Men for Gender Equality Now (MEGEN) Kenyan men betray archaic patriarchy

Kenya
Kennedy Odhiamb...

Project Summary

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Men for Gender Equality Now is a Kenyan Network of men working to end gender based violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS through prevention, service provision to the victims and awareness creation focusing on the role of men as agents of change. We strive to empower the community to understand the roles they play in promoting violence thereafter developing interventions in ending violence at family and community level during the community sensitization seminars and workshops. During the community seminars we come across victims of gender based violence whom we support through the survivor support services. The Rapid Response Team is the service arm of the project and works on rescue and effective referral system for the victims of gender based violence. Domestic violence starts before birth, practiced during growth and harvested during adulthood. Through the awareness campaigns we strive to curb violence from the root by sensitizing the community into understanding the effects and cost of violence to their families.

The project has designed activities to reach the community at the grassroots level. We conduct community sensitization seminars which are educative forums at the community level for prevention. Community sensitization workshops culminate in the development of plan of action at individual and community level. These forms a basis for future follow up activities.

Men's Traveling Conference (MTC) is observed during the 16 days of activism against gender based violence every year. The campaign goes straight to the community targeting people who may otherwise be unable to attend a formal conference. For a long time men in Kenya have remained passive to issues raised about violence mainly because of the socialization hence the need for this project. Our project target men however the primary beneficiaries of our products are women and families which are able to get support from their transformed husbands and men.

This is a short term high impact

About You

Location
Project Street Address
Project City
Project Province/State
Project Postal/Zip Code
Project Country

Your idea
Focus of activity
Advocacy

Year the initiative began
2001

Position your initiative on the mosaic of solutions
Which of these barriers is the primary focus of your work?
Aggressive Models Of Masculinity

Which of the insights is the primary focus of your work?
Create Paths to Prevention or Remediation

If you believe some other barrier or insight should be included in the mosaic, please describe it and how it would affect the positioning of your initiative in the mosaic

Innovation
Description of Initiative

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Innovation

Survivor Support Activities:
Community activities open the community to talk about their violent ordeals. Rapid Response means going to the homes to assist victims of GBV whenever a case is reported to us. The Rapid Response Team takes the emergency steps to rescue the victim out of danger posed by the perpetrator, reporting the case to the police to initiate the legal redress. A comprehensive referral process begins for medical, legal, psychological assistance and in extreme cases where the victims life is in danger the team get a secure shelter. The team also attends court sessions in solidarity. The process sends a strong warning to perpetrators that gender based violence is a crime. The team has responded to cases ranging from defilement, rape, rescue from female genital mutilation and domestic battery. Currently the team is handling a total of 200 cases that are spread in various courts across the country; so far 70 cases have been concluded in favor of the victims.

Awareness Campaigns:
The 16 days of activism is a powerful platform for awareness on gender based violence and other human rights issues. Since 2003 MEGEN has marked the 16 days with the Men’s Traveling Conference (MTC). The activity brings together a team of activist’s men and women from all walks of life to an awareness campaign trip across the country. The campaign is multifaceted and has education, awareness, research and network building components in all the communities reached. The activities also help in awareness creation; recruitment drive and establishment of new contacts at the community level for future follow up. The campaign uses drama, facilitation and lectures to communicate to the communities across villages, towns and communities.

Our project uses the men to men strategy to combat gender based violence. This strategy involves working with gender sensitised men talking to other men while capitalizing on patriarchy as a platform for discussing action against violence.

Delivery Model

• Men to Men is a strategy where gender sensitised men reach out to other men with information on ending violence. The strategy capitalizes on the patriarchy as a platform for action.

• Advocacy through service where men offer support services to the victims of gender based violence, this adds the men’s voice in condemning violence and putting perpetrators on notice to end violence.

• Capacity building and training of men to be gender activists and trainers helps in reaching men with the right information on ending gender based violence at formal and informal forums;

• Multimedia campaign develops messages and materials into different mediums like posters, T shirts. The messages are also translated to reach people with only basic education. Other multimedia channels include radio interview contribution to the newspaper debates and writing of articles

• Experience Sharing is away of showing transformation. The experience sharing acts like a forum where members declare their stand and the community is able to audit their action and to motivate other men that change is possible.

• Participatory Theatre involves the use of performing artists developing plays and drama on gender based violence. The drama acts as a case study where members of the community used to reflect what taking place in the community.

The impact of the work is measured by:
• Number of people convinced that there is need for action against GBV and have joined the network;
• Request for multimedia materials by different communities;
• Responses from radio interviews and call in sessions;
• Participation by members of the community in the outreach campaigns
• Number of local networks created.
• Feedback and reports on gender related activities taking place in the communities organised by MEGEN members.
• Number of follow up activities initiated at the community level in partnership with the existing structures such as schools, DO, Chiefs barazas, churches

Key Operational Partnerships

MEGEN believes in working through partnerships at the institutional and community level to offer a holistic attention to violence. At the institutional level we work with organisations which offer medical, psychological and legal support to victims of gender based violence while at the community level we work with community structures to empower community to take responsibility against violence.

