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## HIV AND AIDS REPORTER: positive male engagement in HIV and AIDS 21 November 2006

produced by the [IDS Health and Development Information](#) team  
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This is our monthly email bulletin, bringing together research to inform policy debates on health in developing countries.

The HIV and AIDS Reporter aims to provide readers with a more in-depth look at a particular area of health policy. This month's theme is [positive male engagement in HIV and AIDS](#). The bulletin also features summaries of new documents and other additions to the [HIV and AIDS Resource Guide](#).

[HIV and AIDS Reporter archive](#) - an archive is now available on the HIV and AIDS Resource Guide. See previous issues of the HIV and AIDS Reporter at [www.eldis.org/hivaids/archive.htm](http://www.eldis.org/hivaids/archive.htm)

All documents listed below are available free on the web. If you are unable to access any of these materials online and would like to receive a copy of a document as an email attachment, please contact [i.young@ids.ac.uk](mailto:i.young@ids.ac.uk).

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## Feature: positive male engagement in HIV and AIDS

There is growing recognition that men's attitudes and behaviour are pivotal to the success of HIV/AIDS programmes. As a result, many development agencies and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) are seeking to encourage positive male involvement in HIV prevention, treatment and care.

There are many good reasons why it is important to work with men. Like women, men often lose out as a result of rigid gender norms and unequal gendered power relations. They often face intense social pressure from peers - and from women - to publicly demonstrate that they are "real men" through taking risks like having unsafe sex. In Malawi, for example, men boasted about the likelihood of being HIV positive since having HIV would act as a badge of manhood before their peers (Kaler, 2003, cited in [Barker and Ricardo, 2005](#)). At the same time, men are encouraged to view health-seeking behaviour as a sign of weakness. This means that they may not get tested for HIV. Men and boys are also expected to be knowledgeable about sex, which leaves no space to admit the anxieties that many feel. This can have devastating consequences - both for men themselves and for their partners.

Men who do not conform to society's expectations of appropriate male sexual behaviour - such as men who have sex with men (MSM) - are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection as a result of the stigma and discrimination that many face. For example, MSM may be driven "underground" as a result of the violence they suffer at the hands of the police, pushing them away from sexual health information and services and into secretive sexual relationships.

How can we support men as well as women to challenge conventional gender roles and expectations? Applying a sophisticated gender analysis to work on HIV and AIDS is essential. We need to think in terms of relations of power and powerlessness, in which both men and women may experience vulnerability, rather than treating 'men' as invariably powerful and problematic. Initiatives need to engage men as partners, using positive and relevant messages which address their specific vulnerabilities and needs, and recognise their rights - for their own sake, as well as in relation to women. Appropriate initiatives and gender training can help men work through their fears and realise that it is okay not to conform to dominant forms of masculinity. Without this, efforts to respond to HIV will continue to lack sincere commitment from men, and risk inadvertently reinforcing the inequalities and stereotypes that drive the epidemic in the first place.

### For more information see:

- A new BRIDGE overview and bibliography on [Engaging Men in Gender Equality](#):

## Positive Strategies and Approaches

[www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/BB15Masculinities.pdf](http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/BB15Masculinities.pdf)

- A range of resources on masculinity, HIV and AIDS from [Siyanda](http://www.siyanda.org) [www.siyanda.org](http://www.siyanda.org)
- A new id21 insights: [Dealing with HIV and AIDS](http://www.id21.org/insights/insights64/art00.html) [www.id21.org/insights/insights64/art00.html](http://www.id21.org/insights/insights64/art00.html)
- The [gender](http://www.eldis.org/hivaids/gender/index.htm) section on the HIV and AIDS Resource Guide [www.eldis.org/hivaids/gender/index.htm](http://www.eldis.org/hivaids/gender/index.htm)

This reporter was produced in collaboration with [BRIDGE](http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk) ([www.bridge.ids.ac.uk](http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk)). Thanks to Emily Esplen for writing this feature and advising on content.

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## Recommended readings on positive male engagement in HIV and AIDS

### 1. Young men and the construction of masculinity in sub-Saharan Africa: implications for HIV/AIDS, conflict, and violence development

Authors: Barker, G. Ricardo, C.

Produced by: World Bank Publications (2005)

This report discusses the role of young men in the perpetuation of violence and the spread of HIV in Africa, and outlines the kind of programme interventions that can support alternative forms of masculinity. It argues that applying a more sophisticated gender analysis as it relates to conflict and HIV and AIDS is essential in order to understand how both women and men are made vulnerable by rigid ideas of masculinity and gender hierarchies. Throughout the report references are made to alternative, non-violent forms of masculinity and to elements of traditional socialisation in Africa which promote more gender-equitable attitudes on the part of young men. Included are examples of young men whose stories reveal ways in which men can question and counter prevailing norms of masculinity.

