

LONGITUDINAL STUDY - YEAR 3



Equal Community Foundation

April 2021

Published in April 2021

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Acknowledgements

Equal Community Foundation (ECF) would like to thank the Dalyan Foundation for their support in the implementation of Action for Equality since 2018 as well as for their guidance and support for this three year study.

Executive Summary

The aim of the longitudinal study is to understand the sustainability of the Action for Equality (AfE) programme outcomes (attitudes, behaviours, knowledge and skills) among participants who graduated from the programme in August, 2018. AfE is a programme that engages adolescent boys between the ages of 13 to 17 to be gender equitable over a period of 60 weeks.

This study evaluates the outcomes of participants at three stages: at the end of the programme, and 12 months and 24 months after the end of the programme. The sample in this study comprises 84 participants' responses at the end of the programme and 12 months later, and 78 participants' responses (out of the 84) 24 months after the end of the programme.

In this report, the study aims to answer three questions:

1. Part I: Does AfE, a gender-transformative intervention, lead to shifts in attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviour in adolescent boys?
2. Part II: Are these shifts in attitudes sustained a year after the intervention has ended?
3. Part III: Are the shifts in attitudes, behaviours and skills sustained two years after the intervention has ended?

Overall findings indicate that the AfE intervention is successful in bringing about positive shifts in gender attitude, knowledge, skills and behaviour of the participants. The results show:

1. A positive shift in overall gender equitable attitudes.
2. Gender equitable attitudes are more positive towards girls' right to education, women's employment outside the home, women's right to choose their own attire, and less progressive towards attitudes related to family maintenance and/or protection.
3. Participants have increased knowledge on gender and human rights issues, to help them raise awareness on gender based violence and discrimination in their communities, as well as improved skills to clearly and confidently communicate with people, analyse situations related to gender based violence and discrimination (GBVD) and suggest solutions to solve problems on GBVD.
4. Overall improvement in the behaviour of the participants. Mothers report positive changes in their sons' behaviour and communication styles. Results also show that graduates have better relationships with their sisters, do more household chores and pay more attention to their studies.

Findings show that shifts in attitudes are sustained one year after the AfE intervention. The results indicate that, similar to the results at the end of the AfE intervention, gender equitable attitudes are more positive towards girls' right to education, women's right to work and women's right to choose their own attire. Moreover, we see that gender equitable attitudes very gradually change towards attitudes related to traditional gender relations/roles of husband/brothers and wives/sisters (i.e. tolerating violence to keep the family intact, protectionism and the idea of being a man).

Findings show the following results two years after the AfE intervention:

1. A decline in gender equitable attitudes in attitudes related to violence and tolerance towards it, masculinity and gender roles and responsibility;

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2. Increase in the percentage of boys under low gender equitability;
 3. There has been a decline in knowledge and skills related to critical thinking and initiation of the participants. Boys feel that they have the ability to communicate with family, peers and community members on issues of GBVD as well as work as a team to solve problems of GBVD;
 4. Mothers have reported sustained changes in their sons' behaviour and communication styles and continued help with household chores.

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List of Acronyms

VAWG: Violence Against Women and Girls

VAW: Violence Against Women

NFHS: National Family Health Survey

GEMS: Gender Equity Movement in Schools

ECF: Equal Community Foundation

AfE: Action for Equality

GAS: Gender Attitude Survey

GEM: Gender Equitable Men Scale

SAP: Skill Assessment by Participants

FP: Foundation Programme

AP: Action Programme

LP: Leadership Programme

Introduction

Gender inequality continues to be a severe issue in India and it is indicated that gender equity indicators have declined over the past year. India has slipped 28 places to rank 140th among 156 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021¹. India is currently the third-worst performer in South Asia and has "widened its gender gap from almost 66.8% closed one year ago to 62.5%."

Gender equity issues identified in India in this report include gender-biased prenatal sex-selective practices and poor health and survival outcomes related to gender bias and neglect. India also has the second largest economic gender gap amongst the countries evaluated, caused by low participation of women in the labour market - "only 22.3% of women participate in the labour market, translating to a gender gap of 72%", as well as by a failure to adequately reduce the gender wage gap. Political representation is also an issue; India is the country where the "share of women ministers declined the most (from 23.1% to 9.1%)".

In 2018 India was ranked as the most dangerous country for women, largely based on an extremely high incidence of sexual violence². That Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a significant issue in India has been substantiated by various studies. A study conducted in New Delhi in 2012 found that 92% of women had experienced some form of sexual violence in public spaces during their lifetime³. In 2016, close to a third of total crimes reported against women in India was cruelty or physical violence by her husband or his relative⁴. As per the United Nation's Violence Against Women (VAW) database, 28.8% of women in India have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence⁵. Perpetrators of VAWG are most often men and hence VAWG cannot be prevented without making men and boys a part of the solution.

VAWG combined with and exacerbated by discrimination with regard to education, health, livelihoods and political representation results in a situation where men are more likely to have financial and political power and influence. In this scenario, empowering women without attempting to address underlying gender norms that govern the behaviour of both men and women can result in resistance and backlash⁶ as women attempt to exercise their autonomy in hostile households, workplaces, and communities. Additionally, pre-existing gender-based inequities have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant restrictions⁷, with the rise in domestic violence during state-imposed lockdowns being a particular area of concern⁸.

¹ World Economic Forum (2021). Global Gender Gap Report 2021. Retrieved from <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2021/dataexplorer>.

² Goldsmith, B. (2018, June 26). India most dangerous country for women with sexual violence rife - global poll. Retrieved from <https://in.reuters.com/article/women-dangerous-poll/india-most-dangerous-country-for-women-with-sexual-violence-rife-global-poll-idINKBN1JM076>

³ UN Women (n.d.) Safe Cities Global Initiative: Brief. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/~/_media/44F28561B84548FF82F24F38F825ABEA.ashx

⁴ Goal 5: Gender Equality. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/post-2015/sdg-overview/goal-5.html>

⁵ Evaw-global-database.unwomen.org. n.d. *Global Database On Violence Against Women: India*. [online] [Accessed 8 June 2020] <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/asia/india>

⁶ Dasra. 2019. Action Reaction: Understanding and overcoming backlash against girls' exercise of agency in India. Mumbai: Dasra. <https://www.dasra.org/resource/action-reaction-understanding-and-overcoming-backlash-against-girls-exercise-of-agency-in-india>

⁷ Khurana, N. V., Chadha, N., & Acharya, S. (2020). *Driving the Development Paradigm in the post COVID-19 World: Gender inclusivity in response and recovery*. ICRW, Asia and PwC. Retrieved from <https://www.icrw.org/publications/driving-the-development-paradigm-in-the-post-covid-19-world/>

⁸ Das, M., Das, A., & Mandal, A. (2020). Examining the impact of lockdown (due to COVID-19) on Domestic Violence (DV): An evidences from India. *Asian journal of psychiatry*, 54, 102335. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102335>

Studies further indicate either minimal progress or declines in the attitudes of Indian men towards discrimination and VAWG. According to a 2020 UNDP report⁹, the share of men with no gender social norms bias fell in India between 2005-09 and 2010-14 according to the World Values Survey; India in fact, had the second highest backlash to gender equity amongst the 31 countries measured. A comparison of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-3¹⁰ and NFHS-4¹¹ for roughly the same period (i.e. the decade between 2005-06 and 2015-16), indicates minimal improvement in attitudes towards VAWG. In the 2015-16 survey, 52% of women and 42% of men believed that a husband was justified in “beating his wife in at least one of seven specified circumstances (she goes out without telling him, she neglects the house or the children, she argues with him, she refuses to have sex with him, she doesn’t cook food properly, he suspects her of being unfaithful, and she shows disrespect for her in-laws)”, as compared to 54% and 51% in 2005-06.

Further studies indicate that men in India express discriminatory attitudes towards homosexuality, with 92% of men stating that it would be shameful to have a homosexual son, and 89% of men stating that being around homosexual men made them uncomfortable¹²; as well as inequitable attitudes towards control and consent in personal relationships - 77% of men expected their partners to agree if the man wanted to have sex, and 54% of men did not expect their partners to use contraceptives without their permission¹³.

