As we round off the first quarter of the new year, life is yet again proving to be the unexpected. In the work of creating a gender-equitable society, men play an essential role – and an underestimated one. They are often the sidekicks and ask us to be the main participants and asks them to take on the unequal systems alone. Given the space was new to us, we had no evidence or experience upon which to mount a programme for middle school and high school students. We decided to try with a learning approach. We hoped to learn from the research as co-travellers. The distinction between research and evaluation is that research is aimed to understand the lives of boys and men. Evaluation, on the other hand, is to understand how well programmes make a difference, and we found that being clear about our approach was critical to navigating some of our programme building in unfamiliar territory.

In another instance, we had several partners implementing a Family Education programme for middle school students in the same way for different purposes, sometimes intended to middle school students, but a major implicit concern high school and university environments can become challenging when the gender and sexual dynamics of the outside world seep into programme-centric gatherings and events.

Implications beyond work with YMBs
Young Men and Boys (YMBs). Some years ago, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies started a portfolio focussed on working with Young Men and Boys. We decided to try with a learning approach.

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Paying with our own philanthropic capital, we engaged with partners, our reach to create a learning approach.

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