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The "Second Sex" vs. The Forgotten Sex: Exploring the missing masculinity component and the involvement of men in gender and development in Egypt

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The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

The "Second Sex" vs. The Forgotten Sex:

Exploring the Missing Masculinity Component and the Involvement of Men in Gender and

Development in Egypt

A Thesis Submitted to

The Department of Psychology

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts in Community Psychology

by Heba Wanis

December 2018

ـ هل نريد قليلًا من الصبر؟

ـ لا .. فالجنوبي يا سيدي يشتهي أن يكون الذي لم يكنه.

يشتهي أن يلاقي اثنتين: الحقيقة والأوجه الغائبة.

أمل دنقل

- *Do we need a little patience?*

- *No. For a Southern [man], Sir, desires to be what he is not.*

  [He] desires to meet two: Truth and missing faces.

Amal Donkol

DEDICATION

To the soul of my grandmother Teta Thoraya (Fortunée Mikhael, 1935-2014),

whose words ‘‘أصل الستات قِوِيِت!’’

“Women have become way too strong!”

have inspired the inception of this research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Abstract

This research explores the masculinity component of gender and development (GAD) interventions in Egypt. Women's empowerment has been the center of interventions in most developing countries, including Egypt. Men's engagement has been peripheral and limited to certain issues. The objective of this research was to gain insights about missing aspects regarding the involvement of men in developmental interventions, including suggestions for enhancing male engagement in communities. The research employed qualitative research methodology for data collection through focus groups with men in four villages in Assiut, and in-depth interviews with stakeholders of GAD. Analysis and coding of data was carried out using NVivo software using a pre-determined analysis framework that corresponded to content of data collection tools.

Results revealed a diverse range of issues that men perceived to be needs, primarily economic empowerment and vocational training activities given the challenging economic conditions in Egypt. Other social issues, particularly marital relationships and parenting, were attributed to stressful economic conditions necessitating the need for psychosocial and psychoeducational interventions.

This paper recommends placement of gender and masculinity interventions in the economic context of Egypt and a re-connection between gender policy and programming. There is a need for innovative participatory and asset-based programming by building on existing men's leadership in communities, while adapting successful interventions from other similar country contexts. This should be coupled with adopting a psychosocial and psychoeducational approach when targeting men. Sustainability (attaining community self-sufficiency) can be achieved through community capacity development and technical training of personnel implementing programs in communities.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Global development policies and interventions have long focused on women as a principal target in their attempts to mainstream gender work and reach gender equality. Women's empowerment, with underlying women's subordination and oppression as an identified problem, has been the center of interventions in most developing countries. Skills development, reproductive health education, economic empowerment, and political participation are among the interventions that target women by most, if not all, development agencies. Working with men has been limited to certain areas of work (e.g., health), and has often been of short duration without delivering much in terms of structural transformations that would benefit both men and women. Thus, these interventions do not ultimately bring gender equality.

It is observed and generally accepted that funding and resources are often channeled towards women's education and economic empowerment in order to counter the systematic disadvantages that women have experienced compared to men. In a culture that is predominated by men and patriarchy, Gender and Development (GAD) efforts in Egypt seem to have overlooked men as members of the gender scene. Yet, over the last two decades, men and masculinities have drawn increasing attention in the gender agenda, and this increasing focus is relevant to Egypt.

This research aimed to gain insights about what could be missing when it comes to the involvement of men in developmental interventions, including suggestions for enhancing male engagement in their communities. It employed qualitative research methodology for data collection through focus groups and in-depth interviews. Analysis of the focus group and interview data was carried out in order to reach findings and develop conclusions on the best way of involving men in gender and development work in Egypt.

Literature Review

Reviewing literature on gender and development, especially around masculinity, revealed a plethora of areas that branched out of the subject. For the purpose of this research, the literature review will start with definitions, then a historical overview of gender and development, then an examination of the emergence of masculinity as an area of interest.

Setting the Scene: Definitions Related to Gender and Development. There are multiple definitions and views regarding the construct of "gender." Gender is a social construction that is based on sexual differences but is not identical to them; it is rather the social, economic and political interpretation of those sexual differences, all of which make gender a dynamic process that is woven into the economic and social fabric of society, also entailing institutions and not just individuals (Fernandez-Kelly, 1994). Also, gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female (United Nations, 2001). According to the American Psychological Association (APA), gender refers to the attitudes, feelings and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex (American Psychological Association, 2012). It is a relational concept that that prioritizes social relations over attributes of individuals and looks at relationships between women and men and girls and boys, and also between women of different ethnic and class backgrounds (Fernandez-Kelly, 1994; United Nations, 2001). This research adopted the last definition of gender being a relational concept, hence necessitating targeting both women and men. This is the operational and reference definition used throughout this paper.

Community psychology research approaches gender in three ways, according to Bond and Wasco (2017): as a grouping variable, as a process variable and as a contextual variable. First, as a *grouping variable*, gender is used to categorize communities as men and women or boys and girls based on sex and age, entailing community-specific social constructions and gender relations as these groups interact with each another. Second, gender could also be a

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process variable, which means that it influences research processes, namely design and implementation, both of which vary according to the gender of target beneficiaries. Third, gender could be a *contextual variable*, and this refers to how gender-related attitudes, relationships, and cultural values influence the issue under study (Bond & Wasco, 2017). With these three approaches in mind, regardless of which one is adopted, gender is therefore socially constructed and defines the expectations of women and men such as norms, roles and relationships (World Health Organization, 2015). Moreover, gender can categorize groups, organizations, and institutions; for example, the military can be considered a masculinized institution.

Given the scope of the present study, it is important to moreover define masculinity within the framework of gender. Masculinity is defined as the set of attributes, including physical ones, as well as behavioral traits and roles that are typically associated with being male. These attributes distinguish males from females (Dunphy, 2000; Lippa, 2016; Wijngaard, 1997). Not only is masculinity socially defined, but sexually as well. There are biological contributions to masculinity formation and development, in other words sexual characteristics, that are cross-culturally and historically consistent (Lippa, 2016; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Such relative consistency has to do with the almost culturally agreed physical presentations of masculinity such as the having a beard, body hair and, certainly, a penis. Again, this is not to rule out the socially defined nature of masculinity, despite the cross-culturally perceived consistencies

A discussion of such consistencies cannot but also cover types of masculinities, or multiple masculinities, as researched and laid out by Connell (2005a) in three main types: hegemonic, marginalized and subordinate masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity refers to practices the dominant form of masculinity, typically associated with characteristics such as physical strength as well as social characteristics of manhood such as bread-winning,

entailing economic dominance in certain contexts, aggression and violence. Marginalized masculinity refers to the inability to conform to hegemonic masculinity characteristics and is often associated with disability or belonging to a racial or ethnic minority. Subordinate masculinity is the absence of qualities of hegemonic masculinity or exhibiting qualities that are on the complete opposite end. In light of the above, hegemonic masculinity comprises the strategy and practices which establish and legitimize men's dominance in society, justifying the subordination of women and other marginalized male groups (Connell, 2005a). In addition to this, there is continuous social interaction, if not struggle, between subordinated and dominant forms of masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The survival of non-hegemonic masculinities is determined by their oppression or incorporation in a functioning gender structure, which is how girls and women themselves contribute to the construction of masculinities in their families and communities (Messerschmidt, 2004). Arguably, if gender equality, discussed in the following paragraphs, is to be achieved, both men and women need to be involved in dissecting masculinities.