Gender inequitable and discriminatory attitudes have been shown to affect behaviour, as “rigid masculinity is often expressed in the form of violence against women and the practice of son preference [and] skewed perceptions about and expectations of masculinity have a direct relationship to the perpetuation of these practices”¹⁴.

Simultaneously, gender equality is widely perceived to be a women’s issue and is often considered to be a zero-sum game. Gender equality initiatives are often perceived as efforts that will negatively impact men; “Men see gender justice and full, meaningful gender integration as a threat to their status and conferred privilege. Men feel that they have little to gain and everything to lose. Members of any privileged group will always work to maintain that privilege”¹⁵.

However, just like women and girls, men and boys also face gender specific issues under patriarchal structures, and hence men and boys have also been shown to benefit from gender equality. In more gender equitable societies “men are half as likely to be depressed, less likely to commit suicide, have around a 40% lower risk of dying a violent death and even suffer less from chronic back pain. Adolescent boys in those countries have fewer psychosomatic complaints and are more likely to use contraceptives”¹⁶.

⁹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Human Development Report Office (HDRO). (2020). 2020 Human Development Perspectives; Tackling Gender Norms: A game changer for inequalities. Retrieved from: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/gsnr>

¹⁰ International Institute for Population Sciences. (2007). National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3), 2005-06: India. Mumbai, India: International Institute for Population Sciences. Retrieved November 5, 2020, from <http://rchiips.org/nfhs/nfhs3.shtml>

¹¹ International Institute for Population Sciences. (2017). National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), 2015-16: India. Mumbai, India: International Institute for Population Sciences. Retrieved November 5, 2020, from <http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-4Reports/India.pdf>

¹² Barker, G., Contreras, J.M., Heilman, B., Singh, A.K., Verma, R.K., and Nascimento, M. Evolving Men: Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES). Washington, D.C.: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Promundo. January 2011. <https://www.icrw.org/publications/evolving-men/>

¹³ Nanda Priya, Gautam Abhishek, Verma Ravi, Khanna Aarushi, Khan Nizamuddin, Brahme Dhanashri, Boyle Shobhana and Kumar Sanjay (2014). “Study on Masculinity, Intimate Partner Violence and Son Preference in India”. New Delhi, International Center for Research on Women. <https://www.icrw.org/publications/masculinity-son-preference-intimate-partner-violence/>

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2005. *Masculinities: Male Roles And Male Involvement In The Promotion Of Gender Equality A Resource Packet*. https://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/male_roles.pdf

¹⁶ Karpf, A., 2020. We all benefit from a more gender-equal society. Even men. *The Guardian*,. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/mar/08/gender-equal-international-womens-day-men>

Barriers to men and boys' involvement in gender equity initiatives include a "lack of experience with discussing gender and violence issues; a lack of opportunities for men and boys to engage in open discussion; and a concern among men and boys about how they will be perceived by their peers. Men fear being derided and ridiculed by other men; they feel pressured by other men to conform to masculine stereotypes. Fear of criticism silences many men. Therefore, the lack of involvement of both formal and informal male leaders has a significant impact on the involvement of other men"¹⁷.

It is essential to bring about changes in the attitudes and behaviours of men and boys in order to create an enabling environment for organisations, programmes and policies that work directly with and for women and girls. Adolescence, in particular, is "a period of opportunity when boys and girls begin to form their opinions, ideas, and beliefs – including around gender roles and sexuality"¹⁸. Hence it can be very fruitful to engage boys in this formative period in their lives.

Studies of other gender equitable behavioural change initiatives have yielded findings that substantiate the findings of this study and other evaluations of the AfE programme. Further, these studies emphasize the need for consistent evaluation and development of programme activities and content. A review of 36 studies of 34 programmes working with adolescent boys and young men to promote more gender-equitable masculinities¹⁹ found that high quality facilitation; a programme duration of at least six months; the creation of safe spaces and a participatory approach; addressing barriers to participation (chiefly time and work constraints, and lack of interest) were all factors that determined the effectiveness of a programme.

It is further indicated that the involvement of families and peer groups in the given intervention can influence outcomes for gender equitable behavioural change programmes. A review of peer-reviewed literature in 12 databases from 1984–2014, covering eighty two studies across 29 countries²⁰ found that "interpersonal influences (family and peers) are central influences on young adolescents' construction of gender attitudes, and these gender socialization processes differ for boys and girls". This study further concludes that "programs to promote equitable gender attitudes [...] need to move beyond a focus on individuals to target their interpersonal relationships and wider social environments"; A reviewed study²¹ involving older adolescent boys in India, Nigeria and Brazil found that "boys whose viewpoints were 'supported or reinforced by someone else in their social context' were more likely to endorse equitable norms". This review of studies also identifies the need for long-term evaluation, concluding that, "longitudinal studies, particularly from low-and middle-income countries, are needed to better understand how gender attitudes unfold in adolescence and to identify the key points for intervention".

The need for consistent evaluation and programme design are also noted in other studies of behavioural change interventions. A systematic review of 61 evaluations of 59 health programmes that targeted gender

¹⁷ Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2005. *Masculinities: Male Roles And Male Involvement In The Promotion Of Gender Equality A Resource Packet*. https://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/male_roles.pdf

¹⁸ Kato-Wallace, J., barker, g., sharafi, l., mora, l., lauro, g. (2016). adolescent boys and young men: Engaging Them as supporters of gender Equality and Add Health and understand their Vulnerabilities. Washington, d.C.: promundo us. New York City: unfpa. <https://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Adolescent-Boys-and-Young-Men-final-web.pdf>

¹⁹ Marcus, R., Stavropoulou, M., Archer Gupta, N. (2018) "Programming with adolescent boys to promote gender-equitable masculinities: A rigorous review". Gage. <https://www.gage.odi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Masculinities-Review-WEB1.pdf>

²⁰ Kägesten A, Gibbs S, Blum RW, Moreau C, Chandra-Mouli V, et al. (2016) Understanding Factors that Shape Gender Attitudes in Early Adolescence Globally: A Mixed-Methods Systematic Review. PLOS ONE 11(6): e0157805. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0157805>

²¹ Barker G. Gender equitable boys in a gender inequitable world: Reflections from qualitative research and programme development in Rio de Janeiro. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*. 2000;15: 263–282.

inequality²² found that while there are “potential contributions that gender-transformative programming can have on gender equality”, “gaps in current programme design, implementation, and evaluation” affect the outcomes of such programmes. Factors that limited the contribution programmes can make to reducing gender inequality and violence include: Backlash faced by programme participants who attempt to challenge entrenched gender norms within their social groups; emphasis on “the empowerment of girls and women to the comparative neglect of masculinity and restrictive gender norms that affect sexual orientation and gender identity and expression” and; the inability to “understand gender in the context of intersectionality”. This review further found that while only 7% of programmes in the sample “evaluated outcomes more than 3 years after programme completion” these programmes all “produced significant, sustainable change”.

About Equal Community Foundation (ECF):

ECF was founded by Will Muir and Rujuta Teredesai in 2009 with a vision of a world free from violence and discrimination. Our mission is to raise every boy in India to be gender-equitable. ECF has designed and developed an innovative programme called Action for Equality (AfE) through which we equip adolescent boys with the knowledge, skills and peer support required to bring about gender equitable changes in their own lives as well as their peers’ and families’ lives. We have reached out to over 6000 boys in Pune, India so far. Through Project Raise, we have also scaled this programme (AfE) through partnerships with organizations across India and reached out to over 10,000 boys. ECF has trained nearly 50 organizations and nearly 180 field facilitators across India to deliver programmes for boys. Most recently, ECF partnered with ICRW on its GEMS programme in Rajasthan to co-design and facilitate workshops to train over 600 government school teachers to deliver this programme with an intended outreach of 20,000 boys across 2 districts. Similarly, ECF also partnered with UNESCO on its ‘Transforming Men-talities’ programme to train nearly 100 CBSE school teachers who implemented this programme with 1800 boys across India.

²² Levy, J. K., Darmstadt, G.L., Ashby, C., Quandt, M., Halsey, E., Nagar, A. (2020). Characteristics of successful programmes targeting gender inequality and restrictive gender norms for the health and wellbeing of children, adolescents, and young adults: a systematic review”. The Lancet. VOLUME 8, ISSUE 2, E225-E236, FEBRUARY 01, 2020.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(19\)30495-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(19)30495-4/fulltext)

Longitudinal Study

The aim of the longitudinal study is to understand the sustainability of the programme outcomes (attitudes, behaviours, knowledge and skills) among participants who graduated from the AfE programme in August, 2018.

