BUILD TOGETHER: Second Young Men and Boys Convening

Day 1: 10 February 2021

**Agenda**

3:00 to 4:00:  Introductions | Ice-breaker: I used to think and now I think

4:00 to 4:45:  White Paper Presentation: Working with Young Men and Boys

5:00 to 5:45:

(i) Spotlights: The global landscape of interventions and how they relate to India  
(ii) Bridging the Gap: A look at different approaches to gender empowerment and social justice

5:45 to 6:00:  Curated stand-up event

6:15 to 7:00:  Chai, Coffee and Charcha: Unintended Consequences

**Session 1 | Introductions and Icebreaker**

Access to full padlet is [here](#).

**Session 2 | White Paper Presentation: Working with Young Men and Boys**

The aim of the white paper was to synthesize existing knowledge about the YMB approach. By better understanding the evolution of the YMB movement and the current landscape – both globally and within India, explore questions on dimensions that are being overlooked and how we can think more holistically about the change we want to create.
Key Discussion areas

1. Disparity of thought on engaging with YMB on their own or within the gender equity framework:
   • How to structure engagement in a way to ensure a conducive environment for girls/women and at the same time help boys develop their own identity and keep themselves safe?
   • Looking at YMB programmes orthogonally to women’s and girls’ programmes can threaten the need and resources for them. Therefore, YMB programmes need to be kept separate and complement ongoing work with and on women/girls, keeping resource envelopes separate.
   • Is there a need to engage with YMB for their own actualisation?

2. For men to be real allies and provide support for women, they need to actualise learnings and reach their own conclusions. And for that, there is a need to unpack male actualisation.

3. Not having enough men as part of the gender equality/YMB programming is in itself something that needs to be addressed to be able to scale up this work. Moreover, sufficient peer communication needs to be encouraged to facilitate this process.

4. There exists white spaces in the YMB work however, whether the group needs to address those may need to be explored as men already have significant privilege and access to resources.

5. There isn’t sufficient longitudinal research that has been done to capture inter-generational trauma or long-term impact of interventions.

Session 3

A. Bridging the Gap: A look at different approaches to gender empowerment and social justice

In conversation with Ravi Verma (ICRW) and Geeta Misra (CREA)

Key discussion areas

1. While men cannot be categorised as poor helpless victims, because they have agency, they too are victims of patriarchy and gender-based norms who live within conflicting tensions of acceptance of their privilege and the cost of their entitlement.
2. There is a need to look beyond just men and boys and incorporate the ecosystem and institutions that nurtures them and writes their narrative and which gives them ideas that are then manifested in their daily lives.

3. The people and organizations working on this aspect of gender, need to be clear in their own perspectives, overcome their own biases, struggles and bottlenecks, and be ready to break convictions that have a binary approach to gender and work outside structural norms.

4. Family based interventions and/ or using the family as an entry point to conversations on gender can go deeper and beyond boundaries. At present they exclude all those who fall outside the purview of heteronormative roles.

5. There is a need to navigate the protector-provider-responsibility nexus attributed to men and move from male responsibility to male partnership. This identity needs to be unpacked without relying on a flawed understanding of masculinity and needs to be framed in way that isn’t self-defeating for men.

B. Spotlights: The global landscape of interventions and how they relate to India
In conversation with Gary Barker (Promundo) and Laxman Belbase (MenEngage Alliance)

Key discussion areas

1. There is an important need to start generational research that looks into how boys view their fathers within their homes as carers and how this impacts their own behaviour. Bridging this shift in programme design is needed - especially in South Asia where gendered norms are much deeper.

2. The systemic understanding of familial roles across South Asia (rural families, urban families, regional families) needs to be uprooted. This transcends short-term projects. The work needs to move beyond programming and work with many systemic actors and stakeholders such as politicians, media etc.

3. How do we build incentive for politicians to tackle this? Could we think of a reportcard?

4. There needs to be a global understanding and preparation to be invested in this for many years. Patriarchy cannot be resolved in 3 years.
5. Urgent to engage male policymakers as more than superficial champions of gender issues, but instead be able to have them take on complete responsibility and be accountable for the whole process.

6. We need to think of scaling up, but also of scaling in - by accepting fluidity and bringing in all overlapping structures into programme design.