Gender equality between women and men came to being as another notion that sits at the heart of gender work in development. For the purpose of this research, the term development used here refers to human development, or the human development approach. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines development to be the expansion of the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of economy in which human beings live; it is an approach that is focused on people and their opportunities and choices (United Nations Development Programme, 2017). This approach is built on the pillars of healthy life, access to knowledge, and access to resources needed for a decent living standard. Within this human development approach, gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys, independent of whether a person is born male or female (United Nations, 2001).

In order to operationalize gender work within the field of development, the concept of gender mainstreaming came into being. It is defined as an organizational strategy that brings a gender perspective to all aspects of an institution's policy and activities, through building gender capacity and accountability (Reeves & Baden, 2000). It has been expressed in international institutions by adaptive terminology, gender-equitable policies and, most importantly, the implementation of such policies (Moser & Moser, 2005). The primary purpose of gender mainstreaming is to ensure that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to development activities, including policy development, research, advocacy, legislation, and resource allocation, as well as planning, implementation and monitoring of programs and projects (Moser & Moser, 2005; United Nations, 2001).

After having defined the principal concepts in this research, it is necessary to establish the link between gender and development as defined above. In fact, development is used as a means for the operationalization of gender equality, both in terms of empowering women by increasing their human capital, as well as changing the cultures and structures of the communities themselves. This entails targeting both men and women, to reduce gender-based discrimination. Human development becomes the rationale behind interventions that aim to improve the situation of women in their societies; for example, by raising awareness and knowledge on health issues (such as hygiene and reproductive health), harmful practices (such as early marriage and female genital cutting); or providing them with skills training to start income generating activities or promote their participation in public life. Such activities take place at the local community level, specifically targeting women most of the time as vulnerable members of society. It is against this background that this research examines gender-related work within the scope of human development as practiced in communities which receive development funding and programs. Next, a historical background about gender and development work and how men and masculinity became part of it is presented.

Gender in Development and the Involvement of Men. Contrary to the formal definitions of gender, public discourse has limited the subject of gender to women, hence the strong association between gender and women. Quoting Simone de Beauvoir's famous line from her classic *The Second Sex* (Beauvoir & Parshley, 1972, p. 267), which has inspired the feminist movement for decades: "*On ne naît pas femme: on le devient,*" which translates to "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," one could conclude that one is not born a man either! Similar to women, men are also gendered subjects. Arguably, masculinity, that is, becoming a man, faces similar social development, challenges and constraints that femininity would face in any given society. However, as De Beauvoir and Parshley (1972) put it, the default human is male, hence female is considered an *other*. That said, gender is likely interpreted as female, rather than a relational concept, as previously discussed, entailing male and female and inclusive of both masculinities and femininities. No wonder that there exists a strong association between gender and women in public discourse which has influenced gender work in favor of women as the following paragraphs detail.

While gender is not about women alone, much of the earlier work on gender focused solely on women primarily through the lens of the Women in Development (WID) paradigm. The WID is an approach of international development that started in the 1970s, marked by the United Nations Decade for Women 1975-1985, that sought to identify how women had been left out of development, particularly in the economic sense of the word (Connell, 2005b; Rizzo, 2014). Since that time, international discussions around women started being framed around equal rights (Connell, 2005b); however, this resulted in men being overlooked as gendered subjects. This is attributed to the influence of the feminist movement (Chant, 2000) and to the consideration that attempting to raise issues of concern to men and boys would potentially risk either further strengthening patriarchal structures or evoking antifeminist politics (Connell, 2005b); all of which have influenced gender analyses in international

development away from a gender relational approach that equally involves men alongside women.

In the 1980s WID was criticized for overlooking equally important aspects to gender inequality; namely, political, economic, and social structures. This led to the newer Gender and Development (GAD) approach that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, which focused on gender and the unequal power relations it entails (Fernandez-Kelly, 1994; Rizzo, 2014). However, this perceived major shift of perspective from WID to GAD did little in achieving its objectives (Ruxton & Oxfam, 2004; White, 1997) for the reasons explained below.

On the ground, gender planning has deviated from the much-needed balanced relational approach. Changes in gender relations can only take place when men and masculinities become foundational at all levels of the gender planning process (Chant, 2000; Ruxton & Oxfam, 2004; White, 1997). However, interventions were confined to the common *projects for women* programming style, with a focus on women's empowerment. As defined, women's empowerment is a bottom-up process of transforming gender power relations, through awareness raising and capacity development of individuals or groups to examine and challenge power relations when not in women's favor (Reeves & Baden, 2000).

For example, tremendous focus was directed towards women's economic empowerment after the Fourth UN Conference on Women in 1995, which acknowledged that 70% of the world's poor are females. Subsequently, the Beijing Platform for Action adopted women's poverty as a critical area necessitating action. Recently, there has been an increased focus on adolescent females as agents for economic recovery through economic empowerment, which is described as an "extremely worrying trend" by Cornwall, Edström, and Greig (2011), because it is an approach that overlooks power and structural relations that are themselves gendered. In addition to this, an emerging construct of feminization of poverty has been driving this work, ignoring men and gender relations (Chant, 2008). This is to say

that since women were found to be the poorer group, interventions aimed at poverty alleviation started targeting women at the time when, realistically, gender relations can themselves be major determinants of household economies. While there is evidence supporting economic empowerment as a way to reduce women's vulnerability to gender-based violence, it remains insufficient as long as it excludes men from decision making within the household, or the likely economic disempowerment of men is not acknowledged (Barker, Greene & Siegel, 2010).

In short, needs-driven interventions and funding directives have caused gender to be handled as a static, rather than dynamic, and often rigid construct. Moreover, the scope of gender work, including gender politics, has been driven away from its relational nature. Public discourse, mostly resulting of nonspecialized circles, often interprets gender as 'women', whereas this is not the case – it is a distorted meaning, mostly driven by the politics in this field. Interpreting gender as 'women' emphasizes the vulnerability of women, distracting the focus from changing the structures that disadvantage women (Cornwall and White, 2000), which should be at the heart of gender-related work. This is obvious in how women had continued to be socially and economically disadvantaged (Chant, 2000) despite all the perceived positive changes in the gender field since the early 1980s in areas of education, labor market, and family organization. Such discrepancy confirms that there is a disconnect between GAD policy developments and practices on the ground, necessitating transformative bridging that would take into consideration the inclusion of men besides addressing other operational causes of such disconnect.

Real policy debate on men and gender in international development is very recent. It has been growing since the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population Development (ICPD) when men were called upon for more involvement in gender equality, followed by the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing when shared responsibility and

partnership between men and women were emphasized (Cornwall et al., 2011; Inhorn, 2012; Ruxton & Oxfam, 2004). It is also worth noting here that during the 1994 ICPD, men's role was acknowledged at a high policy level as partners in reproductive health (Inhorn, 2012) rather than being implicitly blamed for being the cause of problems. This was also around the time when academic and policy literature started to become more self-conscious about gender work being focused on women, and men became recognized as a gendered constituency (Chant, 2000; Connell, 2005b), thus allowing men and masculinity greater space in the gender agenda (Cornwall et al., 2011; Ruxton & Oxfam, 2004).