Key Research Questions:

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Does AfE, a gender-transformative intervention, delivered at the community level beyond school hours in low income urban slums, successfully shift adolescent boys' attitudes, knowledge and skills, and behaviour on gender? If so, in what ways?
2. Are the shifts in attitudes sustained for one year after the 60 week intervention has ended?
3. Are the shifts in attitudes, behaviours and skills sustained two years after the intervention ended?

To answer the two key research questions, the report is structured as follows:

1. Change in Attitudes
2. Development of Knowledge and Skills
3. Change in Behaviour

Sample Size:

Before the start of the 60 week AfE intervention/programme (March, 2018), 186 adolescent boys enrolled in the programme. At the end of the intervention (August, 2018), 101 graduated. The analysis was based on a combination of ECF's M&E tools and qualitative interviews. The sample size varied across tools and time and the details are provided below.

The Longitudinal Study has two sources of data:

1. **ECF's M&E tools:** We gathered data of boys who completed the AfE programme. These boys were evaluated on the outcomes of the programme.
 - a. **At the end of the AfE (1st Endline/T3)** From the 101 boys who graduated from the programme, 84 were tracked successfully at the beginning and the end of the intervention.
 - i. **Attitudes:** A sample of 84 boys were evaluated whose attitude surveys were available at Baseline/T0 and the 1st Endline/T3.
 - ii. **Knowledge and Skills:** Out of the 84 boys in this sample, we were able to track 61 boys during the intervention to understand how their knowledge, skills and behaviours changed over the course of the intervention. The reason that 23 boys were not included in the analysis was because their knowledge and skills were either not observed at the early stages of the intervention or they did not complete the self assessment at the 1st Endline (T3).
 - iii. **Behaviour:** The surveys of 77 mothers were assessed, out of the sample of 84. The reason that seven mothers were not included in the analysis was because they either did not do the survey at Baseline (T0) or at the 1st Endline (T3).
 - b. **One year after the AfE programme (2nd Endline/T4),** we tracked the same 84 boys.

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- i. Attitudes: A sample of 84 boys whose attitude surveys were available at Baseline/T0, 1st Endline/T3 and 2nd Endline T4 were evaluated.
 - c. **Two years after the AfE programme (3rd Endline/T5)**, 76 boys (out of the 84 boys from the 2nd Endline/T5) were successfully tracked. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, eight boys from the sample of 84 migrated to their native village and hence could not be reached.
 - i. Attitudes: A sample of 76 boys were evaluated whose attitude surveys were available at Baseline/T0, 1st Endline/T3 and 2nd Endline/ T4 and 3rd Endline/ T5).
 - ii. Knowledge and Skills: Out of the 76 boys in this sample, we were able to track 67 boys during the intervention to understand sustainability of knowledge and skills.
 - iii. Behaviour: 56 mothers completed the outcome surveys.
2. **Qualitative In-depth Interviews:** From the boys who completed the intervention, a sample of graduates were randomly selected for in-depth interviews. The main purpose of the interviews was to get a more nuanced understanding of the impact and change the programme has had on boys who have graduated from the AfE programme.
- a. **At the end of the AfE programme (1st Endline/T3)** in-depth interviews were conducted with:
 - i. 19 boys who were randomly selected.
 - ii. 19 boys who were purposefully selected. In the 1st Endline, 19 participants who were purposefully selected were graduates who had actively participated in the programme. The objective of selecting these participants was to get an understanding of the impact the programme had on boys who demonstrated a higher degree of engagement as compared to boys who were randomly selected.
 - b. **One year after the AfE programme (2nd Endline/T4)** in-depth interviews were conducted with:
 - i. The same 19 boys who were randomly selected.
 - ii. Interviews were not conducted with the 19 purposefully selected participants as there had been no difference in the results between the two groups (randomly selected and purposefully selected).
 - c. **Two years after the AfE programme (3rd Endline/T5)** Out of the 19 boys who were randomly selected at the end of the AfE programme (1st Endline/T3), in-depth interviews were conducted with 18 boys. One participant was not interviewed as, during the lockdown, he migrated to his village. These interviews were held via phone calls due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

Methodology of the study:

Table 1 gives a timeline of the outcomes assessed, the tool used to assess the outcomes.

Table 1: Methodology of the study

Outcome	Tool used	When the outcomes were assessed
Attitude change	Gender Attitude Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baseline/ T0: Before the start of the intervention (March, 2018)• 1st Endline/ T3: At the end of the intervention (August, 2018)• 2nd Endline/ T4: One year after the intervention ended (August, 2019)• 3rd Endline/ T5: Two years after the intervention ended (September, 2020)
Behaviour Change	Outcome Surveys (with mothers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baseline/ T0: Before the start of the intervention (March, 2018)• 1st Endline/ T3: At the end of the intervention (August, 2018)• 3rd Endline/ T5: Two years after the intervention ended (September, 2020)
Knowledge and Skill development	Knowledge and Skill Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baseline: At the beginning of LP (June 2018)• 1st Endline/ T3: At the end of the intervention (August, 2018)• 3rd Endline/ T5: Two years after the intervention ended (September, 2020)
Sustainability of change	In-depth interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st Endline/ T3: At the end of the intervention (August, 2018)• 2nd Endline/ T4: One year after the intervention ended (August, 2019)• 3rd Endline/ T5: Two years after the intervention ended (September, 2020)

During the first year of the study, from the 101 participants who completed 60 weeks of AfE, 84 boys were tracked successfully. The quantitative findings were substantiated via in-depth interviews with a group of 19 randomly selected participants. We also conducted in-depth interviews with 19 purposefully selected participants, to understand the impact the programme has had on boys who demonstrate a higher degree of engagement throughout the programme.

Further, we also ran a short comparative analysis on attitudes of participants who had dropped out of the programme versus those who had completed it. The objective of the comparative study was to understand if there was a difference in gender attitudes among boys who dropped out after completing the Foundation Programme (the first stage of the intervention) vs boys who have completed all three levels of the AfE programme. The results show that completing all three stages of AfE served to shift attitudes further along the gender-equality spectrum and as such contributed to reducing gender discriminatory or biased attitudes.

In the second year of the study, 2nd endline, we administered the Gender Attitude Survey to 84 participants who were tracked at the beginning of the intervention (T0) and at the end of the intervention (T3). We also conducted in-depth interviews with the same set of 19 randomly selected participants in order to understand if the outcomes of the programme were sustained.

In the third year of the study, 3rd endline, we assessed sustainability of gender attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviours in 76 participants who were tracked at the end of the intervention (T3), one year after the intervention (T4) and two years after the intervention (T5). We also conducted in-depth interviews with 18 randomly selected participants to understand sustainability of the outcomes.

Measurement Tools

Gender Attitude Survey (GAS)

Attitude change towards violence against women and girls, masculinity, and gender roles and responsibilities is one of the main outcomes of the AfE intervention. Attitudes are measured using the ‘Scenario-based Gender Attitude Survey’, which consists of 10 scenarios. This survey was adapted out of statements from the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale, created by Promundo in 2007 (Pulerwitz & Barker, 2007). The GEM Scale is widely used to measure changes in the equitability of gender attitudes as a result of interventions working with men and boys. It asks participants to rate how much they agree with a number of statements on a five-point likert scale (from Agree to Disagree). Using the same principles, ECF adapted the GEMS scale and created a tool using character-based scenarios instead of statements. Scenarios were developed in consultation with facilitators, observations of the community and training sessions and outcome assessment survey with mothers. Once developed, the gender attitude survey was piloted in 3 versions using open ended responses, closed ended responses and context based closed responses. It was found that open ended responses were most reflective of participants’ actual understanding of gender norms and attitudes towards gender violence and discrimination and hence we continue to use this format. Each response of the participants is either coded as “Gender inequitable”, “Less gender equitable”, “Moderately gender equitable” or “Gender equitable”. Once the responses are coded, the codes of all the responses are summed up to give each participant a gender equitability score. The total possible scores range from 0 to 30, which are divided into quartiles.