Several factors are identified which promote health-seeking behaviours and non-violence on the part of young men:

- a high degree of self-reflection and space to rehearse new behaviours
- tapping into men's sense of responsibility and positive engagement as fathers
- family members that model more equitable or non-violent behaviours
- community mobilisation around the vulnerabilities of young men.

In addition, key entry points are identified for engaging young men in gender equitable behaviour, including:

- working with young men through mainstream youth organisations
- engaging communities through community-driven development
- using social marketing to promote change in gender norms - for example through the

use of radio

The report concludes that masculinities are in flux, and it is precisely this environment of change that can be used to promote greater gender equality.

Summary written in collaboration with BRIDGE and [Siyanda](#)

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC21154>

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## 2. Working with men responding to AIDS: gender, sexuality and HIV - a case study collection

Produced by: International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2003)

Across the world, people working on HIV and AIDS now recognise the importance of developing their work with men in order to have a real impact on the epidemic. This has involved identifying what their roles and responsibilities are in different contexts, and developing strategies to work with men on them. This case study collection, produced by the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, presents experiences and lessons from a range of projects that are working with men.

This collection describes not only HIV and AIDS projects, but also other kinds of projects that address other issues relating to men (for example, gender identity, sexuality and violence). It is organised into two parts. Part one provides an overview of HIV and working with men, looking at why we should work with men, which men we should work with, what issues should be covered, and how to work with men. Part two contains thirteen separate case studies organised into sections covering background to the project, its goal, the issues it covers, who it works with and how, the results, and lessons from the work.

Key findings are as follows:

- Botswana has one of the worst AIDS epidemics in the world. Men play a central role in the epidemic. One project has focused on male sexuality rather than just HIV and AIDS education and the response has been positive. The number of men's groups has grown in the last five years, and men have reported a number of changes in their sexual attitudes and behaviour.
- In Bulgaria, violence against women is a major issue. One project tackled the issue by providing health and gender education to boys and girls in secondary schools. At the end of the course boys showed less tolerance of violence and the girls showed more self-confidence.
- In Mongolia, there is no visible AIDS epidemic, but the county is vulnerable to an increase. A project targeting military recruits, focusing on HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) risks, used peer educators and prevention supplies. Peer educators have reported a steady increase in demand for condoms.

Lessons drawn include the following:

- The belief that men are not interested in discussing issues of sexual health, gender and sexuality is false. Given the opportunity, men are willing to learn from other's experiences.

- It is important to be patient and sensitive in developing discussions with men on issues of gender and sexuality.
- In order to be effective in HIV/STI prevention work, it is necessary to work with men and women both separately and together. Working with older men or men with strong religious beliefs is a challenge because of their preconceived ideas.
- The best way is to listen and learn from them, and adapt your information and message based on what they have to say.
- It is necessary to challenge the view that men's attitudes and behaviours are 'fixed by nature'. Starting discussions about gender and sexuality issues with communities can lead to controversy and conflict.
- It is essential to create and maintain strong relationships with formal and informal community leaders.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC15939>

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### 3. SystemaLEtizing resources for engaging men in sexual and reproductive health

Produced by: Population Reference Bureau for the Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG) (2006)

This brochure highlights key resources for working with men and provides a framework for distinguishing among the varied programmes, research and tools that are available. The framework reflects different approaches to such work: men are viewed as 'clients' (focusing on men's own reproductive health needs), as 'partners' (focusing on promoting men's central roles in supporting women's health), or as 'agents of positive social change' (focusing on engaging men in the promotion of gender equity). The main body of the brochure provides key resources - programme reviews, evaluations, policy examples, and tools - for five important areas: family planning and contraceptive use; maternal and neonatal health and fatherhood; male identities and roles; sexually transmitted infections and HIV prevention, diagnosis and treatment; gender-based violence; and policy.

Available online at: [www.siyanda.org/static/igwg\\_systemaletizing.htm](http://www.siyanda.org/static/igwg_systemaletizing.htm)

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### 4. Changing perceptions and practices: grappling with manhood in Ecuador

Authors: Harris, C.

Produced by: id21 insights (2006)

This short paper describes a project in rural Ecuador, which worked with a youth group to reduce gender-based power imbalances. Graphics, role plays and focus group discussions helped group members to reduce their consumption of alcohol and stop coercing each other into having sex with multiple partners. Some learning points are outlined.

- Young people engaged with the project because of interesting exercises that encouraged them to think about their lives from fresh viewpoints.
- Peer pressure around masculinity was the most significant issue for both men and

women.

