

Technical Paper No.3



PARTNERING: A New Approach to Sexual and Reproductive Health



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Partnering: A New Approach to Sexual and Reproductive Health

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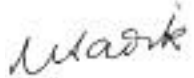
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Foreword

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, Cairo, 1994) broke new ground in endorsing men's involvement in sexual and reproductive health, a realm that until then had overlooked their active role. In 1995, UNFPA published its first Technical Report on "Male Involvement in Reproductive Health, Including Family Planning and Sexual Health." Tremendous advancements over the last five years in research on men and masculinities, in the sense of urgency with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in the visibility of gender-based violence, and in understanding the role that gender imbalances play in sexual relations and reproductive health have compelled us to reflect on new directions for working with men. A number of good practices from UNFPA and other organizations innovative programme interventions in these areas also deserve recognition and replication. This report attempts to capture such progress and recommend promising programming prospects in the areas of partnership with men, gender equity and engaging men to address such pressing issues as STDs and HIV/AIDS prevention, reduction of unwanted pregnancies, maternal mortality and morbidity, and gender-based violence, and in meeting their own reproductive health and educational needs. The growing consensus about focusing on young men, given the critical role their socialization and education play in determining the way they view women and their future sexual and reproductive behaviours, brings us hope. I strongly believe that early interventions with young men and boys constitute a great opportunity for promoting gender equity and reducing risk behaviours. It is essential to empower boys and young men with negotiation skills, supportive role models and networks, positive notions about sexuality and gender relations in schools and through community-based approaches, and to ensure adequate access to youth-friendly services. Similarly, enabling men to explore new family roles, to express their needs and seek help, to discuss such sensitive subjects as contraception, risk reduction and STD and HIV/AIDS prevention and reproductive intentions with their partners, and inviting them to make joint decisions on such matters require concerted efforts. This document reflects UNFPA's commitment to advocating and implementing such change, with support from other UN agencies, NGOs, political and religious leaders, activists, educators, employers, the media, husbands, partners, parents, male adolescents, community members, and service providers. I hope that it will serve as inspiration for stronger and tangible results in this complex but critical area.

Dr. Nadis Sadik



Executive Director, UNFPA

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Table of Contents

<i>Executive Summary</i>	i
<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Chapter One</i> THE MASCULINITY EQUATION	15
■ Understanding the context of pressures on men	15
■ Learned stereotypes of male identity	17
■ Implications of studies of masculinities for future programmes	19
■ Entrenched sexual stereotypes raise risks and vulnerability of both men and women	22
■ New models of fatherhood and childrearing are needed	25
■ Gender-based violence and men	29
■ Prevention of maternal mortality and men	33
■ Political changes to achieve partnerships between men and women	34
<i>Chapter Two</i> PREVAILING MALE ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES IN THE AREAS OF REPRODUCTION, SEXUALITY AND SERVICES	37
■ The role men play in the AIDS crisis	37
■ Reproductive intentions, knowledge and practices of men as married partners	40
■ Men's roles in couples' decisions pertaining to reproduction and sexuality	45
■ Men's reproductive health needs as clients	50
■ Health systems that reinforce men's and women's unequal positions	52

Chapter Three **FUTURE PROGRAMME DIRECTIONS**55

- **Four programming frameworks, corresponding approaches and expected outputs** 56
 - *The pre-ICPD family planning framework*
 - *The men and family planning framework*
 - *The male equality framework*
 - *The gender equity in reproductive health framework*
- **Expected outputs of “partnering” and indicators** 62

Chapter Four **PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS**69

- **Addressing ethical issues** 69
- **Allocation of resources and costs of men’s programmes: diversion from women’s programmes** 71
- **The need for a holistic and multi-pronged approach** 74
- **Adopting a life-cycle approach to assess men’s profiles and needs** 76
- **The need for more research, monitoring and evaluation to learn about men’s perspectives** 77

Chapter Five **CHANGING CULTURE, POLICIES AND BEHAVIOUR THROUGH COMMUNICATION**81

- **Advocacy: the newest emphasis in communication programmes that focus on men** 82
- **Selected advocacy strategies to change culture and policies, with a focus on men and gender roles** 85
- **Individuals’ behaviour changes through information, education, communication (IEC) strategies** 96
- **A few strategic communication tips: lessons learned from experience** 98

<i>Chapter Six</i>	REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY INTERVENTIONS THAT FOCUS ON MEN	109
■	Meeting men's reproductive health and sexual needs	109
■	Available male methods for family planning and HIV/AIDs prevention	111
■	The range of RSH services for men	117
■	Integrating STDs and family planning in services	119
■	Providing special services for men or using existing services?	120
■	Is there a special notion of quality of care for men?	122
■	Training providers to work with men	127
■	Distribution schemes of RH commodities	129
■	Reaching men in employment-based programmes	133
■	Reaching men through organized groups	135
<i>Chapter Seven</i>	REACHING YOUNG MEN AND BOYS	139
■	Adolescence, a time to form young men's identity	140
■	Young men's sexual and reproductive health needs	141
■	Adolescent sexual and reproductive health programmes	145
■	Youth-friendly reproductive health information and services	155

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