Skill Assessment by Participants (SAP)

The Skill Assessment by Participants is a self-assessment tool which has been created to measure knowledge and the four key influencing skills: Communication, Critical Thinking, Initiation and Mobilization, from the participant’s perspective. In this tool, participants are invited to rate themselves and to reflect on their own progress related to knowledge and skill. The Skill Assessment by Participants is used during the Leadership Programme. It is filled by participants at the beginning of the Leadership Programme and at the end of the Leadership Programme.




Outcome Survey

Outcome surveys are conducted to gauge the relatives’ awareness about the work done by Equal Community Foundation and the Action for Equality Programme. Through these surveys, we get a better understanding of the behaviour of each participant in their homes and of their interactions with different members of their family. In addition to these, we get a better understanding into the community we are working in, their collective problems and mindsets about different issues.

Demographic Analysis

Table 2 provides the **demographic details** of the 84 boys. This data was collected at the beginning of the intervention, baseline/T0:

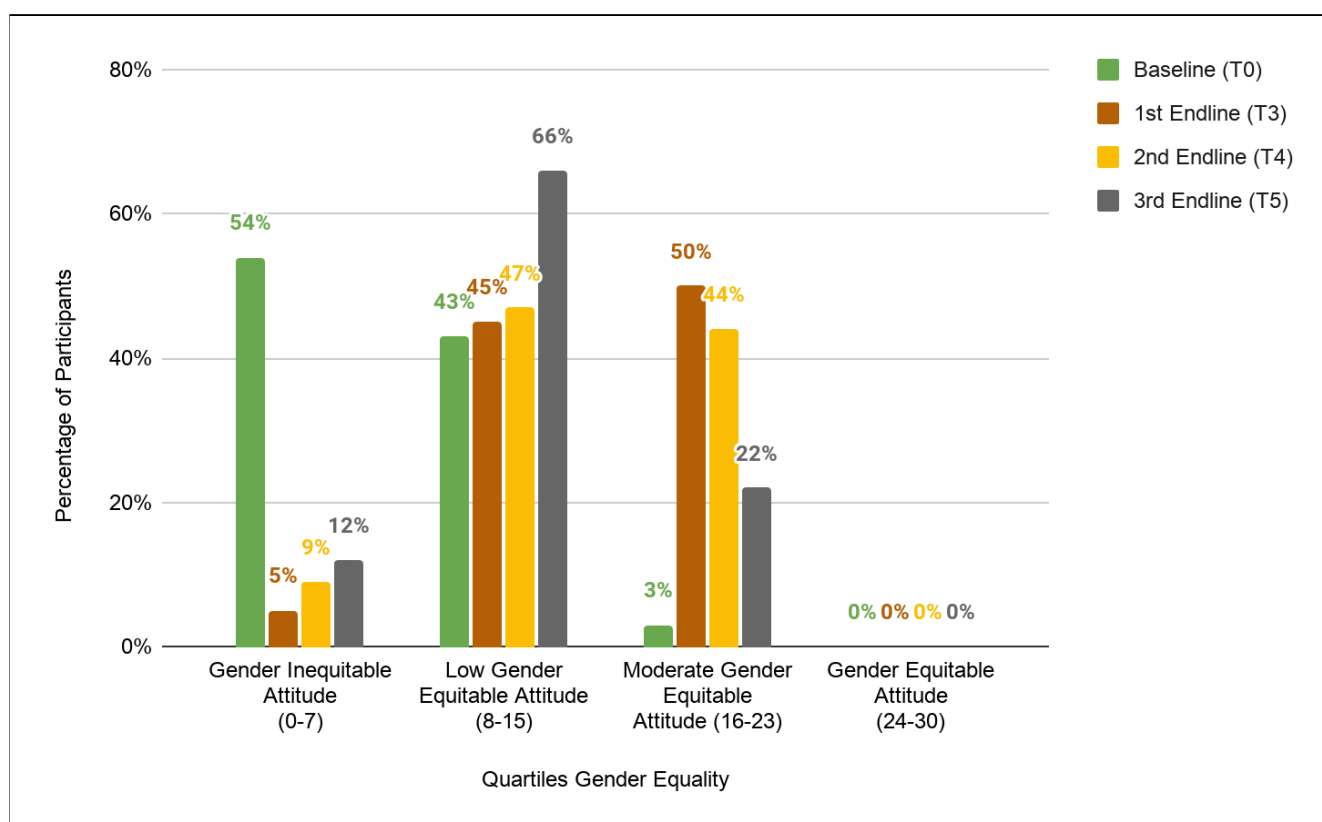
Table 2: Demographic Data from Baseline/T0

	AGE					
	50% 13 years	32% 14 years	17% 15 years	1% 16 years		
	EDUCATION BACKGROUND					
	1% Std 5	4% Std 6	18% Std 7	55% Std 8	21% Std 9	1% Std 10
	RELIGION					
	81% Hindu	8% Muslim	10% Buddhist	1% Christian		
	MOTHER TONGUE					
	87% Marathi	13% Hindi				

Attitude Change

Attitude change in 76 boys was measured using the scenario based Gender Attitude Survey. Results from the survey analysed results rooted in three themes: Tolerance towards Violence, Manhood and Masculinity and Gender Roles and Responsibilities.

Figure 1: Gender equitability scores of 76 graduates in the context of gender norms at Baseline (T0), 1st Endline (T3), 2nd Endline (T4) and Third Endline (T5)



Prior to the intervention (Baseline/T0), 54% of the graduates demonstrated gender inequitable attitudes, while just 3% supported gender equitable norms. However, at the (1st Endline/T3), there was a positive shift in gender attitudes. Here, the percentage of boys supporting gender equitable attitudes increased (from 3% to 50%). while the percentage of graduates justifying gender inequitable attitudes decreased (from 54% to 5%). With regard to low gender equitable attitudes, there was a slight increase (i.e from 43% to 45%).

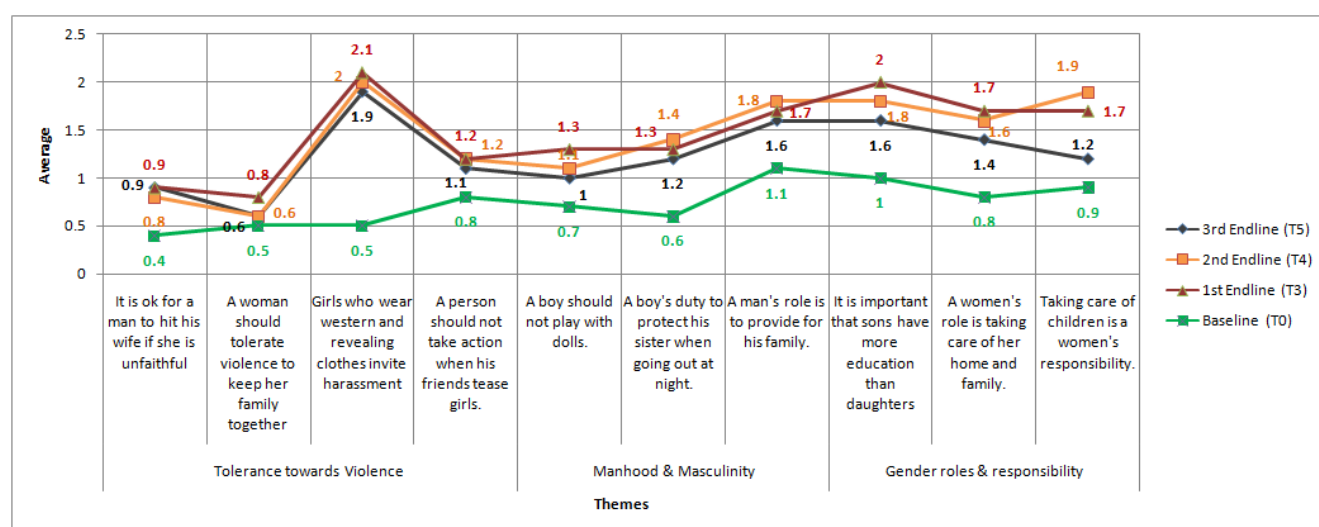
One year after the intervention (2nd Endline/ T4), results showed that shifts in attitude were sustained. There was a slight decline in the percentage of boys supporting gender equitable attitudes (from 50% to 44%). Moreover, the percentage of boys demonstrating gender inequitable attitudes slightly increased (from 5% to 9%). Further, attitudes surrounding low gender equitable attitudes showed a small increase (i.e from 45% to 47%).