Accordingly, there was a recognition of the positive role that men could play in challenging sexism and patriarchy in their contexts (Inhorn, 2012; Kaufman, 2004). The concept of shared responsibility between men and women towards achieving gender equality was later emphasized in 2003 in the United Nations Secretary General report, at the 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2004, and by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2005 (Ruxton & Oxfam, 2004). Since then, the gender scene has particularly witnessed a rise in research on men and masculinity. Besides increased research, more engagement of men started to take place in the health field, particularly HIV/AIDS (Connell, 2005b; Cornwall et al, 2011; Rizzo, 2014), which necessitated working around issues of reproductive rights and intimate relationship dynamics, including gender-based violence.

In light of these historical developments, and despite what seems to be strong global policy will, GAD continues to be a field with a wide disconnect between policy and practice, where practice predominantly focuses on women as primary planners and actors, as well as recipients of GAD interventions. That said, most development work continues to exclude men as gendered subjects, who, in theory, should take an equally active role as actors and recipients.

The Exclusion or Inclusion of Men. Involving men in GAD work, especially its programmatic part, is not an easy task. One reason working with men is complicated is that, unlike women, many men are not interested in changing gender relations. Besides, they benefit from the existing patriarchal system, which functions in their favor (White, 1997). With this in mind, the following paragraphs outline how men have been engaged, rather inadequately, in GAD while also highlighting some of the community implications of excluding them.

It has been common practice to see men being involved in GAD for political necessity. Gender politics and interventions often use male figures to give balanced packaging or a form of legitimacy that is necessary for communities to accept or host interventions involving women. One reason for this could be a realization that women-only projects have obvious limitations such as training on rights that may be difficult to exercise at home, or having to respond to violent partners. Likewise, education programs miss the involvement of men, for example in cases of nutrition and sexual and reproductive health (Chant, 2000), where men are fundamental partners in making solutions work for families and communities. In addition, excluding men could lead to gendered rivalries in communities because of the resources acquired by females when taking part in interventions targeting them, such as in case of income-generating projects.

Under-representation of men results in interventions without much influence on the communities especially when issues concerning gender relations play a role. Men's representation is important in terms of numbers, ultimately to form a much-needed critical mass of change. However, and equally important, there is a need for the genuine political commitment of men towards changing gender relations (Cornwall & White, 2000). Unfortunately, there is a tendency only to engage men in limited short-term interventions, which in theory does not lead to the gender-related changes that may be desired in the

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community. Evidence shows that only few interventions with men and boys can be described as long-term, involving wider community engagement and formation of alliances that can have deeper and more sustainable effects on the community (World Health Organization, 2007).

The importance of involving men arises from the need for a deeper exploration of gender as a relational construct, given the GAD experiences over the past decades. The impetus for involving men is not only to ensure the success of interventions, but also to respond to the changing nature of gender relations; for example, changes in the traditional image of man as breadwinner and head of the family. There is a need to understand gender in a more interactive way that explores masculinity, allowing men the opportunity to challenge stereotypes around masculinity (Barker 1997; Chant, 2000). Besides, if working on gender equality is women's responsibility alone, women will face an uphill struggle involving changing their own ideologies and practices as well as men's (White, 1997).

It is important to examine the contexts where GAD work takes place; that is, the reality of communities in which men are active members. Tailoring of policy and intervention has sometimes been designed to accommodate men in communities, such as including men in women's groups in Kenya and other African countries, where such groups had been long restricted to women (Cornwall & White, 2000). This happens for reasons related to making an intervention more contextually relevant to a given location as argued by Cornwall & White (2000), for example in communities where the presence of men is tolerated or is necessary for the success of the intervention. That said, having involved men can make these kinds of interventions more acceptable to the community, and can be effective in influencing men's attitudes and behaviors in relation to gender equality (Cornwall & White, 2000; Connell, 2005b; Cornwall et al, 2011; Rizzo, 2014). Despite this, according to Barker et al (2010), policies have been inadequate in engaging men to address gender inequality or men's

and boys' gender-related vulnerabilities. Besides, gender has been handled in a selective manner by development agencies in the form of short-term palliative, rather than transformative, interventions (Cornwall et al, 2011). Gender-related interventions often did not lead to real policy change that could translate into influencing people's lives at the community level. As such, having not penetrated social politics, the global gender agenda has been described as being depoliticized. In other words, the gender agenda has not tackled root causes of gender inequality, and has, therefore, failed to change social structures and improve people's lives.

What Needs to be Done to Involve Men: Evidence for Effectiveness. Men need to be involved as leaders and beneficiaries of GAD interventions in ways that helps them revisit their masculinity in their contexts and helps them redefine gender as a relational construct. It is crucial that men realize that such processes are fundamental for communities to develop, and that the burden of change is not the responsibility of women alone. With this in mind, there is a need for the creation of safe spaces for men to break the silence around masculinity and its rigid social constructs that are detrimental to both women and men (Cornwall & White, 2000). Such engagement entails brave and deep exploration of gender relationships, not only at the intimate level as related to women in their lives, but also at the social level where communities recognize and sanction different forms of masculinities.

There is evidence of changes in gender-related attitudes and behaviors among men who took part in well-designed GAD interventions. Literature demonstrates several efforts that have successfully engaged men in a variety of countries and continents. This is especially in areas of reproductive and sexual health, interaction with children, reducing violence against women and questioning of violence against other men, among other areas (World Health Organization, 2007). For example, authors have identified successful programs involving men on topics such as reproductive health interventions (Greene et al, 2006);

addressing violence against women (Casey et al., 2013; Flood, 2011; Jewkes, Flood & Lang, 2015) specifically as allies for gender equality (Messner, Greenberg, & Peretz, 2015); as well as addressing violence of men against men (Pease, 2008) and as partners in care, e.g. childcare at home (Esplen & Brighton Institute of Development Studies, 2009).

There are success stories about the involvement of men from around the world. For example, engaging men as partners was a successful approach in a health-related multi-country program called "Men as Partners," implemented by Engender Health in Bolivia, India, Nepal, Pakistan and South Africa (Mehta, Peacock, & Bernal, 2004). In this program, men played a positive role against gender-based violence. Allowing men this space to act was among the determinants of success of this program in terms of attitude and behavior change, besides engaging key stakeholders and developing alliances. Similarly, partnerships with men through the establishment of allies was successful for women's civil society groups working on gender equality in Yemen (Elsanousi, 2004). In Britain, the increased presence of young fathers during pregnancy and childbirth proved to be transformative for men's attitudes and behaviors in relation to gender equality, as it built on the fathers' desire to be involved (Seidler, 2006). In Egypt, a civil society organization involved men in awareness raising sessions about women's involvement in local elections. This initiative proved to be an enlightening experience for the men about their wives' lives outside of their homes, specifically their wives' engagement in community and social change activities (El Feki, Heilman, & Barker, 2017).

In theory, interventions that succeed in engaging men and influencing them have common characteristics. There have been attempts in the community development literature to capture those characteristics, although rating and categorizing gender approaches remain debatable (World Health Organization, 2007). A commonly used rating to describe such programs includes categories such as gender-neutral, gender-sensitive or gender-

transformative, which has been applied by the World Health Organization (2007). Gender-neutral refers to programs that distinguish little between the needs of men and women, neither reinforcing nor questioning possible gender differences. Gender-sensitive programs recognize the specific needs and realities of men based on the social construction of gender roles. Gender-transformative approaches are ones that seek to transform gender conceptions and promote more gender-equitable relationships between men and women (World Health Organization, 2007).

