

Case study

Men's Campfire Conference, Zambia

Gender, targeting and social inclusion



Case studies illustrate the kinds of interventions (from IFAD and other development agencies) that have used household methodologies effectively, highlighting the way each methodology has worked in a particular context.

The **case studies** are “living” documents and will be updated periodically based on new experiences and feedback. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the originators.

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Section 1: Overview of the methodology

Name of the methodology	Men's Campfire Conference (MCC)
Countries of implementation	The MCC is implemented in Zambia. The first campfire was held in Kasenga, near Lusaka, but it has been adopted in other towns in the western, central and eastern parts of the country.
Start/end date	The first campfire conference was held in August 2009 and they are ongoing.
Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology	The MCC was developed and is being implemented by the Men's Network. The latter has been supported by several partners: the African Women's Development and Communication Network in Nairobi; the Non-governmental Coordinating Council; the Zambia National Women's Lobby; Sonke Justice in South Africa; and individual membership contributions.
Purpose of the methodology	The purpose of the campfire is to encourage men to talk about gender equality and the promotion of women's leadership. The idea is to develop a critical mass of gender-sensitive men within communities who will promote gender sensitization and advocate for discussions on women's issues, such as ending gender-based violence (GBV) and how it hinders women's ability to participate in national development. The methodology replicates what men in many parts of the country traditionally do: meet at night around a fire to socialize, drink beer and discuss various issues – even sensitive matters related to marriage and sexuality, topics which they do not discuss with their wives. Women are not allowed to socialize in the evenings due to strong cultural beliefs in villages. For this reason, the Men's Network decided to turn this cultural bias into positive gains for women by conducting outreach sessions with men in an informal setting around a fire at night and by sharing supportive messages about women. The focus is on engaging with men to address men's attitudes and behaviours that affect women. The MCC focuses on peer groups because it is easy for men to influence men. The MCC enables local people to find solutions to local issues by working together.
Contribution of the methodology to wider organizational/project goals	The MCC supports the achievement of the Men's Network's goals and principles. The Men's Network is an advocacy group that seeks to ensure that cross-cutting issues affecting women's participation in national and community affairs are addressed from a male perspective. It is built on the principles of equality and diversity, and promotes the core values of non-violence against women and equal participation of men and women. The Men's Network believes that gender is about power relations between women and men and that any efforts to change must involve both.
Target group	The MCC is open to any man. Men with skills (for example, teachers, nurses, religious and traditional leaders, policemen, government workers, counsellors, social workers, leaders of farmers' associations, youth workers) are encouraged to participate since they can mobilize others and influence their peers in their community. A similar initiative, the Boys' Campfire Conference, reaches out to boys between the ages of 10 and 14 who attend school. During the school holidays, the informal campfire setting is used to encourage as many boys as possible to attend.

Section 2: Implementation arrangements

Implementing partners	<p>The Men's Network works with various national partners, civil society organizations and government departments working with rural farmers. At the country level, these organizations have provided resources and support services for its activities. Some partners have been lead agencies to implement a campfire conference in their areas of operation, such as the Planned Parenthood Association, the Church, traditional leaders using village <i>indabas</i> (meetings), the Citizen Forum and the Zambia Police Service Victim Support Unit. Other institutions have been supportive of the MCC, including the media and the Ministry of Gender.</p> <p>At the regional level, the Men's Network collaborates with the Regional Network of Men Against Gender Violence to share information and implement activities together. The Men's Network is a member of MenEngage, a global alliance of many country networks, hundreds of NGOs and UN agencies, which work with boys and men to promote gender equality.</p>
Selection of facilitators	<p>Facilitators are men chosen at the community level who are willing to volunteer their time without financial benefit. Some of them have mobilization skills while others are chosen because they are professionals. The selection criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ high interest level ▪ previous involvement in peer education ▪ ability to mobilize other men ▪ basic understanding of gender, HIV and AIDS ▪ experience as social workers, teachers, counsellor, officers from the Victim Support Unit, reproductive health counsellors, gender advocates, Youth Friendly Health Services provider, etc. ▪ recognition as outstanding members of their community.
Training of facilitators	<p>The facilitators are trained in different skills.</p>