Two years after the AfE intervention (3rd endline/T5) we see a decline in gender equitable attitude. Here the percentage of boys demonstrating moderate gender equitable attitudes decreased from 44% to 22%.

Moreover, there was a slight increase in the percentage of boys justifying gender inequitable norms, (from 9% to 12%). However, attitudes around low gender equitability saw a high increase from 47% to 66%.

In conclusion, although there is a decline in gender equitable attitudes among participants two years after the intervention, we see that attitudes of more than half of the boys (66%) have stabilized around low gender equitability. This suggests that even though the participant's ability to acknowledge and challenge gender/social norms, use human rights language and provide an action oriented solution diminishes over time, they still disagree with the gender inequitable position

Figure 2: Average trend across ten scenarios for 76 graduates at Baseline (T0), 1st Endline (T3) and 2nd Endline (T4) and Third Endline. (T5)



Scores: 0 to 0.5: Gender Discriminatory, 0.6 to 1.5: Low Gender Equitable, 1.6 to 2.5: Moderate Gender Equitable, 2.6 to 3: Highly Gender Equitable

Two years after the intervention, analysis of gender attitudes across the individual scenarios (Figure 2) show sustainability of attitudes around the themes of Tolerance of Violence and Manhood and Masculinity. However, there is a decline in attitudes surrounding the theme of Gender Roles and Responsibility.

Changes in attitudes towards violence against women and girls

Assessment of figure 2. shows sustainability of low gender equitable attitudes towards violence against women and girls. Boys feel that a man should not hit his wife but instead have a conversation with her or ask her to leave the home, if she has an affair. For many boys a wife having an affair is considered 'a betrayal of trust' or 'strike to his ego and pride', demonstrating a tendency towards traditional norms around masculinity. Further, boys feel that a wife should not leave her home if she faces violence as leaving the home will raise gossip in the community and will negatively affect the children. To resolve such a situation, participants suggested that the husband and wife talk and resolve their issues privately. Analysis of the qualitative interviews showed similar results, the majority of the participants felt that it is the responsibility of the woman to keep her family together. Most of the participants believed that domestic violence is wrong; however, a few participants justified domestic violence suggesting that the cause could be husband's work stress or constant badgering from the wife. To solve the issue of domestic violence, participants during the interviews stated that a husband and wife should communicate and settle disputes privately. If communication does not work then other family members should intervene or a complaint with the police should be filed. Only two participants stated that domestic violence should not be tolerated in any circumstance and that a woman should leave such a situation.

With regard to the bystander approach, attitudes were sustained around low gender equity; boys felt that it was important to take action to stop violence, but were unable to explain the type of action needed to stop street sexual harassment. A few boys felt that actions would be more effective if they came from the community or authority figures, like the police.

With regard to street sexual harassment, adolescent boys demonstrated moderate gender equitable attitudes. They felt that women had a right to choose the clothes they wear. They condemned verbal harassment and felt that boys and men needed to learn to respect the choices of women and girls.

Changes in attitudes towards manhood and masculinity

Boys continued to demonstrate moderate gender equitable attitudes towards women's right to work and earn their own income. Boys felt that women have a right to work outside the home and equally contribute to financially taking care of the home and family.

Boys continued to demonstrate low gender equitable attitudes towards boys demonstrating behaviour outside the prescribed gender norms. For instance, boys felt that it would be 'ok' if boys played with dolls when they were young, however as they grow up they need to demonstrate behaviour that is in accordance to their 'sex'. Findings from the qualitative interviews reveal that boys feel that a child should not be stopped from playing with dolls. They felt that as a boy grows he will forget about playing with dolls and learn to play outdoors with his friends. According to a few interviewed participants, playing with dolls does not affect the masculinity of boys. They felt that real men are those that are emotionally available for their family and share household chores.

With regard to attitudes of protection, boys demonstrated low gender equitable attitudes. Responses from the survey demonstrated that boys felt that girls needed to be protected from violence in the society, and thus protection needed to come from the male family members (i.e. father and brothers). However, findings from the interviews demonstrated an opposite result; boys felt that women did not need protection from men and were capable of looking after themselves. Boys felt that if a woman needed help from violence she should contact the police or learn self defence. What needed to change was the mentality of the society (especially men and boys).

Changes in attitudes towards gender roles and responsibilities

Overall there was a decline in attitudes towards gender roles and responsibilities from moderate to low gender equitable attitudes.

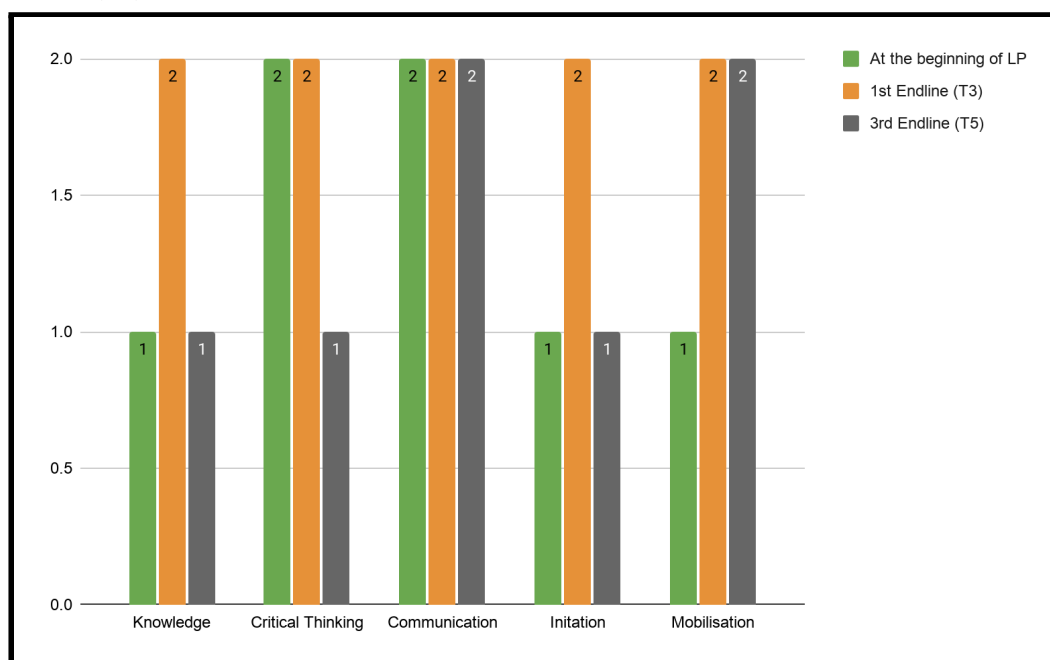
Boys supported girls' right to education; however, at the same time they felt that women were primarily responsible for domestic work and child care. Analysed responses did not demonstrate an equitable distribution of household work, indicating that boys felt that the girls and women were primarily responsible for domestic work and child care.

Knowledge and Skills

Along with attitudes the intervention also seeks to develop knowledge on gender equality in the participants. With a more nuanced understanding of human rights and gender-based violence, there is a belief that participants would be more likely to support gender equality and adopt gender equitable behaviours.

At the early stages of the intervention (during the FP and AP programmes) observations from mentors revealed that about half of the participants began to understand concepts surrounding violence and discrimination against women but were not confident in using human rights language. Further, they (1) began to link information from the programme to their own personal experiences but found it difficult to challenge existing gender norms, (2) They started to communicate more confidently with family and peers and (3) learnt to participate actively in group discussions but found it hard to suggest solutions on the issue of GBVD.