- The project helped its male participants realise the potential negative consequences of the ways they would do almost anything to avoid mockery on the grounds of not being 'real men'.
- Agreeing to stop peer pressure around certain masculinity issues had a major impact on the behaviour of those who had felt coerced into conformity and even made some difference to that of the rest.

This approach can only work if there is a large group of men involved who all support each other. Women's participation is also vital, both to support their menfolk's decisions and to make corresponding changes in their own gender identities.

Available online at: [www.siyanda.org/static/harris\\_changing\\_perceptions.htm](http://www.siyanda.org/static/harris_changing_perceptions.htm)

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### 5. The Program H Manual Series

Produced by: Instituto Promundo (2004)

Program H stimulates young men to question traditional masculine gender norms (the culturally accepted definitions for being a man in a given society). It promotes discussion and reflection about both the 'costs' of traditional versions of masculinity for both men and women, and the advantages of gender equitable behaviours, such as better care of men's own health. Program H, which has been replicated in several parts of Brazil and throughout the world, has developed 5 training manuals which aim to support young men to question traditional gender norms. The five volumes are: Sexuality and Reproductive Health; Fatherhood and Care-giving; From Violence to Peaceful Coexistence; Reasons and Emotions; and Preventing and Living with HIV/AIDS. Each manual contains a theoretical introduction to each theme, a description of the group activities and a list of references for further research. Manuals are available in:

English: <http://www.promundo.org.br/396>

Spanish: <http://www.promundo.org.br/396?locale=es>

Portuguese: [http://www.promundo.org.br/396?locale=pt\\_BR](http://www.promundo.org.br/396?locale=pt_BR)

Available online at: [www.siyanda.org/static/promundo\\_program.htm](http://www.siyanda.org/static/promundo_program.htm)

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### 5. Between men: HIV/STI prevention for men who have sex with men

Produced by : International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2003)

This booklet presents the main issues around HIV/STI prevention for NGOs and CBOs, either currently working with men who have sex with men, or who are considering doing so. It demonstrates that men who have sex with men are one of the key populations for effective HIV/STI prevention, particularly in countries with lower HIV prevalence.

The paper argues that to work with this key population successfully requires a context specific appreciation of who men who have sex with men are, the values they hold, and how they behave. This will facilitate an understanding of the specific vulnerabilities and risks they face and form the basis for designing appropriate HIV/STI prevention programmes with them.

A wide range of strategies can be employed for HIV and STI prevention with men who have sex

with men. These strategies can be summarised under the following categories:

- individually focused health promotion
- scaling up, targeting and improving service and commodity delivery
- community mobilisation
- advocacy, policy change and community awareness

At their heart, all these strategies are based on the principle of working with, rather than for, men who have sex with men.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC13606>

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## Other summaries from the HIV and AIDS Resource Guide

### 1. Circle of hope: children's rights in a world with AIDS

Authors: Decosas, J.; Davies, W.; Williams, G.

Produced by: Plan (2006)

Plan's Circle of Hope is a framework for supporting children affected by AIDS. It is based on a child-centred community development model, using a rights-based approach in which children, families and communities are active participants in their own development.

This document describes the basis and application of the Circle of Hope framework. Drawing heavily on direct quotes and descriptions of children's experiences, the report provides practical descriptions of a variety of programmes implemented by Plan to assist children affected by AIDS. These descriptions explain the rationale for the programmes, the means by which they support the empowerment of children, and note where they have experienced success. The programmes address the following issues:

- reducing children's vulnerability: reducing gender inequality; promoting youth-friendly health services; developing youth leadership; ending child marriages; abolishing child trafficking
- extending the life of the parent-child relationship: preventing HIV transmission from parents to children; supporting home-based care
- living positively and preparing the family for transition: supporting associations of people living with HIV;
- reducing stigma and discrimination; planning for succession; keeping the memory alive ensuring the child's future: universal birth registration; meeting livelihood challenges; education and vocational training; medical care for children living with HIV

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC21547>

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### 2. Making HIV and AIDS financing work for children

Produced by: Save the Children UK, (2006)

In this briefing, Save the Children analyses the performance of child-specific HIV and AIDS spending targets. It raises concerns about the scarcity of data regarding: the overall allocation of funds targeted to combat HIV and AIDS; how much of these funds are targeted towards children; and, the actual expenditure that directly benefits affected children. As a result, even where donors have committed funds for the prevention and treatment for children affected by HIV/AIDS, they lack the mechanisms to ensure that these resources are actually reaching and benefiting children.

