GEM attitudes scale was not statistically significant. With regard to attitudes, in focus group discussions, men revealed their resistance to ideas that conflicted with their traditional beliefs and practices, such as female property inheritance and women assuming leadership roles. Similarly, there were non-statistically significant differences between groups on the knowledge items. It is important to note that the study found high levels of knowledge of training topics at baseline, prior to the training, which may contribute to the lack of change in knowledge results.

Process Evaluation

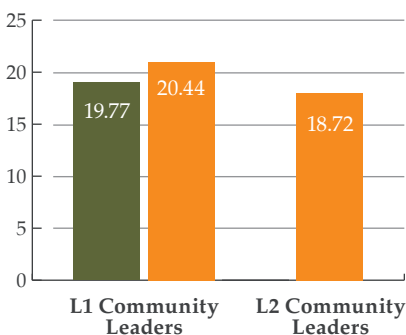
In addition to assessing the outcomes of the MEP in Nigeria, AIR conducted FGDs with training participants to gather insights about the perceived strengths of the program, conceptual challenges with the material, challenges in implementing the step-down training, and recommendations for future trainings.

When asked to define the purpose of the MEP, most men said the training was designed to encourage inclusion and understanding within families and communities. Several believed the program was intended to help people adjust to changing times and evolving gender dynamics. A few identified the need for men’s engagement to support women’s social and economic development in Nigeria.

Knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of treatment and control group men

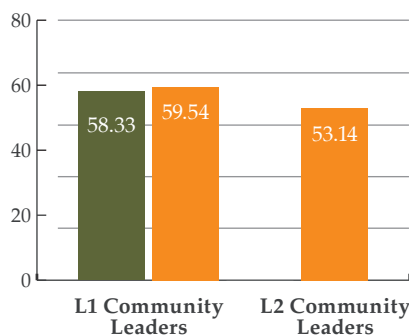
*Indicates significant difference in scores.

Knowledge: Knowledge Scale for Men



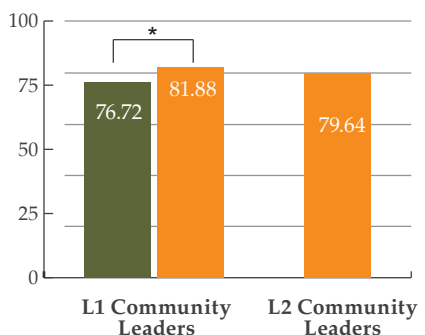
Minimum Score: 12 Maximum Score: 25

Attitudes: Gender Equitable Scale for Men



Minimum Score: 40 Maximum Score: 77

Behavior: Behavioral Scale for Men (P-value: 0.07)



Minimum Score: 29 Maximum Score: 97

Women in Nigeria

- 36%** of women believe a husband is justified in beating his wife (vs 25% of men)
- 49%** of women participate in the labor force (vs. 69% of men)
- 58%** women are literate (vs. 76% of men)
- 15%** of women own land, either alone or jointly (vs. 34% of men)

Sources: World Bank, 2015; Unicef 2017; AIR Report 2017; 2013 Nigeria DHS.

Strengths of the MEP

- **Training logistics and content** – Men appreciated the organization and location of the training, the ground rules, certificates of completion, and opportunity to discuss the training topics with new people. Some said the training made them aware of their own harmful behaviors toward women.
- **Facilitation and training approach** – Men appreciated that facilitators engaged directly with them, asked questions, and discussed ways to apply lessons learned to daily life. L1 participants specifically mentioned the use of illustrations and handouts, and appreciated that the training was delivered in Igbo, their local language.
- **Activities and discussions** – Men said the participatory exercises helped to engage them in the training, while the group discussions allowed them to reflect on the training topics and discuss ways to address potential challenges in delivering the step-down trainings.
- **Personal changes as a result of the MEP** – Many of the men (and several women) reported that the training had a positive influence on their behavior, improving communication with their wives, reducing conflict, and increasing men's contributions to household chores.

“

I understood from the training that leaving all the domestic tasks for women will be too stressful. So, I decided to reduce the burden on my wife. ”

- L1 MEP participant

Challenges to MEP Implementation

- **Difficulty putting concepts into practice** – Even when they saw the value of training concepts, some MEP participants felt that it would be difficult for men to change deeply ingrained behaviors.
- **Conceptual conflicts with material** – Many men disagreed with some of the MEP ideas, such as female inheritance of property, gender-based violence, and division of household labor, because these concepts directly conflict with local tradition and culture.

“

It is our custom that women do not inherit properties. We learned that women have the right to inheritance, but this will take a longer campaign for our men to adopt it into their culture. So, for now, inheritance is for men only. ”

- Male participant

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study results show that the MEP produced a measurable change in men's behavior, but no significant changes in knowledge or attitudes. This is consistent with other research which shows that change begins with a shift in practice and reinforcement of positive behavior over time.² When new behavior delivers positive outcomes, that leads to changes in beliefs and attitudes. Change is also more likely when participants are shown concrete models of behavior that they can put into practice. The study resulted in the following conceptual and training recommendations:

- **Connect knowledge with explicit attitudes and behaviors** – The videos demonstrating MEP training concepts were well-received by MEP participants because they link gender equity concepts with concrete examples of men and women in daily life.
- **Reconcile local traditions with training topics** – Start with a discussion of traditional concepts and how different ideas could complement or enhance these concepts. Look for ways to talk about issues like land inheritance and women in leadership without undermining long-held traditions.
- **Reconcile religion with training topics** – Adapting content to align with religious beliefs will help participants understand concepts through a religious lens, and improve the likelihood of adopting new ideas.