Figure 3: Average level of knowledge and skills of participants at the beginning of LP, 1st Endline (T3) and 3rd Endline (T5)



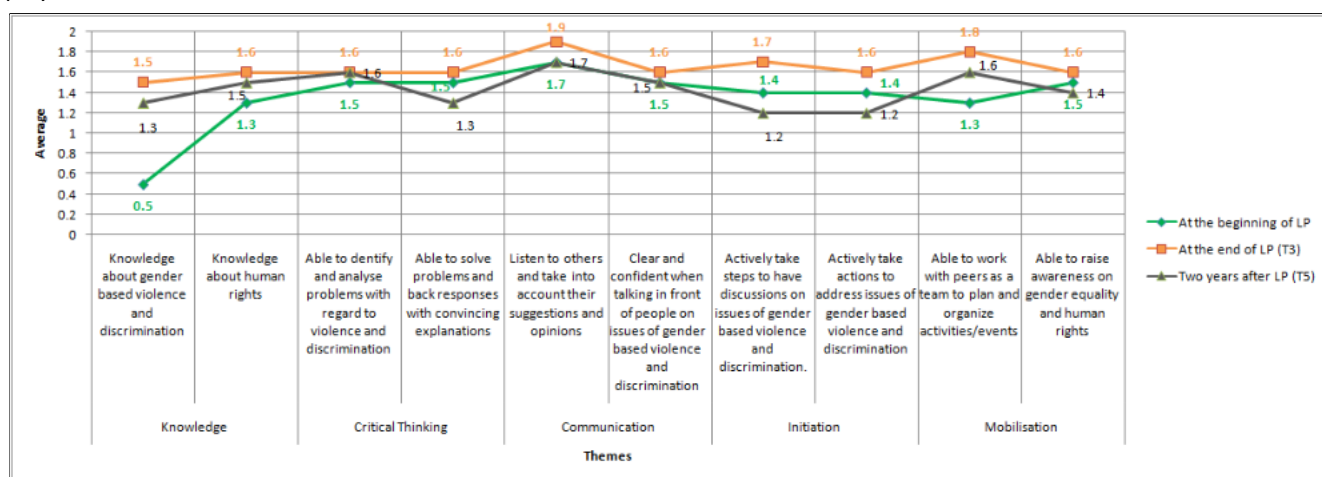
Scores: 0: Does not have the knowledge and skills, 1: Low level of knowledge and skills 2: High level of knowledge and skills

At the 1st Endline (T3) almost all the participants felt that they had the knowledge and skills to raise awareness and take action on gender based violence.

However, two years after the AfE intervention (3rd Endline/T5) participants felt that they did not have enough knowledge on gender equality to raise awareness in their families, peers and community. Further, they also found it difficult to critically evaluate issues of GBVD and initiate conversations on GBVD with people around. Moreover, boys felt that they have the ability to actively and openly listen to family, peers and community members and work with others to solve problems on GBVD in their communities. This is similar to the results of the interviews, where participants felt that the skills that they developed in the programme helped them in their daily lives. For instance, they are able to communicate respectfully and confidently with members in their family and community, they listen more openly to others and consider their opinions. Further, participants felt that they have the confidence to talk in front of large groups of people, which they call 'stage daring'. Also, by

learning how to plan and execute events during the AfE programme, participants stated that they have the ability to work as a team to plan and organise events in the community.

Figure 4: Indicators of knowledge and influencing skills at the beginning of LP, 1st Endline (T3) and 3rd Endline (T5)



Scores: 0: Does not have the knowledge and skills, 1: Low level of knowledge and skills 2: High level of knowledge and skills

At the 1st Endline (T3), almost all the participants self-reported that they were confident in using human rights language and communicating about gender issues with their family and peers. They stated that they were able to analyse situations and challenge gender norms in their families and communities. Further, participants also reported that they were able to problem solve issues related to gender.

However, two years after the intervention (3rd Endline/ T5) analysis of results show that there has been an overall decrease in knowledge and skills:

Knowledge: Participants felt that their level of confidence dropped when talking about concepts related to GBVD and human rights language. However during the interviews when asked to recall information that they had learnt during the programme, almost all the participants stated that they were taught about human rights, for instance, that women have a right to wear clothes of her choice, right to mobility. Further, all of the participants spoke about gaining knowledge on the ill - effects of street sexual harassment.

Skills: With regard to skills results show decline in the participants ability to (1) actively take actions and solve problems relating to GBVD in the community and (2) communicate clearly on issues of GBVD in front of people, thereby raising awareness on this issue. However, from the figure we also see that participants reported confidence in their (1) ability to identify issues relating to GBVD (2) listen to others and take into account their opinions and suggestions and (3) work as a team to plan and organise activities in the community.

NOTE: One year after the intervention (2nd Endline/T4), knowledge and skills were not assessed using the Skill Assessment by Participants (SAP). In-depth interviews were used to assess sustainability of knowledge and skills. Results from these interviews show that in the second year, participants felt that the skills (communication, critical thinking, problem solving) that they developed in the programme helped them to communicate respectfully and confidently with members in their family and community, and listen more openly to others. Further through the AfE programme- action events, they were able to initiate ideas on issues such as street sexual harassment.

Behaviour Change

In order to assess **behavioural changes** in graduates who participated in the AfE programme, it is important to understand how these changes are experienced by people around them, especially by the graduates' mothers. For this purpose 'Outcome Surveys' were conducted with mothers. Behavioural changes in graduates are also assessed by the actions undertaken by participants. Information about actions was assessed through the qualitative interviews.

Results from the interviews reported the following:

Behaviour changes experienced by mothers

Communication and behaviour with mother Two years after the AfE intervention mothers reported that their sons continued to maintain positive changes in their communication and behaviour with them. For instance, their sons listened to them calmly, valued their opinions, communicated respectfully and helped with household chores.

Even through the interviews graduates reported they had good relationships with their family members. For instance, they listened to their parents, took advice from them, were less rude and stopped shouting when angry. When asked about family support, almost all the boys during the interviews revealed that their parents were the most important people in their life. They spoke about the support, guidance and encouragement provided by their parents.

'My parents are most important to me because they work very hard, always put our interest (their children) before theirs.'

'My mother is the most important person in his life because she works at home, she earns, looking after us [her family].'

Sharing of household chores: Results from the outcome survey revealed that two years after the intervention boys continued to take part in the household chores.

More than half of the mothers (about 70%) reported that boys do household chores on their own, without being told and about half of the mothers (about 48%) do not stop their sons from taking part in household chores. For instance, most graduates undertook chores such as sweeping the floor, filling water, and buying groceries. At the same time, results revealed that few participants took part in chores relating to wiping of the floor, washing one's clothes and washing vessels. A similar trend has been seen at the end of the AfE intervention, where a lower number of boys took part in chores that are considered to be female oriented tasks. When mothers were asked for reasons for not allowing their sons to take part in chores such as wiping the floor, washing vessels or cooking. A few mothers stated that they were happy that their sons were helping but believed that household chores were their duty. A few mothers said that they did not allow their sons to cook because they're afraid their sons would not be able to handle the gas stove.

Results from the interviews showed similar results, where most participants revealed that they help in chores such as sweeping the house, filling water, taking out the garbage and buying groceries when needed.

‘I do not feel that I should not be doing household chores. I share a home with my family and I also feel that I should be responsible for the work at home. This kind of belief has come after participating in the AfE programme. Earlier I used to spend my day watching T.V and sleeping. Now, I am more responsible’

However, a few participants reported that they do not take part in household chores such as washing the clothes or utensils and cooking because their family members do not allow them to take on these responsibilities.

‘My mother does not let me do chores because I feel she is afraid of the neighbours might say’

‘I am not allowed to make chapatis at home, because it is considered to be a woman’s task’

Actions:

Majority of the mothers (about 80%), both during and after the intervention, reported that they were unaware if their sons had taken action on issues relating to GBVD or other social issues.

During the interviews when asked about individual actions, participants revealed that the most common actions taken were on street sexual harassment and raising awareness on gender equality amongst family and friends, for instance, sharing of household chores or equity in education.

‘I talk to friends and family about issues such as street sexual harassment. However, I feel it is easier to talk to friends than family members’

‘I speak about human rights to everyone I meet. I tell them no one is inferior and that everyone is equal’

With regard to collective actions, a few participants said that since graduating from the AfE programme, they worked in groups to resolve the issues of garbage and water issues in their community. A few participants said that they worked with their friends to stop domestic violence.

However, overall most of the boys during the interviews reported that since completing the AfE programme, they found it difficult to take individual and collective actions. Reasons for this include: a lack of support from family and community members, absence of ECF mentors who were a source of guidance and encouragement for many participants, lack of knowledge and skills to convince others, lack of support from alumni and AfE peers, their young age, violence and discrimination is a sensitive and private issue in the communities, and final year of school (education becomes a priority for the participants as it lays the foundation for their future careers.)