According to the World Health Organization (2007), in order to influence men on the ground, programs have to be designed so that they are gender-transformative, rather than gender-neutral or gender-sensitive. Unlike the last two types, gender-transformative programs contain deliberate discussions on issues related to gender and masculinity, hence have an impact on gender relations, which was the case in gender workshops with men and women in countries including Afghanistan, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana and Nigeria. Keating (2004) emphasized the importance of raising sensitive issues in programs related to changing social and family norms or male violence, particularly at the community level; otherwise women will be frustrated and men's views will remain unchallenged.

In light of the above, influential programs also have to be integrated into a wider context of community outreach in order to be more effective in achieving positive behavioral changes among men. It is important to aim at covering the complete social context of men; that is, relationships and institutions (World Health Organization, 2007). One example is of livelihood workshops conducted by Kidder (2004) in Albania, El Salvador, Haiti, Indonesia, Malawi, Nicaragua and Senegal that facilitated male participants' appreciation of women's unpaid contributions to the household. Those workshops encouraged men to support women in their families to engage in financial activities such as small-scale production, marketing of products, and access to financial services. In such workshops, Kidder used economic

efficiency arguments to raise sensitive gender issues among men, rather than be explicit or confrontational, which reduced resistance towards gender issues among men. While such successful stories might seem to be sporadic, often experimental, interventions, they are significant practices that provided successful models for similar work in other settings as further explained in the paragraphs below. It could be argued that these models influenced gender programming in later years, particularly small scale interventions whose results might not be captured by literature. This research, in fact, sought to contribute to better understanding of this area with focus on communities in Egypt as will be later elaborated.

Exploring Masculinity: Men as Gendered Subjects. As will be detailed later in this section, except for few key studies, in this part of the world, not much human development research has been done to explore masculinity and how men relate to gender equality in their day-to-day lives. General gender discourses in communities, particularly in the Middle East, has patriarchal interpretations for masculinity that include that men should provide financially for their families and should not show their vulnerabilities. It is obvious that masculinity entails privileges and freedoms, yet at the same time imposes social burdens on men such as the previously mentioned social obligation that men are the primary breadwinners of their families, regardless of their age. This has necessitated approaching men, as men, and responding to their own needs in a manner they would accept, for their own interest rather than to serve the interests of women. The following paragraphs explain this further.

Nearly two decades ago, new gender issues related to masculinity emerged in research and academic writing. Much of this literature focused on the negative consequences of strict gender conceptions and roles, such as 'men in crisis', 'troubled masculinities' and 'men at risk', particularly among young, lower-income males (Amar, 2011; Chant, 2000; Cornwall, 1998; El Feki et al., 2017). These negative depictions emerged because of the changing

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social and economic roles of men and women (El Feki, Heilman & Barker, 2017). While necessary, exploring masculinity is a challenge to gender analysis and to the power and culture of the development sector (White, 1997). It is the very nature of gender, as a relational concept, that gives relevance to the previous statement. In other words, exploring masculinity might reveal inadequacies of the development sector that has for long adopted a women-only interpretation of gender instead of the more inclusive relational one. Ruxton and Oxfam (2004) critiqued this earlier work arguing that the motivation to include men should not be that *men have been left out,* but rather a recognition that masculinity issues are vital in reaching gender equality; a position supported by Connell (2005b). Besides, as outlined in previous sections, it could be argued that literature increasingly uses less judgmental language that neither victimizes nor puts the blame on men, but recognizes the relational aspect and shared responsibility of both sexes.

To examine these trends further, in-depth research explorations of masculinity are few. Barker and colleagues (2011) developed a key study that explored different aspects of masculinity in several countries, which is the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES). Some of the aspects studied included: gender attitudes, relationship dynamics and domestic duties, knowledge and attitudes about policies and laws related to gender equality, and health practices and vulnerabilities. One of the study's main findings demonstrated that a high level of awareness of gender-based violence combined with attitudes that show a high level of rejection of violence is not necessarily associated with a reduction in the levels of intimate partner violence. Thus, the authors concluded that working with men should go beyond simplistic programming such as "violence against women is against the law," and that national and local campaigns should reach out to men in ways that they themselves would perceive as reflective of their needs and challenges.

Like elsewhere in the world, the Middle East has witnessed a situation where there was relatively high emphasis on women in terms of development interventions followed by an emergence of an awareness of men as gendered subjects. Such awareness is reflected in a growing body of literature about masculinity in the Middle East since the mid-1990s (Rizzo, 2014). The masculinity literature regarding countries in the Middle East demonstrates discussions of men and masculinities from diverse perspectives or in relation to community issues where gender plays a principal role. This includes issues such as masculinity in the context of segregated societies (Kandiyoti, 1994); masculinity and female genital cutting in Egypt (Wassef & Mansour, 1999); male multi-identities in private and public spheres (Armbrust, 2006; Ghoussoub & Sinclair-Webb, 2000); masculinity and economic structural adjustment driving family planning programs in Egypt (Ali, 2002, 2003); male infertility and patriarchy in Egypt (Inhorn, 2003); masculinity and political resistance and violence in Palestine (Peteet, 2000); gender-based harassment on Egyptian streets (Ilahi, 2009); the discourse of 'Men in Crisis' (Amar, 2011); gender-based violence in Yemen (Baobaid, 2006); and gender and sexuality in the context of relationships between Egyptian economically underprivileged men and empowered foreign women in Dahab (Abdalla, 2007). In addition to this body of research, some literature focused on masculinity from a specifically Islamic angle such as Shahin (2005) and Ouzgane (2006).

In a field study conducted on university students in Lebanon, Baydoun (2007) tried to answer the question of whether or not men have changed, in terms of individual characteristics and social choices and behavior, in response to the developments taking place among women particularly those related to empowerment. Baydoun (2007) concluded that men generally comply with standards and attitudes of the groups to which they belong. Another conclusion was that masculinity in Lebanon has not been adequately explored nor has it been held accountable for any structural gender-related damage it might have caused,

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compared to what happens in the West. This is the result of, according to Baydoun (2007), the way the feminist movement has focused on violence against women, at a time when other equally important and rather deeper gender-related issues should have had priority as well such as the psychology and behavior of men and women, also arguably behind violence against women. These results are consistent with trends in other parts of the region, including in Egypt which will be explained in the following sections.

      Gender and Masculinity in Egypt. At the time of writing, Egypt is a country of population size nearing 93 million with 49% being females (CAPMAS, 2017a). According to the Egyptian Constitution, the State guarantees equality between men and women in civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights (Egypt, 2014). However, in reality gender equality has not been reached. Egypt ranks low on the Gender Inequality Index (GII), scoring 135 out of a total of 159 countries, which denotes a high level of gender inequality (UNDP, 2016). The GII, as defined by the UNDP (2016), is a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievement between women and men in the three dimensions of health, empowerment, and the labor market. Certain indicators are used for GII calculation under each of the three dimensions. Health is measured by maternal mortality ration and adolescent birth rate; empowerment is measured by female and male population with at least secondary education, and female and male shares of parliamentary seats; and labor market is measured by female and male labor force participation rates (UNDP, 2018).