² Evans, A. (2014). "Theorizing Asymmetric Flexibility in Gender Divisions of Labor: A Zambian Case Study." LSE Working Paper; Paluck, EL. (2009) "Reducing Intergroup Prejudice and Conflict Using the Media: A Field Experiment in Rwanda." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 96(3), 574-587.

■ **Focus on knowledge and behavior before attitudes** – Review the MEP’s theory of change to reflect a pathway to learning that begins with knowledge and behavior change, and leads in time to changes in attitudes.

■ **Focus on clarifying misconceptions** – Distributing specific, written definitions of key concepts and allowing participants to ask clarifying questions will help overcome misconceptions that perpetuate inequality.

■ **Limit training topics** – Fewer topics may enable participants to delve more deeply into the most important concepts and feel more prepared to train other men.

■ **Increase collaborative activities and role play** – Dividing men into groups for activities, discussions, and role play would encourage more active learning and make men feel more comfortable when discussing difficult topics.

■ **Hold multiple training sessions or follow-up training, especially for trainers** – Prioritize practical applications of how to apply key concepts in daily life and extend discussion around how men can apply what they have learned.

■ **Spend more time talking about challenging concepts** – Participants suggested devoting more training time to discussion of topics that are at odds with local tradition.

■ **Deliver supplemental messages locally** – While most participants had heard the radio jingles, several suggested broadcasting the messages through other channels as well, such as town criers, church announcements, and local newspapers, to reach rural audiences that may not own radios.

■ **Refer women to local organizations** – Participants noted that all the resources mentioned in the jingles are located in urban areas, and rural women may not have access to them.³

NEXT STEPS

As WfWI considers the most effective approaches to men’s engagement, we are reflecting on questions raised by this study to implement improvements to our men’s engagement program, including thinking through the change process that we expect to see from an MEP intervention. For instance, if behavior shifts before attitudes and if the intervention time is limited, we should measure attitudinal change much later on in the intervention.

We are also reflecting on our measurement and evaluation systems of our MEP intervention. We should modify our learning tools to gain a better understanding of participants’ baseline knowledge, which will help us tailor our training to build on existing knowledge, and focus on knowledge gaps. This process will also help to ensure the questions we use to assess knowledge reflect what was learned during our training program.

Given WfWI’s unique approach, which is tailored to the specific religious and cultural context of each country we work in, we have many lessons and approaches to share. Based on the results of this study and the key recommendations, we are already modifying our program in the following ways:

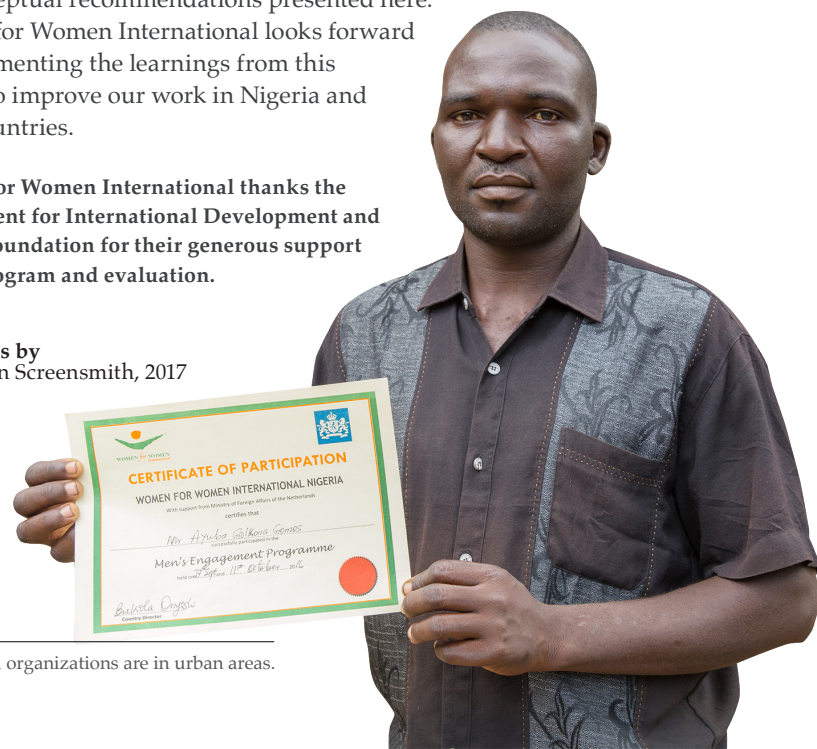
- **Connect knowledge with explicit attitudes and behaviors**
- **Focus on knowledge and behavior before attitudes**
- **Increase collaborative activities and role play**
- **Increase the length of training**
- **Consider the feasibility of having fewer people in class and**
- **Hold multiple training sessions and follow-up trainings for more longer-term engagement with men in the community, instead of offering a short training outside of the community**

In addition, financial incentives for men, through the provision of transportation or stipends, are being considered to further encourage men to participate.

Lastly, WfWI will continue to host discussions with MEP training facilitators to learn from and generate program modifications and improvements based on the conceptual recommendations presented here. Women for Women International looks forward to implementing the learnings from this project to improve our work in Nigeria and other countries.

Women for Women International thanks the Department for International Development and Millby Foundation for their generous support of our program and evaluation.

All photos by
Monilekan Screensmith, 2017



³ There may not be local equivalent organizations, which is why all the recommended organizations are in urban areas.