Actions during the COVID - 19 pandemic: Despite the COVID- 19 pandemic, a few participants worked to raise awareness on the importance of wearing masks, washing hands and social distancing. For example: one participant said that he and his friends tried to seek help from the local corporator on the issue of unemployment in his community, however the corporator was not helpful which frustrated the participant. Another participant stated that he would regularly visit his neighbours in his society making sure that they would not leave the society premises during the lockdown, that they would wear their masks and were not COVID positive. Many of the participants also reported not taking individual or collective actions in the current year.

NOTE: Sustainability in behaviour changes one year after the intervention (2nd Endline/T4), were assessed through in-depth interviews and not through the Outcome surveys. Results showed that graduates reported having good relationships with their family. For instance, they listened to their parents, were less rude, did not use abusive language and stopped shouting when angry. Results from the interviews also revealed that graduates did receive resistance from family members, especially their mothers and sisters. However, the graduates continued to share the workload at home.

With regard to actions, a few participants spoke about the individual actions that they had taken during the AfE programme, for instance, stopping instances of domestic violence and street sexual harassment. However, a few boys stated that they rarely take actions, due to school work. When it came to group actions, boys mainly recalled what they did during the AfE programme.

Feedback Loop Findings

To understand reasons for a few findings from the longitudinal study feedback loop interview was conducted with a sample of 30 participants. For the interviews participants were selected based on convenience. Analysis of the interviews revealed the following:

Attitudes:

Results of the longitudinal study found that two years after the AfE programme there was a decline in attitudes related to gender roles and responsibilities.

The following explanations were given by boys when asked to provide reasons for this decline:

1. **Socialisation/Societal rules:** Children are taught from a young age that men are supposed to provide financially for the family and women are supposed to look after the home and children. Boys reported that society frowns on boys/men who share household duties. Boys said that many boys/men in their communities hide the fact that they take part in household chores for fear of being teased.
2. **Family/Peer influence:** Boys reported that the AfE classes are a few hours in a week, participants spend most of their time with family and friends. These groups tend to have a stronger influence on behaviours and attitudes of the participants. Boys said that even though AfE graduates may believe in gender equality,, they may not demonstrate these positive attitudes due to family or peer pressure.
3. **Women considered to be weak:** During the interviews boys revealed that boys/men regard women as weak, i.e inability to do physically strenuous jobs and/or in need of protection i.e. from being sexually harassed.
4. **Economic contribution:** With regard to the right to education, boys reported that the reason for the decline in equitable attitudes could be because girls will ultimately get married, move to their in-laws' home and not contribute economically to the family.

Skills:

Results from the longitudinal study found that participants found it difficult to communicate with people on issues related to GBVD , use human rights language and solve problems related to GBVD.

Boys provided the following reasons for this difficulty in showcasing learnt knowledge and skills:

1. **Low self confidence:** Boys reported that an inability to recall information learnt resulted in boys shying away and losing confidence in raising awareness on issues around GBVD.
2. **Parental concern:** During the interviews boys said that as issues surrounding GBVD are sensitive, parents were concerned that boys taking actions would put them at risk of being physically/mentally hurt.
3. **Age:** Boys felt that age was the biggest barrier in raising awareness or taking action on issues around GBVD. Boys reported that people in the community would often make fun of them, ignore them and/or tell them that they were too young to get involved in the private issues of people.
4. **Lack of peer support:** Boys said that as GBVD is a complicated issue, they found it difficult to create an action plan individually. They reported that a lack of peer support from AfE alumni made it hard to solve problems on GBVD.

Behaviour (Actions)

The longitudinal study found that participants who graduated from AfE found it difficult to take actions on issues of GBVD.

Reasons reported by boys for this finding were as follows:

1. Lack of support from fellow AfE participants
2. Lack of understanding on how to develop a concrete plan
3. Lack of support from family and community members
4. Importance of education and career: pressure for parents to pay attention to their studies.

Boys stated that for them to take actions in the community they required support from parents and community members, help from ECF, and support from AfE alumni.

Limitations of the Study

The following are the limitations of the study

1. **Methodology:** At the end of the 2nd Endline (T4) the qualitative interviews indicated that behaviour changes, knowledge on human rights and gender-based violence, and skills around critical thinking and communication were sustained. However, we were not able to triangulate and corroborate this information with quantitative data for the whole sample or with outcome surveys with mothers and sisters.
2. **Assessing indirect factors:** In the study, we have seen changes in outcomes at the end of the intervention. However, we cannot fully ascertain that these changes are because of the intervention/AfE programme since we do not have a valid counterfactual. We relied only on our general understanding of the lack of other similar programmes in our communities and did not explore interaction effects independently. Other factors could be responsible for changing attitudes and behaviours in participants. These factors were not explored.
3. **Quantitative Data:** The Scenario Based Gender Attitude Survey Tool used in the study was developed at ECF and we are yet to undertake reliability and validity testing for this tool.
4. **Sample:** The sample represents boys from low income communities in an urban setting. This must be considered when extending findings to other contexts.
5. **Environmental Shock:** About half of the study period during the 3rd Endline coincided with an unprecedented event - the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdowns, school closures, loss of jobs and wages, and other associated difficulties may have also influenced the decline in gender attitudes. Communities and families retreated into themselves and survival became the key focus. Lack of positive external stimuli and total exposure to inequitable social norms prevalent in the community could have resulted in decline in positive gender attitudes.

Conclusion

Does AfE, a gender-transformative intervention, delivered at the community level beyond school hours in low income urban slums, successfully shift adolescent boys' attitudes, knowledge & skills and behaviours on gender? If so, in what ways?

Broadly, the answer to this question is yes, as we find that attitudes have changed positively after the intervention.

- Results indicate a positive change in gender attitudes as boys gain knowledge on gender based violence and discrimination, and as their existing gender attitudes and behaviours are questioned and challenged. Results show that gender equitable attitudes are more positive towards girls' right to education, women's employment outside the home, and women's right to choose their own attire, demonstrating that it is easier to change attitudes related to these aspects. Even in the interviews, most of the participants stated that women have equal rights. One of the reasons that it is easier to shift attitudes on women's rights is that society today openly talks and argues about equal rights for women. Moreover, the survey results show that gender equitable attitudes are less progressive towards attitudes related to family and/or protection. For instance, mothers/wives are expected to keep their family/marriage together, boys/men are expected to protect their sisters/wives, boys are expected to stop playing with feminine toys after a certain age. Even in the interviews most of the participants stated that they regard girls in their community as their sisters - which is a kind of protection. Further, a few participants stated that as girls/women are physically weak, it is the duty of boys/men to protect them from sexual harassment. The reason that such attitudes are difficult to change is that they may have strong links to societal, traditional and cultural norms.
- Increased knowledge to raise awareness on gender based violence and discrimination in the community, and improved skills to clearly and confidently communicate with people, analyse situations related to gender based violence and discrimination (GBVD) and suggest solutions to solve problems on GBVD. Participants stated that they have had conversations around sexual harassment and domestic violence with their peers and family. However, they find it difficult to raise awareness on GBVD in the community because of lack of support. Participants have stated that their young age is a barrier, and moreover, gender equality is not a major concern in the communities. Thus, participants feel that they require more training on learning how to convince people around them and more support from ECF mentors when taking actions in the communities. Further, most of the participants felt that through the programme they gained the confidence to talk in front of groups of people, build relationships with people and have effective discussions with girls/women.
- Overall improvement in the gender behaviour of the participants. Mothers value the positive changes in their sons' behaviour and communication styles. Results also show that graduates have better relationships with their sisters, do more household chores and pay more attention to their studies. Even in the interviews, participants have reported improving the way they communicate with their mother and sister. For instance, not talking rudely, calmly listening and valuing their opinions. Participants have also reported sharing in household chores like sweeping, buying groceries and filling water. However, when analysing the household chores, we realised that fewer boys take part in wiping the house or washing utensils and clothes.

Are the shifts in attitudes sustained one year after the 60 week intervention has ended?