The Government of Kenya is one of the key stakeholders in the quest to end gender based violence because it is a signatory to the CEDAW and other international instruments that seek to end violence on women. Constitutionally the people of Kenya have mandated the government to protect them against all injustices hence the need for them to provide security to its citizens. We also work with other government institutions including the police as the law enforcement agents, the Ministry of Health in the provision of free medical services and the Judiciary in pursuit of justice to victims of gender based violence.
**Origin of the Initiative**

FEMNET’s experience with the involvement of men in the movement towards gender equality dates back to 1990 when FEMNET launched its gender programme. Right from its first training activity, FEMNET laid down the principle that gender is about women, men, boys and girls; and held the different roles, responsibilities and social status that dictate how females and males in different settings behave or are treated. FEMNET established that gender is about power relations between females and males and that any changes must therefore involve both. Further, FEMNET adopted gender analysis in programming, using it at every level of intervention so that programming involved building concepts, skills and tools and using them for reflection, analysis, planning and application. Over the years, FEMNET has trained hundreds of women and men at all levels in several countries, notably Kenya, Malawi, Ethiopia, Swaziland and Uganda.

FEMNET chose the global campaign of the Sixteen Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women, held annually from November 25-December 10, as the entry point for its work with men for gender equality. A Men to Men Consultation on gender based violence (GBV), which was held in Nairobi in December 2001, and attended by 27 men from Kenya, Malawi, Namibia and South Africa was the first activity. The consultation culminated in the development of a plan of action, which specified follow-up actions at both the regional and national levels. Participants committed themselves to take action nationally and requested FEMNET to host the Regional Network of Men Against GBV. On the basis of this request, FEMNET developed a project and raised funds to support it, and has since created the Regional Network of Men Against GBV. The Network has membership in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia. The Kenyan Men for Gender Equality Now is one of the members of this Network.

The Kenyan Men for Gender Equality Now project is built from plans of action developed by Kenyan men who have participated in the network since December 2001. Over the years, the men’s group has become more confident, gained skills and experience, participated with men from other countries and expanded in numbers. They have also been motivated to build a strong project and have mapped out an outreach project for men in Kenya.

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**Impact**

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<th>Stage of the Initiative</th>
<th>1</th>
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**Financial Model**

Gender is about power relations where one party is using power negatively to violate the other. Most of the victims are underprivileged members of the society who are in need of assistance. Our project works through a cost effective referral programme with other institutions to support victims of gender based violence. At community level we promote development of community oriented interventions and strategies which work with the readily available resources to combat gender based violence. We work with churches, schools and mosques at the community level.

What percentage, if any, of the total operating costs does earned income (from products, services, or other fees) represent?

0

How is the initiative financed? Is it financially self-sustainable or profitable? How much do beneficiaries contribute?

The initiative is financed through the grants from various organisations, the Canada International Development Agency (CIDA) has supported the project through the Gender Equity Support Project (GESP), UNIFEM and the Henrich Boell Foundation are also grant makers to the project. However the greatest contribution has been the work of members who have the passion to eradicate violence and are going to greater heights to offer in kind support to the project.

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**Effectiveness**

- Built a national network of 1000 members that is working to influence men and women positively by shedding the negative behaviors and practices that promote violence;
- Initiated gender dialogue forums in 40 communities across the country where men and women talk openly about GBV and HIV/AIDS;
- Produced information education and communication materials on the role of men in combating GBV and HIV/AIDS;
- Increased public awareness about the role of men in combating GBV and HIV/AIDS;
- Trained 30 TOTs (trainers of trainers) on gender based violence and HIV/AIDS who are currently facilitating and training in formal and informal community outreach activities;
- Developed a 5 year strategic plan for MEGEN;
- Building of relationship with the police and other government agencies;
- Empowered communities into taking action against GBV by reporting cases of violence to the police and other legal authorities and;
- Our work has contributed to the development of the national response guide to rape and the enactment of the sexual offences bill into an act of parliament turning it into law.

How many people have benefited from your program over the last year? Which element of the program proved itself most effective?

The project has been able to reach approximately 500,000 (one million) people directly through various outreach campaigns including community seminars, MTC and follow up activities campaigns that we have conducted in the last three years. Other avenues are print and electronic media which has continued to feature our work.

Scaling up Strategy

- Devolution of all major activities into community level to accelerate the community programmes on GBV and HIV/AIDS;
- Training of members using the training cascade to create a mushrooming effect for a long term outreach campaign;
- Development and translation of multimedia materials into local dialects to reach more people;
- Production of articles in print and electronic media to heighten debate on gender based violence and HIV/AIDS and;
- Work with the provincial administration officers and other law enforcement agencies at community level to fight gender based violence.
How did you hear about this contest and what is your main incentive to participate?

The information was sent to us from Ashoka through a mail from Tyler Ahn. however this project has been in contact with the east African Office in Uganda.

Main Obstacles to Scaling Up

• The process of transforming men from old to new masculinity is slow, requires a regular follow up which requires time and resources. By supporting the community activities we will be able to minimize on the cost as while maximizing results in the community into action centre;

• The project has grown fast in the last three years hence the need for autonomy from FEMNET. We are seeking institutional support to enable the project to scale up its activities turning it into an organisation.

Main Financial Challenges

Most of the donors are supporting short term activities of the project with limited provision in hiring of staff. The currently funding is committed to specific activities making it hard to cater for the needs arising from the devolved community activities;

Main Partnership Challenges

The project would require a long term core funding to enable the project undertake the major activities planned for the future. We are currently operating on a budget of approximately US$150, 000 annually. We envisage a budget of US$ 200,000 to US$ 300,000 for the scaling up programme of the project. The project is looking for a grant maker or a foundation that can offer institutional support. The grant will also work for the development of programmes and services by the organisation.

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