

MenEngage Expert meeting

Vienna, Hofburg, 23-24 November 2017

REPORT¹

Introduction

Quick facts:

50 participants; 3 sessions; 1 theatre performance

Opening session: Strategies to engage men within organizations

The opening session, which was chaired by EU Ambassador Vreilas, aimed to set the stage of the meeting, highlighting the current state of play of the global work on engaging men and boys in gender equality and global strategies that work to challenge masculinity norms and behaviours within organizations.

Dr. Michael Linhart, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, opened the meeting and stated that the promotion of gender equality is as relevant now as it has ever been. While women’s voices need to be given due consideration, if half of the population is facing discrimination, then the other half also has to speak up. Mr. Linhart stressed that gender equality is a priority for Austria, including as a Chair of the OSCE and in its foreign policy. The **2nd Gender Equality Review Conference (GERC)**

‘If half the population is facing inequality and discrimination, the other half is obliged to speak up.’

Dr. Michael Linhart

included the strong recommendation that we need to involve men and boys more strongly in the promotion of gender equality. The Austrian Development Agency worked with the NGO CARE on their **“Young men initiative in the Western Balkans”**, which aimed to engage men and boys in the prevention of violence against women. Dr. Linhart mentioned that a lot remains to be done and education at an early age is of great importance to combat existing stereotypes. We must also do more in our personal lives - we must speak up. We need to be aware of the influence people in power positions have. They need to speak up for women’s rights and gender equality as well as the development of fair policies and equal access to everyone. International organizations, governments, political parties and private companies need to establish rules and regulations to ensure that all members of society are treated equally.

‘Existing stereotypes of what “real men” should be like can be very destructive.’

Amb. Andrej Benedejcic

Ambassador Andrej Benedejcic, Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the OSCE and Chair of the OSCE MenEngage Network, said that existing stereotypes of what “real men” should be like can be very destructive. He gave a brief outline of the history and role of the OSCE MenEngage network, which was founded in 2012. Being part of the global MenEngage Alliance, its goal is to promote

¹ This report should neither be interpreted as official OSCE recommendations based on a consensus decision, nor as the official position of the OSCE Secretariat; it reflects opinions expressed individually by participants in the context of the MenEngage expert meeting.

women’s rights in the knowledge that they are linked to security. The OSCE recognizes that gender equality is linked to security and is a cross cutting issue, for which the OSCE offers a forum for discussion. He encouraged the OSCE to look for synergies with other international organizations, and mentioned as an example the **International Gender Champions initiative**, which several Ambassadors to the OSCE and now also the new Secretary General joined in 2017. One of the goals of the MenEngage initiative is to build and improve the engagement of men in achieving gender justice.

Key-note speaker Nikki van der Gaag, Director of Gender Justice and Women’s Rights at Oxfam GB provided an introduction to the global commitments and laws on gender equality, while underlining that the OSCE also has specific commitments. Progress was made in developing commitments and laws on combating violence, promoting equal pay, maternity leave and political participation, but laws are not enough and there is still a lot that needs to be done. Ms. Van der Gaag provided an overview of positive global developments, including a strong increase in the % of girls attending school and women entering the labour market, and knowledge of women’s rights. However, many things that concerned the women’s rights movement since decades, have still not changed:

- Statistics on VAW are still high – 46 countries still have no laws against domestic violence
- The majority of the world’s poor are women – 600 million women have insecure jobs
- Less than 20% of land is owned by women
- Women are paid 20-30% less than men for comparable work
- The fact that women provide the vast majority of unpaid care is considered a barrier for women’s participation in many areas.

‘Men are an important part of the solution, and reaching gender equality needs to be the joined work of women and men’

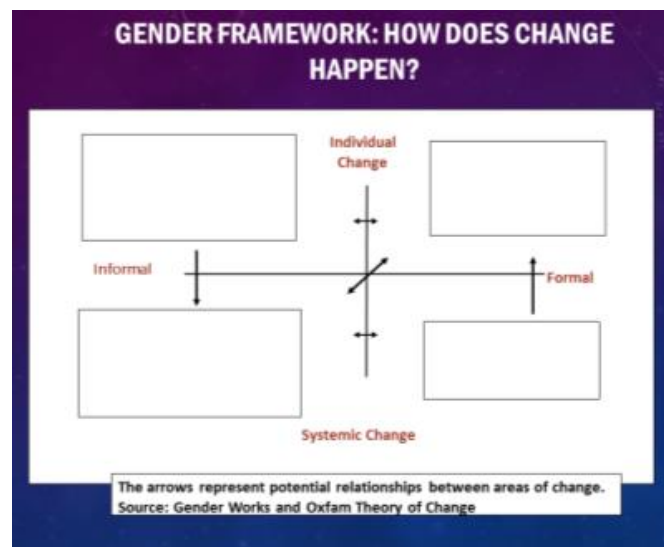
Nikki van der Gaag

When it comes to leadership and representation, the gender gap remains particularly vast:

- Globally only 22% of national parliamentarians are women
- In 2016, only 21% of CEOs of international companies are women (decrease compared to 2014)
- Less than 1 in 4 Senior Management positions are held by women
- Women’s participation in peace processes (UN survey) → only 9% of women represented in negotiating delegations

The current global environment threatens progress and even increases the risk of a reversal of certain progress that has been achieved, namely the increasing economic insecurity and growing global insecurity.

In order to achieve change, we need new approaches and working with men and boys has gained prominence in the past years. Many organizations, including women’s organizations, are working with and have programmes that include men and boys in their gender equality work. UN Women started the #HeforShe campaign. The global



MenEngage Alliance was founded and the global MenCare Campaign launched.

Ms. van der Gaag highlighted the importance of addressing all levels of change needed to achieve gender equality, beyond the individual level. Challenging patriarchal institutions and structures that maintain status quo, challenging the notion of traditional masculinity is key and men need to take an active role in this.

Possible obstacles in the involvement of men in gender equality include:

- Gender equality is still seen as “women’s issues”
- Pressure on men to conform to traditional gender norms is strong and starts at young age
- Many men are resistance to change
- Existing men’s rights movements, which are anti-women and misogynistic

What fosters greater involvement of men in gender equality:

- Highlight the benefits for gender equality for men
- Take into account diversity among men
- Focus on ‘opportunity moments’ in men’s lives – education, sport, fatherhood
- Address the real problems some men experience (e.g. health, unhealthy social norms, violence)
- Build alliances with women and women’s groups

Ms. van der Gaag highlighted three programmes as examples of successful practices:

- Oxfam’s **We-Care programme**: aims to address the heavy and unequal responsibilities of women face on unpaid care and domestic work
- **State of the world’s fathers**: a global policy advocacy platform
- **Oxfam Enough! campaign in India (in 2016)**

Key-note speaker Ritxar Bacete Gonzalez, Senior Fellow of Promundo, talked about the advantages of involving men in promoting equal rights, highlighting the positive impact on the lives of men and children if they become more engaged. He called on participants in the meeting to reflect on their own views on equality and how they are making equality a reality in their work and their private life, and what they want to commit to for the future.

Promundo is a global organization working to promote gender justice and gender equality and to create a world free of violence by engaging men in partnership with women and girls. Promundo works with men and boys to transform harmful gender norms and unequal power relations as a critical part to achieve gender equality. They do this by promoting healthy masculinity and positive notions of what it means to be a man, through programs, projects and campaigns at the local/community level. They also advocate with institutions and governments to adopt policies and programmes aimed at reinforcing societal and personal change. High quality research is a starting point for all of Promundo’s work, with the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) as key example, which by now covers 36 countries and more than 50,000 interviews have been conducted worldwide.

Nigina Abaszade, UNFPA, provided an overview of the situation in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region which impacts the work to promote gender equality. Key challenges in this context

include re-emerging conservatism about women’s rights; cuts to public services often at expenses of women’s health and rights; weak private sector support for women; and increasing poverty among the elderly, disproportionately impacting women.

The IMAGES survey, which has been supported by UNFPA and conducted in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia in the OSCE region, revealed worrying findings on attitudes to gender equality. In all surveyed countries, high numbers of men and women agreed to different justifications of violence against women and negative attitudes towards gender equality.

In 2011, UNFPA launched the MenEngage Platform for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, which collects good practices from the region. Nigina shared a number of projects , including working with

non-traditional partners like sports clubs, armed forces and health care workers, and the development of national and international campaigns on key topics such as GBV, prenatal sex selection and MenCare.

‘The young generation is more prone to change and global developments like modern technologies and new modalities of work provide key opportunities to transform gender relations.’

Nigina Abaszade

For UNFPA, involvement of men is a key entry point to transform gender relations and many opportunities exist in the region. The IMAGES surveys show that the young generations are more prone to change, the two-income family model is becoming the norm and modern technologies allow new modalities of work. We should also take into account the crucial role of the private sector and social

media, and the issue of migrant and trans-border transit of social norms.