The answer to this question is yes, results from the evaluation of attitudes and in-depth interviews show that:

- Attitude change has been sustained one year after the intervention ended (2nd Endline/T4). Similar to the results at the end of the intervention (1st Endline/T3), gender equitable attitudes are more positive towards girl's right to education, women's employment outside the home, women's right to choose their own attire. Even in the interviews, we see that boys' values continue to be conscious about the issue of gender equality and human rights. Moreover, we see that gender equitable attitudes change very gradually towards attitudes related to traditional gender relations/roles of husband/brothers and wives/sisters (i.e. tolerating violence to keep the family intact and protectionism and the idea of being a man). In fact, we see a slight regression in certain perspectives; for instance boys' positions on domestic violence/discrimination and homosexuality. The reason for this could be that boys' changed attitudes compete with other influences, for instance community and family beliefs, media and peer groups.
- Even though knowledge on gender equality, gender based violence and discrimination, and human rights has been retained, and skills have been sustained, taking action continues to be an uphill challenge for participants. Although most boys said that they have taken individual actions with regard to street sexual harassment and domestic violence, these actions involve their peers and family. Most of the interviewed participants have not taken action on violence and discrimination in their communities. The reasons for this could be lack of support from community members. Further, violence and discrimination is a sensitive and private issue in the communities, and participants lack the confidence to intervene in this space.

Are the shifts in attitudes, knowledge & skills and behaviours on gender sustained two years after the 60 week intervention has ended?

Results from the evaluation and in-depth interviews show that gender attitudes, knowledge and skills were not sustained two years after the AfE intervention.

Attitudes: Two years after the intervention (3rd Endline/T5), there is a decline in gender equitable attitudes. Further, we see that attitudes of more than half of the participants stabilized around low gender equity. This suggests that even though the participant's ability to acknowledge and challenge gender/social norms, use human rights language and provide an action oriented solution diminishes over time, they still disagree with the gender inequitable position

An in depth analysis revealed that:

1. Boys supported women's right to education and women's right to work. However at the same time they felt that girls and women were responsible for domestic work and child care. They felt that men should be supportive of their wives and that men and boys should help with household chores and child care.
2. On the issue of street sexual harassment, adolescent boys felt that women have a right to choose the clothes they wear. They condemned verbal harassment and felt that boys and men needed to learn to respect women and girls.
3. Boys felt that women have a right to mobility but, at the same time, felt that a woman needed to be protected from violence in the society, especially in the evenings.
4. With regard to the bystander behaviour, boys felt that intervention is important when witnessing violence. However, analysed responses suggested that boys were not confident to stand alone in opposition to public violence.

5. With regard to attitudes surrounding behaviour of boys that did not conform to societal gender norms, participants felt that male children should not be stopped from playing with dolls, because as he grows he will learn to play outdoors with his friends.
6. They were able to recognize that physical violence should not be an immediate reaction by a man against his wife if he suspects his wife of cheating and suggest that they should discuss what happened, but then they suggest the outcome of the dialogue can be “asking her to leave the home or divorce,” Further, they felt that a wife should not leave her family even if she faces violence as she is responsible for keeping the family together. These findings indicate a tendency towards traditional norms of men as decision-makers.

At the end of the AfE intervention there were positive changes in gender equitable attitudes; however with every passing there was an increase in the percentage of boys in the low gender equitable category. The reasons for the decline could be (1) Social contextual factors- Research has shown that increasing influence of community members, peers and parents who conform to traditional roles during adolescence leads to increased adherence to gender-inequitable views²³. (2) Lack of a link to the AfE programme: Attending the AfE programme saw boys being able to reflect, critically analyse and openly discuss their experiences. As a result there was a positive shift in gender equitable attitudes at the end of the AfE programme (1st Endline/T3). However, the end of the AfE programme saw a decline in positive attitudes. (3) COVID-19 Lockdown: The pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns also could have resulted in inequitable gender attitudes. Research has shown that lack of peer connections, closure of schools resulting in educational uncertainty, increase in domestic violence, early marriages of sisters, economic uncertainty like loss of a parent's job could all have a negative impact on mental health.²⁴ Further, with no neutral influences like the AfE programmes or other programmes, the current situation may have resulted in boys learning and accepting the life of inequitable gender attitudes presented to them.

Skills: Analysis of the indicators of knowledge and skills show that there has been a decrease in knowledge and skills two years after the AfE intervention. Participants felt that their level of confidence dropped when talking about concepts related to GBVD and human rights language. Moreover, they also found it difficult to take actions and solve problems relating to GBVD in the community, and communicate clearly on issues of GBVD in front of people, and thereby found it hard to raise awareness on this issue.

Behaviour and Actions: Two years after the AfE intervention mothers reported that their sons continued to maintain positive changes in their communication and behaviour. Further, boys continued to take part in the household chores; however, most AfE graduates undertook chores such as sweeping the floor, filling water, and buying groceries. as compared to chores relating to wiping of the floor, washing one's clothes and washing vessels. Lastly, the majority of the participants reported not taking individual or collective actions in the current year. Reasons for this include, lack of support from family and community members, absence of ECF mentors who were a source of guidance and encouragement for many participants, lack of knowledge and skills to convince others, lack of support from alumni and AfE peers, their young age, a belief that violence and discrimination is a sensitive and private issue in the communities, final year of school (education becomes a priority for the participants as it lays the foundation for their future careers and the COVID- 19 pandemic).

²³ Kågesten A, Gibbs S, Blum RW, Moreau C, Chandra-Mouli V, Herbert A, et al. (2016) Understanding Factors that Shape Gender Attitudes in Early Adolescence Globally: A Mixed-Methods Systematic Review. PLoS ONE 11(6): e0157805. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0157805>

²⁴ Deepika Bahl, Shalini Bassi, and Monika Arora, “The Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Adolescents: Early Evidence in India,” ORF Issue Brief No. 448, March 2021, Observer Research Foundation.

Recommendations

Action for Equality was designed as a gender-transformative programme for adolescent boys. It was developed and implemented as a three-stage programme: Foundation, Action and Leadership Programme. The key findings of the longitudinal study over the last couple of years showed us that:

1. During the course of the AfE programme, despite the sustained interactions and structured inputs: First, there is a palpable shift in attitudes and behaviours after the first level, but this shift stabilizes at that level over the course of the next two programmes. Second, it continues to be difficult to shift attitudes around tolerance to violence and norms on manhood and masculinity. Third, participants don't feel supported enough to take collective actions at the community-level to challenge and change gender norms.
2. One year after the programme (2nd Endline/T4), there is a stability of gender equitable attitudes. However, there is a slight regression in certain perspectives; for instance boys' positions on domestic violence/discrimination and homosexuality. Further, taking action continues to be an uphill challenge for participants as they don't feel supported.
3. Two years after the programme (3rd Endline/T5), there exists an overall decline in gender equitable attitudes, with the biggest drop seen in attitudes of gender roles and responsibilities. There is a decrease in knowledge (around concepts related to GBVD and human rights) and skills, such as the ability to convince, communicate confidently and solve problems around GBVD. Lastly, taking actions continues to be a challenge for participants as there is no support from family, peers and community members.

Keeping these learnings in mind the following key changes have been planned:

1. The Theory of Change has been amended.
2. Programme Structure: The 45-week programme has been restructured into a 30-week programme open to all the participants in our age group, coupled with a 3-day residential Leadership Camp for selected graduates.
3. Curriculum Amendments: The curriculum has been amended for the 30-week programme and new materials have been developed for the Leadership Camps.
4. Alumni Network: The Alumni network will be strengthened and alumni will be engaged in a more light-touch manner.

Due to the pandemic and lockdowns we have not been able to implement and evaluate the current key changes. However, with the resumption of regular AfE programme, we will be able to pilot and test the planned changes.

Additionally, we conclude that it would be beneficial to **include gender transformative programming at multiple levels of the socio ecological environment**, as research has shown that interventions that target multiple levels of socio ecological environments, such as family, peers and the community, may be more effective in changing views on gender norms.²⁵

²⁵ Kågesten A, Gibbs S, Blum RW, Moreau C, Chandra-Mouli V, Herbert A, et al. (2016) Understanding Factors that Shape Gender Attitudes in Early Adolescence Globally: A Mixed-Methods Systematic Review. PLoS ONE 11(6): e0157805. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0157805>
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