      Gender inequalities in Egypt have been similarly documented in the IMAGES study, which was recently conducted in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) by El Feki at al. (2017). It examined men's and women's attitudes and practices towards gender equality in four Arab countries; namely, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine. Inequitable views were supported by the majority of men in all four countries, and both men and women believed that a woman's principal role was as a wife and mother. Specific findings from

Egypt showed that patriarchal attitudes were widespread in the country. More than half of men and nearly 60% of women believed that gender equality was a concept that was foreign to Egyptian traditions and culture. In the meantime, 70% of men believed that equality has been achieved already. Views of younger men were found to be more supportive of maintaining gender inequality compared to those of older men. Among men, the level of wealth, education and living in urban areas corresponded to more equitable views, while for women, the determining factors for equitable views were education, young age, being single and living in urban areas. Dominance of men over women, according to men interviewed in the study, was manifested in controlling what women wear, where they go, if they are allowed to leave the house, and expecting to have intercourse on demand.

To address these gender inequalities, gender work in Egypt has enjoyed strong political support especially through the leadership of government institutions such as the National Council for Women (NCW) and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM). Non-governmental organizations have also shown interest in working towards reducing the gender gap. However, since the 1980s, development in Egypt has been guided by the neo-liberal agenda of international donors that prioritized political reform over the need for social and economic equity (Ali, 2003). One could argue that this disconnect, manifested in emphasis on policy at the expense of communities, has done injustice to GAD work which remained distant from the reality of gender relations in communities. In other words, it could be argued that positive policy change did not proportionately translate into as high as impact at the community level as originally intended.

While gender issues in Egypt have gained attention, results remain unsatisfactory. One of the reasons behind this is the short-term cost-benefit calculation (Abdellatif, Zaky, & Ramadan, 2017), aiming at fast fixes in communities, which has caused results on the ground to lack sustainability. Also donor pressure, established women's development networks, and

the political power of governmental women's entities have given rise to a situation where GAD work tended to overly focus on women, overlooking masculinity and men. As a result, given the above, it could be surmised that the gender scene in Egypt may continue to struggle with societal resistance to change and relatively slow development in terms of achieving real transformations.

Besides these factors, Egypt has also been witnessing tensions between gender mainstreaming and gender equality agendas, in addition to the lack of consensus on how to achieve gender equality using mainstreaming (Shash & Forden, 2016). One reason is the tendency to focus on woman-only issues such as early childhood care and general health and hygiene, because these issues are more politically palatable and attractive since they do not entail any threat to gender social constructs and inequalities. However, this overlooks the important role that men play as partners in change, and the need and importance of including them. In fact, this is not different from what has been happening elsewhere in the world. Gender terminology, policy, and implementation, referred to as the three-pronged concept of gender mainstreaming, have been facing challenges within international institutions, primarily for reasons related to organizational contexts (Moser & Moser, 2005). Therefore, gender mainstreaming was not as successful as expected in achieving gender equality. It is fair to conclude that implementation is the most challenging of all three arms. Looking more closely at the community level in Egypt, and as Shash and Forden (2016) argued, the inclusion of men would be a way of balancing between the cultural relevance of programmatic work and achieving gender equity. In fact, gender equity cannot be achieved without the cultural relevance of interventions, and such relevance is often dependent on the involvement of men and their approval of the intervention; hence, their permission for women to be involved.

Despite the importance of their inclusion, men and boys have been rarely involved in community-based gender-related work in Egypt (El Feki et al., 2017). When they were involved, it was largely on a superficial level. Reasons for including men in Egypt often were to obtain their permission to engage women in their families, or to neutralize community resistance to solutions that often tend to be strictly women-only or girl-centered. The long-standing family planning programs in Egypt, heavily campaigned for in the 1980s and 1990s, have focused on women through reproductive health education and access to counseling and contraceptives. Men's involvement was not, necessarily, to actively engage them in the family planning process, but rather to get their permission to allow women to use contraceptives (Ali, 2003). The community's resistance to female-only interventions was exemplified in an intervention that sought to increase girls' enrollment in schools. The parents refused to send their girls without their sons who also needed to have access to educational opportunities, and as a result, boys were also accommodated in the newly built schools (Shash & Forden, 2016). An obvious conclusion here is that programmatic design is often done in isolation of communities in a top-down approach, again raising the challenge of imposing a global and 'foreign' gender agenda in a local context without consultation. Arguably, the challenge at this moment in time is that there is no clarity as to how to include men in interventions given that development agencies in Egypt in the past have been mostly planning with a women-only lens. The same trend has continued until this day: the burden of change is on the shoulders of women alone, overlooking the gender relational aspect that necessitates men's active and genuine engagement.

A transformational approach to gender equality necessitates more community-oriented thinking. While the top-down gender mainstreaming is important to support the introduction of new policies and legislation, it is important to keep in mind that real change can only take place by community consent. Even laws and policies have to be accepted, if not

developed, by the community itself. In light of this, and building on it, the following sections will seek to explore ways of engaging men in GAD work in Egypt with community psychology as basis for both the exploration and delivery processes.

Engaging Men: A Community Psychology Perspective. Community psychology emphasizes the value of channeling voices from the ground up towards policy change. Applying a community psychology approach, and based on the ecological theory, working with women would necessarily entail working with men in parallel. Ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), with its convergent levels of systems, also provides a framework for gender mainstreaming from a community psychology perspective. The ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) looks at individuals, in this case women, as inseparable from their environments. First, there is an immediate environment, the *microsystem*, which is the groups, institutions with direct contact with women, e.g. family and workplace. Second, there is the *mesosystem* which is the interconnections between the microsystems. In other words, it is how a woman's immediate family circle, for example, interacts with her work environment or with her friendships. Third, there is the *exosystem* which is defined as links between the wider context where the individual does not have an active role and the individual's immediate circle. An example would be the economic situation of the country, over which any given woman in rural village does not have control. However, in case this economic situation leads the government to cut salaries, the woman's husband, now frustrated with an inadequate income, may express violence against her at home. Fourth, there is the *macrosystem*, defined by the wider cultural context, socioeconomic structures, values and beliefs, etc. Fifth and finally, there is a *chronosystem* which holds all the aforementioned systems in the dimension of time over the life course of the individual.

Since community psychology is concerned with ecological systems and policy change, the politics of gender entail transforming policies to become more equitable at all

system levels. With gender as a contextual variable in mind, Bond and Wasco (2017) proposed a distinction between gendered qualities and practices that exist in any given setting. In other words, and based on this distinction, gender relations could be regarded as practices and accordingly could be attributed to certain community characteristics that shape how men and women behave towards one another. Based on that, Bond and Wasco (2017) called for more systematic research on the impact of interventions in terms of influencing such gendered natures. In fact, this distinction itself is a recognition of the multi-layered and multi-pronged nature of gender, which includes community qualities on the one hand and practices on the other. Based on this, it could be argued that a positive community quality could translate into a negative practice, a common form of which is benevolent sexism. For example, solidarity with vulnerable community members could potentially disempower a widow by her male entourage who believe that financially supporting a widow, out of social solidarity, would be an alternative to her seeking a job, even if she wishes to do so.