Question and answers

The Q&A session included a discussion on best practice examples of transformational programmes. Working with young boys and men was considered essential to achieve change, and working with schools to initiate discussions on what it means to be a man considered a best practice. Furthermore, programmes engaging non-traditional partners like private companies have shown a lot of potential.

Another question addressed the role of media in changing social norms and how to achieve change at the systems level. One speaker recommended involving local officials and engaging them on topics relevant to their local policies.

Session 2: Good practices and preliminary results of MenEngage activities in the OSCE region

The second was chaired by the Permanent Representative of Spain to the OSCE, Ambassador Victoria González Román, and aimed to provide an **overview of projects and programmatic approaches** to engaging men and boys in gender equality issues and discuss entry points for engaging men in gender equality issues in the OSCE region.²

<p>Mongolia <i>Beautiful Hearts Against Sexual Violence</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Aims to increase the number of boys in Mongolia who are actively preventing gender-based violence •Works to change the national strategies and policies on gender equality, using tools such as gender budgeting, establishment of MenEngage Network and working with marginalized communities •Works with education sector using the platform of the National University of Mongolia •Organizes workshops for young staff members of police and law enforcement agencies to provide training on identification and prevention of sexual violence against women
<p>Tajikistan <i>MenEngage Network for political parties</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •OSCE initiated a project to engage men from political parties in Tajikistan in gender equality issues. •Awareness of male party members was raised and they have initiated different activities to promote gender equality •OSCE organized a <i>camp for girls</i> to empower them to express their opinions •The members of the MenEngage Network are open to cooperate with different regions and encourage men of different social status to be actively involved in combating gender-based violence
<p>Russia <i>Doctors to Children's Papa School</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Project developed by women and men together to encourage fathers to be more involved in the everyday lives of their children. •Work with professionals of medical, social and educational staff who have specific expertise •Developed a guide for Training of Trainers •Organizes interactive sessions for young fathers •This approach also aims to combat violence, as many social services are directed to women and children and not tailored for the needs of men.
<p>Serbia <i>Reflektor Teatr</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •SPOTLIGHT THEATRE is an independent youth theatre production, which among other plays performs MACHOMEN, a theatrical documentary dealing with manhood here and today. •A broad audience is reached through working with actors, a dedicated volunteer team, partnerships with schools, universities and the NGO sector, having discussions after the play, engaging media in creative campaigns and performing in the region and in Europe, including outside of the institutional theatre and in unexpected places
<p>OSCE Mission in Kosovo & UNFPA Kosovo <i>Images Survey</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Preliminary results from the International Men And Gender Equality (Images) Survey conducted in Kosovo highlight that while young people are more positive on gender equality norms, attitudes and practices that promote traditional stereotypes of male and female roles persist. •Women are still in charge of household chores, while paternity leave is considered as auxiliary to maternity leave and not about the father's involvement in their children's upbringing. The survey also showed a correlation between violence experienced in childhood and exhibiting violent behaviour
<p>Western Balkans <i>CARE Youth and Gender Programme</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The CARE framework includes several interlocked areas for engaging men in ending GBV; awareness raising; working with communities through role models and engaging religious leaders; and, alliance building, including connecting to the work of women's rights organizations

² All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

Discussant **John Crownover**, the Youth and Gender Program Advisor from CARE International Balkans office provided a reflection on the current state of thematic programmes in this area in the OSCE region. He highlighted the **impact of conflict on young people**. While young people are most likely to challenge social norms, they are also heavily impacted by the past and current conflicts in their direct environment, which often led to an idealization of masculinity. **The issue of extremism and radicalization is crucial** in the context of the discussion on challenging harmful masculinities as well, while it is hardly addressed in the current responses to prevent violent extremism and radicalization. Promoting a healthy lifestyle for men and boys, as well as healthy social interactions, requires **not only a change at the personal level but also a political change**. It will be important for **different organizations and institutions to work together** to promote this systematic change.

Action Point:

Spain stressed the importance of young people and will include MenEngage as an agenda item at the next meeting of the Group of Friends of Youth

The role of men in combating violence against women

Moderator: Zorana Antonijevic, National Programme Officer, OSCE Mission to Serbia

Introducer: Iluta Lace, Director, MARTA, Latvia

During the group discussion, good practices from Moldova, Tajikistan, Latvia and Serbia on involving men in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) were shared. Participants referred to the **importance of the #Metoo campaign** and that it should move to a discussion on how men can step up and speak out about sexual harassment.

The Director of the Centre for Agressors in **Moldova** presented their work since five years with male perpetrators, who are enrolled in a 6 months programme. Having champions of the project among policemen and prosecutors as well as female champions proved effective. The Legal Centre in Moldova makes the first protection order and trained policemen on this. A nation-wide campaign targeting young boys and men, including in rural areas, aims to end VAW.