Section 3: MCC at the community level

Implementation steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communities are chosen based on the high level of GBV and also a community's interest in sharing and finding solutions to gender-related issues. Sometimes community leaders approach the Men's Network to request a sensitization meeting. ▪ The Men's Network meets with community – in most cases male – leaders and traditional leaders to help them understand the methodology and its benefits. ▪ The community – mostly male leaders – maps out their situation and the issues that need to be addressed. The mapping also captures the organizations working in the area, such as youth and community action groups. This exercise is usually done before the campfire conference and is led by the Men's Network members. ▪ The leaders mobilize men in the village to identify the venue for the campfire and to collect firewood, food contributions and maize meal to brew non-alcoholic beverages. The leaders then invite participants. This community engagement in organizing the conference fosters active ownership and ensures sustainability. ▪ Based on the issues that have been mapped out, the Men's Network identifies an appropriate facilitator to lead the discussion. ▪ The MCC is usually held in the middle of a village between the hours of 18:00 and 22:00, with the facilitator leading the discussion, using participatory approaches. Topics include: GBV, HIV/AIDS, masculinity and other sensitive issues that are not easy for the men to discuss with their spouses. ▪ Up to 200 men may attend one campfire conference. ▪ After the conference, men develop workplans that are based on local solutions. The plans are shared with community leaders, who identify how they can support the implementation of the plans together with community members. ▪ The Men's Network members usually follow up with the community leaders to ensure that the plans are implemented.
Average length of the implementation cycle	<p>The average length of implementation usually is six months. The campfire conference can be a one-off activity but can also be held regularly or frequently, depending on the needs of the community. Usually, the Men's Network organizes three MMCs per quarter with different groups in different locations.</p>

Section 4: Monitoring and indicators

Monitoring process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workplans developed by men are shared with selected community leaders who are responsible for drafting reports and collecting data. The Men's Network's leadership works with the selected community leaders to conduct monitoring activities to ensure that the plans are adhered to.
Indicators	<p>Indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ change in attitudes towards GBV ▪ reduction in reported cases of GBV in the campfire conference area ▪ increase in advocacy by community leaders and chiefs on issues of gender equality.

Section 5: Results

<p>Number of beneficiaries reached</p>	<p>In 2012, the MCC reached over 540 men in three districts: Chibombo in central Zambia, Solwezi near the border with Angola, and Nakonde near the border with the United Republic of Tanzania. Recently a campfire was held in Chongwe district, attracting 161 men.</p> <p>Men who attend the MCC include traditional leaders, media personnel (including women who are interested in participating in men’s discussions), government workers, NGO leaders and men from the area.</p> <p>The Men’s Network plans to reach 1,000 men and boys each quarter through holding MCCs.</p>
<p>What are the main changes that can be attributed to the household methodology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Men examine their own attitudes towards and perceptions of women and girls. ▪ Men begin to appreciate the role that women play in the community and help them to reduce their workload by contributing to domestic tasks such as fetching water and cooking. ▪ Women started visiting health centres and look after their reproductive health, as a result of their increased time and the fact that their men were supportive of women attending maternal clinics. ▪ Men acknowledge that GBV is a critical issue that they need to address. They realize that they should react when women are being abused and <i>‘gather the courage to report to police’</i>. ▪ Networking with initiatives outside Zambia has added value to the MCC campaign for gender equality by strengthening voice and advocacy.
<p>Key elements responsible for the successes factors and strengths of the methodology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Men are recognized as part of the solution, triggering a very important mindset shift in both men and women. (One example is men joining in the 16 days of activism to end violence against women.) ▪ Men become enthusiastic to join the MCC campaign for gender equality. ▪ The MCC focuses on peer groups because it is easy for men and boys to influence their peers. ▪ The diversity of men participating in the conferences is very valuable for the campaign. ▪ Working with the media has been a very powerful way to disseminate messages to end violence. Since the first Men’s Campfire Conference in 2009, the uniqueness of the concept has continued to receive media attention. ▪ The MCCs are easy to arrange and organizing them does not require a lot of money. ▪ The MCCs require only local resources; for example, firewood and a community hall.
<p>Challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Negative cultural practices: Some men in the MCC area do not want to be associated with efforts to promote gender equality and this has a strong influence

	<p>on young men.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resistance from the women's movement: Men's programmes were historically associated with women's organizations but now the Men's Network has its own identity. There has been some resistance from the Zambia National Women's Lobby to let the Men's Network become independent because of the positive attention the Lobby receives as a result of being associated with the Network. ▪ Lack of visibility for recognizing men's work: Because of the close association of the Men's Network with women's organizations, the men are not recognized for the work that they are doing; rather much of the success of the Men's Network is attributed to the Zambia National Women's Lobby, which has anchored the Men's Network.
The way forward: potential improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The greater involvement of traditional leaders through networking and lobbying, especially the House of Chiefs (comprised of traditional leaders from various provinces in Zambia), can be an effective way to eliminate negative traditional practices that are working against women and girls. ▪ The Men's Network, as a men's voice on gender, needs to separate from the women's organizations so as to have a strong and independent voice to speak on matters concerning violence. It should have its own secretariat with staff to enhance its authority and carry out its own fund-raising.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The men who attend the conference become part of the Men's Network, leading the campaign in their area and helping to sustain and scale up the campaign. Over time, the community takes ownership of the campaign and organizes its own campfires. ▪ The MCC has been scaled up in other countries; for example, Malawi has adopted the concept of the MCC and in the United Republic of Tanzania, the MCC has inspired the formation of a men's group.

Section 6: Resources

Budget	The estimated budget is US\$480 per conference for a single event, including: accommodation for facilitators, journalist and driver, communication material, fuel, and meals.
Resources	A training toolkit has been developed by Sonke Gender Justice as regional training material for the MenEngage partners. (Only a hard copy is available.)



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