

Men Care +

ENGAGING MEN IN A 4-COUNTRY INITIATIVE

MenCare+ is a three-year programme engaging men as caregiving partners to improve the health of women, men and children, to stop gender-based violence and to build respectful relationships.

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Practicing and preaching gender equality

INDONESIA

“I come from a place where men are rough. I have seen events in my hometown that contradict my beliefs,” says Ustadz Muhammad Nur Salim. “However, when I went to Qu’ran study at Boarding school, my headmaster taught me to respect women.”

Living in East Java, Muhammad Nur Salim has made gender equality an important theme in his life. He respects and supports his wife’s leading role in society as a school’s headmistress. “I find it natural to care for my children and join in the household chores,” Muhammad says.

As an Ustadz, an Islamic teach-



er, he often preaches about the moral need for men and women to respect and support each other, but also emphasizes that gender equality has educational, professional and economic advantages.

Prize winning documentary maker Nia Dinata joined MenCare+ workshops to study how men and women in Indonesia shared child care and other responsibilities at home; she wanted

to know how people make gender equality work in a practical way.

“I was so proud when I met Ustadz Muhammad and heard his story,” says Nia Dinata, the filmmaker. “When I started the documentary I just was not sure I would find these enlightening stories in my own country.” ■

Watch the documentary at:
www.lakilakipeduli.org

Men making changes in South Africa

SOUTH AFRICA



“He has changed a lot now. He has become a better father and even a better man.” South African women are enthusiastic about the fatherhood groups in their neighbourhoods.

In South Africa, two out of

every three children grow up without support of a father figure, due to poverty and labour migration. In South African culture many men believe that they should only be with their children if they can actually provide for them. Otherwise they avoid the humiliation of not being able to be a good father and choose to be absent.

With support from the City of Cape Town and the Department of Health, MOSAIC and Sonke Gender Justice are starting an increasing number of fatherhood groups. The Department of Health supports young fathers’

involvement during pregnancy and delivery, as a strategy to build stronger and more equitable relationships, and to prevent transmission of HIV.

The city’s police also see the need for MenCare+ programming, as they confront gender-based violence daily. Two South African women are raped every minute. To break this cycle of violence and increase communication and equality, MOSAIC and Sonke are counselling men who are abusive and they are providing courses on sexual and reproductive health for young men and women. ■

Students smash gender stereotypes

BRAZIL



“We are trying to give a positive meaning to the word *shameless*. Shameless should not be about misbehaving, but about being comfortable to be the way you are,” students said during the launch of *Sem Vergonha* (*Shameless*), a campaign to break down the barriers that limit sexual health of young people.

Students from ten public high schools participated in a workshop by Promundo Brasil on gender awareness to discuss stereotypes about what it means to be a man or a woman in Brazil. The students discovered how these stereotypes hinder open communication about sex and sexuality and hamper condom use among young people.

Realising how important talking about sexuality and contraception is, the students created the *Sem Vergonha* campaign for their fellow students. The students shared information about gender, sexuality and health through Facebook, booklets, posters and films in which the students themselves act out the scenes tackling the campaign's issues.

With support from federal and state education officials the campaign was implemented in a dozen public schools in Rio de Janeiro during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence (November 25th to December 10th 2013). *Sem Vergonha* hopes other students will follow their example and implement the campaign in their schools too. ■

You can follow *Sem Vergonha* on [facebook.com/CampanhaSemVergonha](https://www.facebook.com/CampanhaSemVergonha).

Indonesian celebrities lead by example

INDONESIA

“As an actor I am away from my kids quite often. So every time I have a break I always dedicate my time to the kids,” says Indonesian actor Lukman Sardi. “I read to them and change their clothes. This allows my wife to have her ‘me time’. I support MenCare+ and million other fathers who are willing to be involved in taking hands-on care of their children.” Lukman Sardi and his wife recently appeared in a national public service announcement explaining how they divide the care for



their children. The short film is an initiative of MenCare+ Indonesia or Laki Laki Peduli. A sec-

ond announcement featuring the TV-presenter Ersya Mayori also aired. ■

Dolls for dads

RWANDA

Over 2,000 fathers-to-be in Rwanda will use life-size baby dolls to learn how to properly hold, bathe and care for their new babies. The Rwanda Men's Resource Centre is using 150 of such dolls in fatherhood group education to support maternal and child health.

Men who participate in the fathers' groups also learn how to support their partners during pregnancy, prevent violence in the family and the benefits of a more equitable distribution of housework and childcare. The groups are an important way of engaging men in caregiving and challenging gender inequalities from the very beginning of their child's life.

The dolls are handmade by women from the Tubahumurize Cooperative, an organisation that provides counselling, skills training and micro-financing to women who have experienced gender-based violence. Many of the women are living with HIV. With the skills acquired by the women in the cooperative, they are better able to earn money and to support themselves and their families.

Funding for the dolls was raised through the innovative crowd-funding platform, Catapult. The first dolls are already being used with expectant fathers and their partners in four districts of Rwanda. ■



What happens when men care?

GLOBAL ADVOCACY

TEDxBarcelonaWomen focused on *Get men involved in gender equity!* At the event Gary Barker and Tim Shand, of Promundo-US and the South African NGO Sonke Gender Justice respectively, spoke about how they discovered men as positive force to achieve gender equality.

During his talk, Gary Barker speaks about the moment he realized the potential of engaging men as fathers. When he asked a young gang member how he planned to stay away from a violent life, the young father pointed at the baby in his arms and said: "Her, man, she's the reason."

Tim Shand told about his work with rape survivors and how this has inspired him to work with men against gender-based violence. ■

Watch the speeches through tedxbarcelonawomen.com



You are my father

SOUTH AFRICA

MenCare+ started an advertisement campaign in the Western Cape Province that encourages men to become responsible fathers. Billboards have been installed around train stations, bus stations and shopping malls with the message that being with your child can be rewarding and give both child and father a positive energy. ■



MenCare+: caring for gender equality



Sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls and women are critically hindered by rigid gender and cultural norms for women and men. Women lack decision-making power and are at greater risk of HIV and gender-based violence. MenCare+ engages boys and men in social change and as caregiving partners to improve the health of women, men and children, to stop gender-based violence, and to build respectful relationships.

Fatherhood offers an opportunity to reach young and adult men with a new perspective on manhood. When men become more involved and supportive as fathers and partners, intimate relationships improve and violence decreases, women's rights advance, and children have better development outcomes. Research shows that

men's involvement as caregivers also enhances the quality of life of men themselves.

In Brazil, Indonesia, Rwanda and South Africa a full set of strategies is implemented to provide this perspective. MenCare+ partners work with young men, fathers and their partners, and health sector workers to engage men as partners in gender equality, SRHR, maternal and child health. In addition, MenCare+ provides counselling with men who have used violence; and raises community awareness of the positive influence that men can have through fatherhood and caregiving.

MenCare+ is a three-year, four-country collaboration between Rutgers WPF and Promundo-US, working with long-term national and regional partners who pos-

sess extensive local knowledge and expertise. MenCare+ is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. To ensure sustainability, MenCare+ partners work directly with national public health systems.

Rutgers WPF (rutgerswfpf.org) is known for its expertise in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Netherlands and internationally. Rutgers WPF coordinates the program with **Promundo-US** (promundo.org.br/en), an international NGO known for its groundbreaking work with boys and men to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women, children and youth. ■

For more information, visit www.men-care.org/plus

Correspondence:

Rutgers WPF
P.O.Box 9022
3506 GA Utrecht
The Netherlands

+31-302313431
info@rutgerswfpf.nl
www.rutgerswfpf.org

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