Tajikistan adopted a law on domestic violence. As in other countries, it proved essential to target rural areas to increase awareness among women as well as young men on their rights and the new law. Violence against women in the country also links to economic development and migration and there is a preventive effect of employment opportunities for women, economic independence, and having women in leadership positions.

The issue of the **prevalence of weapons**, in particular in post-conflict context and impact on VAW was brought up.

Several speakers highlighted the **importance of strategic partnerships**. The organization Marta from **Latvia** provided the example of working together as an NGO with the police, which creates challenges but also helps to achieve change. The OSCE Mission to Serbia shared they prepared a booklet with simple rules that summarize the police protocol on how to deal with domestic violence cases.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **More attention should be paid to good practices of local governments, and cooperation between local government and civil society organizations should be encouraged**
- **The OSCE has strong political commitments on ending VAW, and countries can be held accountable to this**
- **More efforts should be made to include GBV prevention in education programmes, including by working with Ministries of Education**
- **It is important to link the global agendas on Women, Peace and Security, Combating Violent Extremism and ending Violence Against Women as they are interconnected. For example, reaching gender balance in security forces will be key to combat GBV**
- **While the legal framework in many countries is strong, implementation is still lacking and needs to be improved.**

The role of men in advancing equal participation of women

Moderator: Vanja Matic, Gender Officer, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introducer: Anatolii Oprea, Consultant, Terre des Hommes, Moldova

Discussion in the working group focused on the **role of leaders and importance of establishing networks of decision makers**. Even leaders do not know everything and need to be educated, and specific programmes should be developed for this. Networks such as the MenEngage Network are a tool, but it is important to place the responsibility where power lies, i.e. with men and leaders.

Successful programs that exists can be extended and more mixed mentoring programs are a good strategy. The #MeToo movement has shown the importance of combating sexual harassment and creating safe workplaces to ensure women can participate at equal level with men.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Women's participation in social as well as in economic spheres are equally important**
- **Leaders should be educated and properly trained to create effective policies and strategies to address the issue of equal participation**
- **More effective use of the global networks and platforms such as MenEngage needs to be encouraged, placing responsibility on men**
- **More mixed mentoring programs are needed, where the leaders with decision making power will be involved**

Strengthening MenEngage networks and linkages

Moderator: Dennis Cosgrove, Head of OSCE Border Management Support Unit

Introducer: Vanja Jošić, Young Men Team Leader, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Participants discussed the important role of men in maintaining the MenEngage Network. Unfortunately in most instances, no **funding** is available to support or facilitate meetings for such groups.

The **country or regional context** should be taken into consideration and the most suitable approach chosen based on this. For instance, in Tajikistan the MenEngage network was first established in political parties. Sometimes it makes sense to start the process with political figures.

Well designed and contextualized **training programmes** are important, for example for law enforcement personnel, so they can gain the knowledge and ability to deal with gender-related issues and deal with issues such as domestic violence and violence against children.

It is important to recognize the **obstacles** to initiatives such as MenEngage, including "men's clubs" that advocate and promote values that are counter to those of MenEngage.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **One size doesn't fit all - a good understanding of the environment is essential for initiating and strengthening MenEngage networks, and local ownership needs to be built and maintained to ensure sustainability of the project**
- **The engagement of OSCE Gender Focal Points (GFPs) is a good entry point and networking between GFPs is essential as a support mechanism and sharing of good practices.**
- **A concrete Action Plan for the MenEngage Network should be developed, with clearly defined and achievable goals**
- **Strong linkages with other existing networks are needed to avoid overlap, duplication and to build on what has been successful and already underway**
- **MenEngage Ambassadors need to be active, engaged and visible.**

Kieran O'Reilly, Monitor in the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine provided a brief overview of gender mainstreaming efforts in the Mission, which includes strategies for engaging men in gender equality. He highlighted the key role of male and female gender focal points in bringing up gender-related issues in teams on the ground.

Session 3: Accountability and inclusion: effective male engagement and partnership

The closing session was moderated by Ambassador Claude Wild, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE. Speakers and participants discussed effective male engagement, basic principles and commitments for male allies in the OSCE and good practices in mobilizing men.

Elli Scambor, Managing director of the Institute for Masculinity Studies, Gender Research and Education, presented the findings from a [big European study](#) on gender equality, which concluded that **gender equality needs men and men need gender equality**. Men can benefit from gender equality since it questions social norms which are bad for men and impact men's health and wellbeing. There is progress in Europe to more equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in Europe. Ms. Scambor stressed the importance of focusing on caring masculinities, as care is a human norm which applies both to men and women.