Policy recommendations include:

- donors who have committed to explicit spending targets to meet the needs of children affected by HIV and AIDS must be able to demonstrate full expenditure of what they have announced through statistical reporting disaggregated by age and gender
- children's needs and rights must be given greater priority within all bilateral and multilateral HIV and AIDS programmes
- there is an urgent need to mobilise more resources while addressing the bottlenecks that prevent funds from reaching children
- much more must also be done to protect children from transmission of HIV infection through prevention of mother-to-child transmission and making male and female condoms available to young people
- affordable and appropriate treatment should be provided and to HIV positive children.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC22874>

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### 3. TB/HIV research priorities in resource-limited settings: report of an expert consultation, 14-15 February 2005, Geneva, Switzerland

Authors: Stop TB Partnership; UNICEF; UNDP; World Bank; WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR)  
(2006)

This report, published by the World Health Organization (WHO), describes the outcomes from an expert consultation on research priorities for tuberculosis (TB) and HIV. The report presents summaries of several cross-cutting issues: HIV testing for people with TB; referral systems and models for TB programmes to contribute to delivering antiretroviral therapy; human resource gaps; tailoring TB and HIV treatment for injecting drug users; multidrug-resistant TB; the role of the community; approaches and challenges to conducting operational research; and perspectives of donors and partners. Research priorities include: examining which treatment regimens are most effective and determining how safe they are; ways to improve case-finding for TB; and the development of new tools for diagnosing TB.

Although many questions on TB and HIV remain unanswered, participants in the consultation felt that evaluating the implementation of current policy was more important than generating new research questions. Mechanisms to avoid redundancy of research should be identified and knowledge disseminated properly. Implementation of research priorities should capitalise on the funds mobilised by initiatives such as the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Advocacy for additional resources to conduct more research aimed at improving TB and HIV control is needed.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC22864>

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#### 4. Preventing HIV/AIDS in young people: evidence from developing countries on what works

Produced by: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), (2006)

This report summarises the WHO publication, "Preventing HIV/AIDS in young people: a systematic review of the evidence from developing countries". It offers evidence-based recommendations for policy-makers, programme managers and researchers to guide efforts towards meeting the UN goals on HIV/AIDS and young people. These goals aim to decrease prevalence and vulnerability; and to increase access to information, skills and services. Recommendations are based on a review of 80 studies of interventions delivered through the major settings which reach young people - schools, health services, mass media, geographically defined communities - as well as strategies to reach young people who are most at risk (e.g. young sex workers, drug users, and men who have sex with men).

The report recommends a number of interventions that have proven effective for immediate large-scale implementation. These include:

- schools should provide curriculum-based interventions with effective characteristics, led by adults
- health services should provide interventions that include training for service providers, changes to the facilities, and promoting the services with young people and gatekeepers in communities
- interventions are required to deliver messages through radio, television, and other media.

Further interventions are recommended for widespread implementation, but with a strong evaluation component to clarify impact of intervention and mechanisms of action. Among these are:

- interventions should be developed for geographically defined communities that target young people using existing structures and organisations
- for young people most at risk of HIV, facility-based programmes should be developed that also have an outreach component, and that provide information and services.

The report also offers an overview of the epidemiological data related to young people and HIV, effective and promising HIV prevention approaches in general, the innovative methodology used in the study, and overall conclusions and recommendations.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC22875>

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#### 5. All together now: community mobilisation for HIV/AIDS

> Produced by: International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2006)

This toolkit describes the process of community mobilisation: a capacity-building process through which individuals, groups or organisations plan, carry out and evaluate activities on a participatory and sustained basis to improve their health and other needs. The guide has been

designed to be used alongside 'Tools Together Now! 100 participatory tools to mobilise communities for HIV/AIDS.'

The toolkit describes each stage of community mobilisation in a separate section, as follows:

- Starting together: choosing where to start mobilising, with whom, when and how
- Assessing together: building the capacity of the community to carry out a detailed exploration of the HIV and AIDS issues existing within it
- Planning together: deciding upon ways to respond together to address the different problems and issues identified during the assessment
- Acting together: undertaking coordinated activities in a participatory manner, whilst adapting and developing plans as required
- Monitoring and evaluating together: measuring achievements against original aims and objectives, and using this information to further build capacity
- Scaling-up together: how to increase the number, breadth or scale of activities in order to strengthen the project's impact.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC22873>

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See the HIV and AIDS Resource Guide for a complete list of new additions at:

<http://www.eldis.org/hivaids/index.htm>

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The IDS Health and Development Information team promotes health and equity in developing countries through the provision of high quality, accessible information to policymakers and practitioners. IDS Health and Development Information currently has three flagship products:

- Health Resource Guide - <http://www.eldis.org/health/index.htm>
- Health Systems Resource Guide - <http://www.eldis.org/healthsystems/index.htm>
- HIV and AIDS Resource Guide - <http://www.eldis.org/hivaids/index.htm>

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