Gender-Transformative Cultural Ceremonies to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence and HIV in Ethiopia
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The Gender/Men As Partners® Ecological Model

- Individual level: group education workshops
- Communities: Community Action Teams, campaigns
- Service delivery: male-friendly and gender-sensitive
- Policy and advocacy: coalition building (MenEngage Network)
Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a pervasive problem in Ethiopia.

- 71% of Ethiopian women have experienced physical and/or sexual IPV in their lifetime
- 29% report current physical IPV
- 44% report current sexual IPV

Source: Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006, WHO multicountry study on violence, The Lancet
Study Design

- A cluster randomized controlled trial of IPV prevention with three intervention arms and one control arm:
  - Arm 1: Women only
  - Arm 2: Men only
  - Arm 3: Couples
  - Control: Short informational session on violence reduction
Intervention

- Involves coffee ceremonies twice a week with ~20 community members per group
- Consists of a pair of two-hour sessions per group each week, for a total of 14 sessions over seven weeks
- Is led by trained facilitator(s)
- Is guided by three gender-transformative curricula of 14 sessions each that cover gender, household roles, relationship behaviors, sexuality, and IPV
  - A women’s curriculum
  - A men’s curriculum
  - A couples curriculum (gender-synchronized)
Coffee Ceremony

- Ceremony usually takes 1–2 hours.
- Green coffee beans are roasted over hot coals.
- Each participant is given a chance to sample the aromatic smoke.
Curriculum Challenges

- Developing a curriculum on IPV for couples
  - What sessions/issue can they do together/separately?
- Considering safety issues for survivors of violence in the workshops
  - How to guarantee safety, given some women will be in currently violent relationships?
- Designing detailed instruction for facilitators whom we will never actually meet
  - How to guarantee fidelity and quality just in a curriculum?
- Designing a way for the coffee ceremony (usually prepared and served by women) to be a gender-transformative activity
Development of Curriculum—Logic Model

- **Step 1**: Define our overall health goals for the curriculum.
- **Step 2**: Identify individual behaviors directly related to those health goals.
- **Step 3**: Identify social, psychological, and environmental determinants that affect those behaviors.
- **Step 4**: Select curriculum activities from known sources (e.g., MAP manual) or develop new activities that will deliberately address those determinants.
64 villages were randomly sampled (minimum distance will be maintained between villages).

Villages were randomly assigned to one of the study arms (16 villages per arm).

Eligibility criteria: Participants had to be married or cohabitating, aged 18–49, resident for at least six months in study districts.

106 households per village were randomly selected to participate in the study.

A baseline survey was conducted with 3,392 women and 3,392 men.
Intervention Delivery

• There were two rounds of pilots to test the curriculum, the intervention design, drop-out rates, and incentive structures.
• The intervention was rolled out between March and November 2015 by 48 facilitators.
• A workshop with village leaders and government organizations was conducted before delivery of the intervention.
• The intervention was delivered in two phases:
  – First in Meskan and Mareko districts
  – Then in Sodo and Silte districts
### Intervention Delivery

#### Percentage of respondents who completed at least 70% and 85% of sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Group</th>
<th>% Completing at least 70% of sessions (10 sessions)</th>
<th>% Completing 85% of sessions (12 sessions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COUPLES</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>77.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALES</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALES</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
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</tbody>
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Identifying and Training Facilitators

- A large number of facilitators was needed—49 (24 female and 25 male).
- Many shared inequitable beliefs that would compromise the workshops.
  1. Facilitators were first engaged in the second pilot as participants.
     - This helped them reflect on the issues discussed and question/challenge their own, attitude and practice related to major issues raised, including gender norms.
  2. A six-day training of facilitators included facilitation skills (active listening, leading group discussions, safety issues, and dealing with challenging situations) and practice (teach-back sessions).
Facilitators’ Perspectives

• “In the past, I walked with rigid gender norms inherited from the culture, my family, my community and my religion. When I entered the role of a facilitator, I was reborn. It changed my whole life.”

• “This program has made significant changes in my personal life…. It has enabled me to change my thinking. There were many traditional gender norms that I considered impossible to change; the program has enabled me to change this thinking.”
Participants’ Perspectives

• “Thanks to the discussions, our husbands are respecting us more than ever. We the ladies talk about this over coffee and think that our partners (who participated in this program) are on the same track.”
  —A female couples group participant in Pilot 2

• “This program has improved our life and relationship for the better; because we have attended the sessions, we have benefited equally and talk equally. Right after our departure from the discussion, my husband and I discuss the main topic of the day until our arrival at the next session.”
  —A female couples group participant in Pilot 2
“Thanks for teaching us good knowledge on sexuality. Right after attending Session 3, my sex life with my husband has changed for the better, and we will do our best to keep our pleasure and happiness.”

—A participant from the women’s arm of the study
Reactions about “Healthy Sexuality”

• “I had lots of disagreement with my wife, with whom my sexual life was pretty bad. I never considered her feelings, and whenever I wanted I climbed up and finished my urge and left her. But Session 3 of the discussion, which deals with sexuality, changed my life for the better…. The next morning my wife asked me… where did the experience from last night come from?... She is the one now pushing me to come to this discussion. This single session has improved my sexual life with my wife…”

—A participant in the male group
Next Steps

- Continued analysis of baseline data
- Analysis of postintervention session questionnaire data
- Endline survey in September 2016
THANK YOU
Couples Curriculum

- Session 1: Program Introduction and Understanding Gender
- Session 2: Act like a Man, Act like a Lady
- Session 3: Healthy Sexuality
- Session 4: Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships
- Session 5: Gender, Power, and Control in Relationships
- Session 6: Joint Decision Making
- Session 7: Negotiating Men’s and Women’s Roles in and outside of the Home
- Session 8: Gender Norms and Communicating with Your Partner
- Session 9: Talking to Your Partner about Preventing HIV
- Session 10: Gender Norms and Violence
- Session 11: Setting Personal Boundaries and Sexual Consent
- Session 12: Nonviolent Ways to Resolve Conflict and Dealing with Anger
- Session 13: Understanding Violence and Supporting Survivors
- Session 14: Empowering Change and Program Closure