Politicizing gender in that sense would be a meeting point between community psychology and feminism, whose primary objective is to change power relations and promote women's rights. Ecological theory, with its concentric contexts of individuals and communities, can be used as a framework towards meeting this goal. However, despite its commitment to working on social inequalities, community psychology as a field has not made much progress towards developing interventions that change structural gender relations. One reason for this could be inadequate awareness about feminism among community psychologists (Riger, 2017). In fact, there is higher potential for community psychology beyond how it is currently practiced, in terms of addressing gender structures. As a discipline, community psychology can succeed in modifying gender relations and practices or even creating alternative community settings that are conducive to transformed practices, according to Bond and Wasco (2017).   Arguably, this could be achieved through deeper

long-term interventions at the grassroots level. As explained above, El Feki et al. (2017) concluded that men's involvement in Egypt was of a superficial nature. With this in mind, community psychology, through its methodologies, can facilitate deeper involvement in interventions. In this regard, a participatory approach which brings together men and women could be a useful tool to challenge gender relations and practices, as part of the intervention and consequently in the wider community.

In Egypt, gender-mainstreaming work has primarily revolved around gender equality from the women's perspective; that is, with emphasis on women's direct interests, rather than from a collective community-oriented perspective that would be inclusive of men. This imbalance has resulted from the absence of certain pillars that govern successful interventions in communities, known as community psychology competencies outlined by Dalton and Wolfe (2012). While these competencies are primarily for training purposes, they are considered principles inspired by how community psychology, as a discipline, seeks to influence communities. If adopted, some of these pillars, if not all, would naturally support and lead to the inclusion of men in interventions related to gender equality. The following selected competencies explain this link.

First, adopting an ecological perspective, a competency itself, to gender mainstreaming would mean looking at women (assuming that women will continue to be the focus of work) within their contexts and environments. In that sense, men cannot be excluded because they are inseparable from the target women's environments, being their fathers, husbands, brothers or sons; employers; community or religious leaders. Naturally, applying the ecological theory with women at its center would bring men into women's microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Engaging men would be inevitable.

Second, the principle of empowerment, if applied in its comprehensive sense, would mean seeking to empower the whole community, even when targeting selected groups, rather

than designing interventions that seek to empower one side while ignoring the other (Riger, 2002). Certainly, empowerment is a relative concept and varies across both men's and women's groups within the same community with men, presumably, enjoying more privilege compared to women. That said, it is important to bear in mind that empowerment in this context refers to interventions which seek to develop capacity and agency of its beneficiaries, hence *empowering* them. In the meantime, empowerment could be perceived as a threat to traditional community structures, since it is about emphasizing individualism (Riger, 2002). However, this could be mitigated using a participatory approach whereby communities can decide which aspects of empowerment are lacking in their contexts so that interventions can adopt, hence making the best use of community psychology tools.

Third, sociocultural and cross-cultural competence is necessary in order to steer gender equality work through the complexity of social and cultural structures, power relations imbalances and politics, etc… Awareness of the patriarchal context in which GAD interventions take place is essential in order to avoid unnecessary resistance to change in communities.

Fourth, the community psychology competencies in community inclusion, partnership, and community participatory research can also apply. These principles would ensure the greater involvement of the community which would in turn lead to increased acceptability of programmatic efforts and openness to future gender-related work. Examples of successful engagement of men demonstrated above in earlier sections support the argument that community participation, by bringing both men and women on board as partners in the design and implementation of gender programming efforts, is a prerequisite for real change. Further research on how men can be engaged in interventions related to gender equality could help inform more participatory and inclusive approaches.

Aims of the Study

Research in Egypt is still needed concerning men and masculinities within the context of development. El Feki and colleagues (2017), who specified the need for further exploration of gender attitudes and practices related to gender equality among men in the MENA region, including Egypt, have called for more investment in applied research related to men and masculinities. Moreover, in light of the minimal research conducted on gender mainstreaming in Egypt (Shash & Forden, 2016), GAD will always have the challenge of implementing global strategies in a local context. This means that the question of relevance to Egypt would continue to be raised in GAD interventions, because there is not much evidence based on which program designs will work in Egypt. The need for involving men has been raised, and yet it is not clear as to how to involve them in a way that would be culturally acceptable to them and at the same time effective in achieving results in the direction of gender equality.

Against this background, an exploratory community psychology approach could be a solution that guides GAD work to replace the top-down approach and better connect policy with practice. This research attempted a small-scale exercise in this direction. With the purpose of further understanding masculinity in the context of development, this research explored how men perceived existing GAD programs and how they wish to be engaged in future programs so that women-only gender work can be complemented with the involvement of men or with parallel interventions targeting men. The present study was an attempt to examine how masculinity can be addressed in GAD in Egypt based on insights from men who live in communities heavily saturated with GAD interventions.

This research was qualitative in nature. The rationale behind choosing a qualitative methodology was to allow for in-depth exploration of men's perceptions of GAD programs and the impact of those programs on their communities, as well as men's needs and how

developmental interventions can cater to them. The research sought to answer several questions, primarily related to the potential role of men within gender and development in the Egyptian context. The following research questions formed the framework of the present qualitative study:

1. How is women's empowerment within the context of development perceived by men?

2. Which women's empowerment programs are men familiar with? What is their level of involvement in such programs?

3. What is the impact of women's empowerment (social, educational and economic) on men and households?

4. What is the impact of women's empowerment on the community as perceived by men?

5. What do men need in the context of gender and development?

   a. What knowledge do men need to acquire? (psychological, economical, health-related, professional, etc.)

   b. Which attitudes and behaviors do they need to change?

6. What are the characteristics of men-targeted and men-friendly interventions?

Question 1 helps to set the scene by bringing the participants' attention to the concept of empowerment and to generally assess men's attitudes and openness towards existing programs that target women. Question 2 explores an important link between women's empowerment with men's involvement as it enquires about how familiar the men are with gender and development programs, and the extent to which men are involved in those programs. Questions 3 and 4 further explore men's perceptions of the existing programs in regards to the impact of the programs at different ecological levels from the family to the broader community. Question 5 explores the needs and priorities of men that could be integrated in future programs. With Question 6 the researcher can then smoothly guide the

discussion towards enquiring about best ways to involve men for the welfare of their

communities.

Chapter 2 Methodology

Focus groups (FGs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) were used in the present study. These qualitative semi-structured interview tools were selected because of their value in exploring the research questions with adequate depth through a free flowing discussion, which surveys and written forms could not fully provide. Qualitative methods are re-emerging and are increasingly in use in the field of psychology (Bishop, 2007; Willig & Stainton Rogers, 2008). They are considered to be of great potential for community psychologists in particular because they serve as means of understanding how people give meaning to their world, while ensuring that people are also seen in their contexts (Bishop, 2007). Qualitative methods were moreover favored in this research for their flexibility to generate new insights and deeper understanding about various related issues as raised by participants during the research. Focus groups create a platform for interaction between participants, often triggering discussion and debate around issues of controversy. Such dynamics provided an important contribution to the richness and depth to the data collected.

Data collection was done primarily through focus groups with men of diverse age ranges, mainly young and middle-aged adults, some of whom were relatives of female participants in development programs in the identified research sites as described below. Data from focus groups was complemented and triangulated with data from KIIs with selected participants from the communities and experts in the field of gender and masculinity as described further in the following sections.