Rati Ionatamishvili, Deputy Chairman of the Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee of the Parliament of Georgia, highlighted that the **HeforShe campaign** is very active in Georgia and the parliament has taken **measures against sexual harassment** and to **promote men taking parental leave**. There was also a **mandatory gender quota** introduced for parties. Mr. Ionatamishvili highlighted the importance of men's involvement as equitable stakeholders and caregivers, stating that gender equality will lead to better lives for mothers, fathers and children.

The CEO and founder of Women@the Table, **Caitlin Kraft-Buchman** presented the **International Gender Champions initiative**, which aims to harness the most senior leadership of international organizations for gender equality. The initiative has 200 individuals signed up as a Gender Champion. The project includes SMART commitments from all Gender Champions and they are required to report on their actions. Practical ways in which the initiative promotes gender equality is through sharing best practices for **gender parity of panels, improving recruitment processes and using gender-sensitive language**. In order to reach gender equality goals, it is important to **change the institutions in which we work** to be more gender-responsive and improve capacity and knowledge on gender issues.

Ruben Reyes, representing the Global MenEngage Alliance and the Masculinity Network for Equality (REDMAS) in Nicaragua joined the meeting via weblink and explained **what accountability means** for the Alliance. The MenEngage Alliance works to transform unequal power relations and patriarchal systems by addressing masculinities, building inclusive alliances, working with men and boys through an intersectional feminist approach and fostering joint actions. The Alliance has established **key values and principles** to which all members are required to adhere. These include **non-discrimination, participation, collaboration and transparency**. They also established a global **Code of Conduct** and Accountability Standards and Guidelines, which are collected in a [Toolkit](#). Being accountable for the MenEngage Alliance means building gender equality into all they do, being critically aware of one's own power and privileges, taking action to address personal and institutional practices, respecting and promoting women's leadership and creating structures of consultation and partnership with women's rights organizations. Accountability means also looking inward into ourselves and being open to criticism. It is important to create spaces to consult and have a genuine dialogue with women's organizations, which includes listening to them.

Action Point:

Ambassador Benedejčič suggested that the OSCE Gender Section develops a page on the OSCE website for the MenEngage Network

Participants and speakers discussed what are the most effective ways for influencing the systems within international organizations. **Commitment by leadership is important** to ensure individuals with power will use their platforms to make a change. Speakers were also asked to share **successful strategies to promote caring masculinities**. These include parental leave regulations, men sharing unpaid work, having male role models in care jobs and developing programmes for men's health and self-care. Participants stressed that assuming equal care in unpaid work requires not only a change in individual mindsets and culture, but a **systematic change at the policy/government level**.

A comment was made that there is a need to change the frame of our discussions on the benefits of gender equality for men. It is important to not only reject toxic masculinity but also embrace a **positive narrative** of a value system that is magnetic, beautiful and transformative. At the same time, the focus should not be on how the patriarchal system affects men but also to question male privileges.

Recurring topics and conclusions throughout the meeting:

- Importance of **forging alliances at the global and national level** on MenEngage
- Engaging men and boys in gender equality is an issue which cuts across the OSCE region and **impacts all countries**
- In order to achieve change, we have to look both at **individual and systems level**. At the individual level, it is important to challenge yourself and others
- There is a need for **resources and funding** for the work on promoting gender equality, including on engaging men and boys. In particular, funding should be made available to local organizations
- MenEngage work links very closely to **security issues** dealt with in the OSCE, like extremism and radicalization
- There are many **synergies with the work on Young People** in the OSCE region, which should be further explored and expanded
- Work with men has to be **alongside women's organizations** and supporting them
- **Education plays a key role** in challenging gender stereotype and addressing gender inequality and there should be more attention to curricula and awareness raising

In her closing remarks, **Amarsanaa Darisuren**, Senior Gender Adviser of the OSCE, stressed that continuing challenges to our work for gender equality remain, including discriminatory legislation, lack of implementation of commitment, and actual resistance. Persistent gender stereotypes and harmful social norms are continued by men as well as women. In order to continue to challenge traditional norms and stereotypes, it is also important to start with ourselves and challenge our own stereotypes. Challenging harmful masculinities and engaging men and boys in gender equality are areas with many linkages to OSCE key topics, such as VERLT and economic and environmental threats. Ms. Darisuren stressed the importance of adopting a new Ministerial Council decision on ending VAW, which recognizes importance of engaging men and boys and proposals with concrete taskings for pS to support the work in countries.