Session 4 | Unintended Consequences anchored by ECF and Probex Consulting

This break-out session allowed grantee organizations to share unplanned consequences – both negative roadblocks and positive discoveries – that they faced in their journeys and how they overcame and/or absorbed these surprises into their programmes.

Access to full padlet is here

Key Takeaways:

1. For programme designers (CSOs) and task implementers (men) to listen to the requirements of the ultimate beneficiaries (girls/women) as opposed to deciding what they need.

2. Ability to accept errors, be fluid and develop and redesign programmes based on needs, requirements, observations, client satisfaction and extended stakeholder engagement, a lot of which was due to programme testing and piloting.

3. Using stakeholders and the community as allies within the programme to help overcome challenges.

4. Some specific unintended consequences that were discovered organically:
   - The Covid-19 pandemic caused beneficiary groups to expand across most programmes to include mothers and wives, teachers and support staff or the wider community.
   - Covid-19 also caused digital adoption and consequently skills accelerated during the lockdown, allowing for wider engagement with beneficiaries and stakeholders.
- Participants faced community backlash and dissonance when they go back to their environments. For example: push-back from women when men try to #sharetheload, or are teased by the friends.

5. Work is challenging and we need to recognize the need for inner to outer changes for teams.
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Day 2: 11 February

Agenda

3:00 to 3:20: Refresh and Recap

3.20 to 5.00: Action Workshop: Charting a way forward

5.15 to 6.00: Chai, Coffee and Charcha: Building a narrative

6.00 to 6.45: Reflections and Close-out – Building Together

6.45 to 7.00: Rohini’s closing remarks

Session 1 | Recap

The Recap session captured insights from the participants using a Mentimeter to check in on what stood out for them (Aha moments!), and their hope for new beginnings (I’m hopeful because).

Key Takeaways:

1. Key Aha moments included!

- Empowerment doesn’t look the same to everyone!
- The importance of caring about care
• Discovering India’s data and its parity with other countries, especially Rwanda
• The need to engage with the idea of “positive patriarchy”: are we working towards reforming or dismantling patriarchy?
• Disparity of thought in working with men in isolation or as part of a larger whole. If the latter, then how to integrate them into the whole?
• The need to bridge the gap between viewing men as allies and/or beneficiaries

2. The key reason for hope unanimously stressed on the collective presence in the room and their continuing work on engaging with young men and boys.

Session 2 | Action Workshop: Charting a Way Forward

The purpose of the action workshop was to explore how the movement could go deeper/ looking at the empty spaces to explore, and go wider/ discovering more organizations to expand the network. Both aspects were considered using the lenses of bazaar and sarkaar.
Section 1 | Internal discussion on the way forward

Key Takeaways:

Going Deep

1. Developing a space where boys/men and girls/women can come together for dialogue and problem solving to avoid an us vs them scenario
2. Need for long-term engagement via a lifecycle lens and consequently longer funding to destabilise something as rooted as patriarchy and allow for a change in behaviour patterns. Not look for quick outcomes.
3. Absence of role models within communities as well as within the greater public domain (eg: positive media) needs to be addressed.
4. Beginning to work even earlier with younger children – before notions of masculinity and gendered norms can be formed.
5. Incorporate all aspects of intersectionality – including power and oppression of young men and boys - when engaging with them

Going Wide:

1. Creating an entry point for other organizations and sectors to want to do this (akin to the food network on Facebook) - where everybody wants to have a go!
2. Exploring through an LGBTQi lens that is currently missing would help us in both going deep and going wider.
3. Expanding the movement to include collaboration with public health, particularly mental health
4. Working relentlessly with media and using the power of media for reach, access and influence.
5. Building a synchronised yet regionally contextualised vocabulary for the sector
6. Building advocacy with the larger society and with the government to achieve scale

Section 2 | Action Workshop: Engaging with Sarkaar and Bazaar

A. In conversation with Priya Naik (Samhita) on where can business involvement can be more impactful?

Key Takeaways:

1. Companies can solve social problems for whatever reason, no matter the starting point: CSR, philanthropy, HR policies, marketing budget, sustainability etc
2. Companies are willing to put in the funds to work with civil society, but need direction, support, access and insight
3. Civil society organizations can capitalise on this need and use their expertise to partner with Companies and support them to do good things at scale
B. In conversation with Aprajita Gogoi (C3) on where can government involvement be more impactful?