Research Site

The governorate of Assiut, located 375 km south of Cairo, was selected as the site for this research. Its key position as a significantly developed Upper Egyptian governorate qualified it to host this research as a site. The population size of Assiut is 4.5 million, at the time of writing (CAPMAS, 2017b). The governorate hosts Assiut University, the first and

biggest university in Upper Egypt, which was established in 1957. Assiut City, the capital, is the most developed capital of Upper Egypt and it is generally known that inhabitants of other governorates in Upper Egypt would pay visits to Assiut for commercial interests or when looking for services, especially specialized healthcare. Between two thirds and three quarters of Assiut's population is rural (CAPMAS, 2006). Historically, Assiut has been a recipient of substantial development funds that have been directed towards reproductive health, access to clean water and sanitation, women's empowerment, and education, among others. Having a rather central location in Upper Egypt, along with hosting a well-established academic institution made Assiut a hub for development work, particularly directed at women's education and empowerment.

Despite that, the conditions and status of women in Upper Egypt, including Assiut, continue to be alarming. According the Demographic and Health Survey of Egypt (Ministry of Health and Population & El-Zanaty, 2015), in Assiut 37% of ever-married women aged 15-49 years have received no education, and nearly 90% are unemployed. Female genital cutting in Assiut continues at very high rates (94%), and is supported by a majority of women (66%) who believe the practice should continue. One third of women in Assiut cannot take decisions concerning their healthcare, make major household purchases or visit family or relatives without taking the permission of their husbands.

Participants

This research benefited from the contributions of 61 participants who took part either in focus groups or in in-depth interviews. A total of 45 male participants took part in the focus groups of this research. Their ages ranged from 18 to 70 years *(M* = 33.3, *SD* = 14.4). Participants in focus groups were members of communities and families of women engaged in empowerment projects. Out of the 45 participants, 26 (57.7%) were married and 19 (42.2%) were single. Level of education varied across the participants, and ranged from

preparatory school certificates to Master's degrees in law and public health. A total of 16 (35.6%) were holders of university degrees, 16 (35.6%) were holders of technical institute diplomas, and 6 (11.0%) were holders of preparatory or secondary school certificates. There were 7 (15.7%) university or technical school students among participants. Participants professional profiles varied as well, often depending on the level of education, and included 3 (6.7%) farmers, 9 (20.0%) skilled workers, 15 (33.3%) professional employees or retirees, including government civil servants, 4 (8.9%) professionally involved in community work and 5 (11.1%) unemployed men.

To complement findings of focus groups, interviews were conducted with key informants in Assiut and Cairo. They were 16 in total, 5 males and 11 females, the oldest of whom was 53 and the youngest was 25 years old (M= 40; SD= 9.06). Informants represented three international organizations operating in Assiut; two Assiut-based (urban based) Egyptian NGOs; two community-based/ grassroots NGOs (rural based); two Cairo-based gender and masculinity organizations (with work experience in Assiut); and one government entity (Ministry of Youth and Sports). Informants varied in levels of seniority, type of program work, and amount of experience; however, all worked in direct contact with communities and beneficiaries, with even the most senior participants having strong programmatic experience.

Procedures

Participants for the focus groups were identified from two districts in Assiut, namely Abu Tig and Manfalout. Identification of participants was done with the support of an international NGO represented in Assiut, who obtained additional support from four grassroots NGOs working in four villages identified in the two districts targeted for this research. The villages were El-Ezzeya and Gahdam in Manfalout and El-Balayza and Dekran in Abu Tig. The villages were selected based on their long-term relationship with local and

international NGOs and their involvement in gender and development activities particularly as related to women empowerment. The four identified villages have a relatively long history of gender-related interventions.

Participants were enrolled through the four local NGOs where community programs targeting women take place (e.g., related to health and social services). The local NGOs are the places through which gender interventions are delivered to women who were relatives of the participants identified. Men were invited by their local NGO leadership to voluntarily participate in the focus groups, based on non-probability convenience sampling. Participants were enrolled by the NGOs using purposive sampling which took into consideration factors such as participants' literacy, availability during the times focus groups were conducted, while ensuring diversity of age, educational backgrounds and occupations.

Two focus groups were conducted in each village, making four focus groups per community and totaling eight focus groups for the whole research. In each village, one focus group was for males below 30 years of age, and another for males aged 30 years and higher. The number of participants per focus group ranged from 5 to 7 participants, with a mean of 5.6 participants per group (SD = 0.7).

The reason why two age groups were identified was to explore the differences in attitudes and behaviors between younger and older men. Younger men are more likely to have been exposed to interventions led by international organizations, including interventions that enhance life skills and integrate values-based content related to gender equality. Such programs have targeted children and teenagers in the communities represented in this research, so it was expected that some of the younger men had engaged in such programs and had been influenced by their content. This is not to rule out that older men as well might have been targeted by some interventions. At the same time, evidence shows that men of older age groups show more gender equitable attitudes and behaviors as demonstrated by the

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IMAGES study (El Feki et al., 2017). Having two age groups in focus groups was aimed to help generate some more evidence in this regard.

Focus groups were hosted by the four local NGO offices located in the respective villages. Men were invited to gather at a certain hour in a meeting room, where the focus group was conducted. The principal researcher, being female, engaged an Assiut-based male co-researcher to support as a co-facilitator in order to reduce possible discomfort among participants when responding to questions asked by a female from outside Assiut's communities. Both were present in focus groups, and the male co-facilitator assumed the role of the one leading the discussion by asking questions and facilitating participants' answers and interventions. The female researcher engaged occasionally as a co-facilitator, where relevant, as well as took notes during the focus groups.

Participants for KIIs were identified through convenience and snowball sampling. In the beginning, the researcher had identified key informants representing community promoters who engage in awareness raising and empowerment interventions; organizations that are active in Assiut, particularly in Abu Tig and Manfalout; as well as informants in Cairo and Assiut with experience working in the area of masculinity and gender. Identification of local organizations in Assiut was done in consultation with colleagues working in an international organization represented in Assiut, following which informants representing these organizations were invited to participate in interviews. Later, identified participants, after being interviewed, referred the researcher to additional informants whom they perceived as experts in the field of this research. Snowballing through personal referrals made it possible to reach out to more key informants who had expertise relevant to the research questions. Some of the in-depth interviews were conducted with grassroots leaders with long involvement in gender interventions in their communities, and these took place at

the premises of the organizations to which informants were affiliated in Assiut. For Cairo-based experts, interviews took place in Cairo.

At the outset of the focus group or interview, the researcher oriented participants with an overview of the research, its rationale and objectives. The informed consent form (see Appendix 1) was read aloud and explained to participants before all focus groups and interviews. Participants were then allowed some time to re-read it and sign it, and also to fill out a participant background data form.

All focus groups and KIIs were voice recorded after obtaining participants' consent. No one objected to voice recording throughout this research. Voice recordings were transcribed verbatim into Arabic by an Arabic-speaking transcriber who works in a specialized media and translation company. The transcribed Arabic text was then fed into NVivo 10 software for qualitative analysis. This will be explained in detail below.

