Using participatory design to understand drivers of SGBV among youth

Findings from Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, India and Rwanda

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Adolescent boys are not all the same

To tackle SGBV, we need to reject the simplistic archetypes that boys and men are inherently aggressive. We can use human-centered approaches to unpack societal and gender normative drivers of SGBV.

- For many boys, “being a man” means suppressing emotion, holding the power in relationships, and using violence to demonstrate authority.
- To design SGBV prevention interventions, it’s critical to analyze personal, social and gender drivers of how power gets asserted from early adolescent onwards.
- How do we engage men and boys as partners in the design process, seeking a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of boys and men’s experiences and pressures?
Broken heart

When I first started my relationship with a certain girl whom I decided to love and give her all my heart, she decided to throw words with me, then that's when I realised that love should not be forced. We parted ways and now we don't talk to each other due to such heartbreak.

Jim.

I know that I am still single because of the girl who gave me love and support. But I believe even if we broke up with each other she can still remember the kind of love and support I gave her. I still love her and I know she does the same.

Heartbreak/Mend

This activity required young men to write or draw about their heartbreak stories on a cutout of a heart. First, on the broken side of the heart, young men talked of their heartbreak experiences and emotions; and on the mended side of the heart, young men talked of how they overcame heartbreak and their emotional state today.
My father betrayed my mother; betrayed my family.
I call him the betrayer. He married another woman
and took a piece of our land from us in order to build
a house for his new wife. When my mother objected, though,
my father threatened to beat her. I’m away at school
now but my brothers, even though they are so little,
protect my mother in the village. I know my little boys
are there to stand up to my dad when he threatens
to abuse my mom.
Learnings from Men Stand Up

POWER
Ego and masculinity are central to a young man’s perception of himself and how he is perceived by male peers. Young men report that if ego is threatened, they might retaliate through violence or through invasions of privacy.

MONEY
In relationships, money and power are inextricably linked. Young men still feel economic pressures to be the breadwinner. Money creates an uneven power imbalance with the poorer partner often having less negotiating power for safe sex.

SEX
The internalized and cultural stigma against premarital sex limits young men’s sexual health learning opportunities. This leads young men to learn about sex and adopt sexual cues from pornography and peers.
“Watching porn makes you want sex. If you can’t get it from your girlfriend, you need to force it.

Young Man - Lucknow, India
Opportunities for designing interventions

INTERVENE EARLY
Where possible, work with younger adolescents, targeting boys and girls at a key developmental stage.

TARGET DRIVERS OF SGBV
Focus programming on structural drivers of SGBV, i.e. gender norms and economic empowerment. Be inclusive of boys, LGBTQ youth, and girls, in order to transform norms in communities and ultimately decrease the risk of violence.

BE DATA DRIVEN
Use data gathered to identify motivations and guide every aspect of the intervention - from behavioral outcomes and delivery channels, to content, engagement and behavior change techniques.
Thank You