**Key Takeaways:**

1. Government needs to be engaged because they have maximum reach, budgets and infrastructure already in place across sectors.
2. We do not have clarity on why there are no YMB programmes launched by the government – this could be a case of “social undermining”. Perhaps an entry-point could be to “retro-fit” the approach into existing programmes such as Skill Development.
3. We need to redesign our approach and take into significance regional needs, supplies and demands and then tailor and curate content accordingly.
4. Core ingredients for an effective samaaj-sarkar-bazaar partnership would include visionary leadership, dedicated funding, complete buy-in on the common goal, operating transparency between partners, a common roadmap across partners, and common performance measures.

**Session 3 | Chai, Coffee & Charcha: Building a Narrative anchored by TYPF and TGL**

1. It is necessary to reframe our own perspective, programme designs and curricula that view men as perpetrators and predators.
2. Most interventions in this field propagate “politically correct sex”, when what is needed to be spoken of is how to have an empathetic, stigma-free and good sex.
3. Conversations on consent need to be made sex-positive and pleasure-affirming. Programme designers need to take feelings of men regarding performance pressure, rejection and masculinity into their thinking process.
4. Need to move away from confined black-and-white structures and appropriate programmes as needed regionally, ideally in non-segregated mixed groups that allow men to hear and experience a woman’s story without seeing it all as fun and games.
What inspired your organisation to start working with men/boys? Think about the incident or experience that gave you the motivation to start this work.

Project kéen - engaging with YMG from the very beginning

Naseem (CTÜM) - Enjoy working with young people

Saway - wanted to work with men right from the inception of Saway. Had done so in a sporadic manner with volunteers and students. But 6 years ago started working in a consistent and long term manner and build on our womens work in the communities. We also realised change takes time.

Saway - To create gender equal & violence free societies we need to work with men & boys and not just with women. Both are affected due to patriarchy.

What are the values you want to uphold? Think about common values for you and communities where you work

Open & honest participation

Inclusive! Gender is fluid

solidarity

Equity and inclusion.

Accountability

Empowerment, engagement, ownership

Trust

Indulgence through intersectionality

Deep listening.

Creating a shared vision for a shared future

Saway - Inclusivity, Accountability, Equality, Respect, Trust, Transparency

Respect

Inclusivity

Accountability

Openness, agility and innovation.

Equity

Fostering agency.

Gratitude

Power with and not power over (as a value to aspire to)

Saway - Equity, respect - Saway

Appreciation of efforts that women put in

Mutual respect and dignity

Celebrating diversity

Perseverance

Respect and care

Trust

Indulgence through intersectionality

Listening

Mutual responsibility

Inclusivity through intersectionality

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Session 4 | Reflections – Building Together

This section aimed to reflect on challenges faced by individuals and programmes in their work in this space and think of how to navigate the way forward

Key Takeaways:

1. One of the key challenges faced at present is resource mobilization and allocation. We need to think about the outcomes we want, what are the kinds of resources we are looking for and how we plan to use these resources.

2. The dichotomy of opinions surrounding need for women’s empowerment vs. men’s actualisation pushes for a need to redefine the language to make it more rights based, and the frameworks surrounding these words. Do we need to empower women, or power them with tools and resources that help them actualise their dreams, and empower men to share and care?

3. We need to understand masculinity within a loop - starting with a sense of entitlement to power, followed by not having an experience to wield that power due to various intersectionalities (caste, class, age, bullying) leading to crisis, resentment, anger and violence.

4. Education is a strong entry point to reach and collect young boys as well engage with the school system by way of working with their curriculum
5. Two of the unanswered questions that remain are how do we go from change in attitudes to this change reflecting in long-term behaviour, and how do we expand this conversation to bring in and engage with more people.

Session 5 | Rohini’s closing remarks

1. The future should stress on the importance of finding gender balance in the world because it directly and indirectly ties to achieving many of our own global development goals
2. We are hopefully reaching the end of a highly polarised world, where we have the power to decide how to and co-create an articulate clear and shared vision
3. Going forward
   a. We need to build an articulate a clear, collective vision for our work and where we want to go;
   b. We need to create space to be open to and respectful of differing perspectives, and be fuelled not by our differences but by our commonalities
   c. We can create a more structured learning network so that more and more people know how to find us and how to join us
   d. We must go beyond empowering, to co-powering,
   e. There is room for many more organizations to join hands – the hope is for 2X-5X the number of organizations to be in the room by Convening 3.