Instruments

Two instruments were developed for the data collection. The first was a list of questions for the semi-structured focus groups (see Appendix 2), and the second was the questions for KIIs (see Appendix 3). Both tools were developed in English and translated into Arabic for use in the community. The Arabic translation of questions for use in focus groups was done in colloquial (informal or spoken) Arabic, rather than classical Arabic *(al-fusha),* which is the literary Arabic language, which might entail the use of some terms which are not commonly used in every-day spoken language. This was done to ensure that the terminology used in questions is well understood by participants of all educational backgrounds. During the interviews and focus groups, the researcher further simplified and paraphrased the language depending on the background of the participant(s) to ensure full understanding of questions and the topics under discussion.

In addition to questions for data collection, some basic information about participants was collected such as age, highest qualification, occupation, civil status and previous experience with community work, if any. Information collected about focus group and interview participants are included in Appendices 2 and 3 at the end of their respective list of questions.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data from both focus groups and KIIs was done using analysis of qualitative data against a framework of codes developed based on the research questions. Transcribed focus groups and in-depth interviews were analyzed using NVivo 10 software, which is a qualitative data analysis software package. The analysis framework was developed in NVivo, and all data transcripts were fed into the software. As the content of focus group and interview transcripts was being analyzed by the researcher, coding of data was done within the framework as themes emerged, often necessitating creating sub-codes. That said, transcipts were, line-by-line, examined for codes and sub-codes, all within the software interface.

After the coding of all transcribed interviews and focus groups was done using the software, findings were then examined under all codes and sub-codes. These findings were used to develop the narrative, as well extract quotes, in the following sections under each of the themes and sub-themes, where relevant.

While the analysis framework was developed in English, coding and analysis were conducted on the research data in its original Arabic language, as transcribed and as fed into NVivo. The researcher, being a native Arabic speaker, translated the material into English while writing the results narrative, including participants' quotes.

Chapter 3 Results

This section lays out the results of the qualitative data analysis. The primary intention of the analysis was to answer the research questions while breaking them down to the themes that emerged under each of them. Results are presented in a manner that shows which came from focus groups and which came from interviews under each of the identified themes. This was done for complementarity and data validation purposes. In doing so, clear distinction is made between the focus groups and interviews when presenting findings. It is important to note that the two data collection tools were designed in a way that covered the same questions, with slightly different phrasing or order. In fact, the tools were designed to triangulate one another rather than answer completely different questions. The priority of this research is to find comprehensive answers to the questions that were asked to participants, which were more or less the same across the two tools. The following is a presentation of results under the respective themes which emerged.

Perception of Women's Empowerment

Question 1 for this research was: "How is women's empowerment within the context of development perceived by men?" This question helped draw participants' attention to the concept of empowerment. Key informants were directly asked about their views regarding men's perceptions of women's empowerment, whereas views of focus group discussions came at a later stage of the discussion under other questions discussing changes in their families and communities resulting from women's empowerment. It is worth noting here that the researcher deliberately avoided using the term "empowerment" *(tamkeen)* in focus groups, because of the negative connotations commonly associated with this term in communities, and substituted it with terms such as "development," "enlightenment," "improvement," among other Arabic synonyms.

When discussing the perception of women's empowerment, key informants revealed that there are two distinct groups of men: one group that does not understand the concept or implications of women's empowerment and another that welcomes it for its benefits. Details are in the following paragraphs.

According to the in-depth expert interviewees, the majority of men do not understand the concept of women's empowerment, nor the content of its interventions. Men lack the knowledge about women's development efforts, according to experts working in the field in Assiut. Women's empowerment could be perceived by men as irrelevant, or as a danger that challenges their status, power and identity in their families and communities. For example, a project coordinator at an international organization located in Assuit said, "When working with women, we used to hear from men, *'Are you here to teach them [women] to talk back to us?! To demand their rights?!'.*" Similarly, a community worker at a grassroots NGO in Manfalout, Assuit, said, "Some men do not realize the important role of women in their lives. They think if women are empowered they will be too strong for them. They will gain confidence. They believe a woman should not be in a better status than where she is."

According to one expert informant, men often draw their perceptions about women from the media, even when media messages are inconsistent with their community's reality, giving the example that men would hear news about the government paying special attention to women and their needs, which leads men to believe that women have obtained all their rights and should not ask for more, and that further empowerment would make women difficult to handle, at the time when women's reality in their communities are furthest from this. Focus group participants reiterated this as they discussed the attention women are enjoying through programs that target their communities. Men would refer to such political attention in their general discourse. One focus group participant in Balayza (a 33 year-old community leader) highlighted that women have become organized, referring to their

increased involvement in formal structures through employment in community-based organizations.

According to KIIs, the negative perception of women's empowerment extends beyond the concern about women obtaining additional freedoms. They explained that inadequate or incorrect knowledge about the content of women's programs makes men suspicious of the results of such interventions on their families and communities, and can also trigger aggressive behavior. One expert key informant from Cairo who trains on positive masculinity through the arts believed that such misconceptions are related to patriarchy being threatened. He said, "It is about patriarchy: a man fears for his ego from women's empowerment… at home, at work. He wants to remain the master as in the old days."

Misconceptions about women's empowerment can reach the extent of not using the term "empowerment" ("*tamkeen*") in any programmatic work, according to one of the expert interviewees, because of the sensitivities it would generate in communities, given its negative connotation and association with rebellion. Similarly, interventions related to the legal rights of women were particularly sensitive in communities and NGOs had to tread carefully when delivering them, according to an expert interview participant in Assiut. This was emphasized by more than one interview informant. An Assiut-based Area Supervisor in an international NGO said, "Some men who do not understand the concept [of empowerment] become afraid of women. The man becomes afraid of the [empowerment] work being done with women, because he lacks the knowledge about it." A gender and masculinity consultant in Cairo said, "I have just heard this from a university professor: that we cannot use this term [empowerment] in our work because this will create a problem."

According to several key informants, immediate reactions of men in communities would often be on the resistant side, because they mistakenly believe such interventions would "strengthen" women and destroy "family structures". The director of a local NGO in

Assiut said, "When we started working on women's legal rights, a lot of men used to tell us we were making women too strong for them to handle and that we disrupted family structures."

There were diverse forms of resistance by men in response to women's empowerment efforts, according to in-depth interviewees. For example, husbands would not allow their wives to go out of the house to participate in training activities in their local community NGOs. Some would even go to the NGO to bring their wives home after learning she had joined community activities. Surprisingly, some men would refuse the participation of their wives, but encourage the engagement of the daughter in women's activities. A project coordinator in an international organization in Assiut said, "Men often refused our work with women. They would even interrupt class to take their wives and bring them home!"

Key informants also noted that such resistance could only be resolved by more in-depth engagement of men to raise their awareness about the content of such programs and about their importance for women and for the family in general. For example, the director of a local NGO in Assiut said, "We started to hold awareness raising meetings with men to make them understand that women knowing their rights should not create family problems."

According to the key informants, there are other groups of men who embrace women's development and empowerment as an opportunity to benefit their family and children by actively participating in family matters related to children, budget, income generation and decision-making. Generally, communities are increasingly accepting that women's capacities, including knowledge, skills and practices, have developed so that they can assume more active roles in their communities, compared to previous times. Nowadays, women play more significant social roles in their families, and men learn to accept this because they see the benefits to the whole family. Interestingly, as soon the man realizes that the woman is capable of making money and generating income for the family, resistance

disappears, according to several expert interviewees. Only then, women are allowed to go out on her own and engage in activities, forbidden otherwise.

This view was expressed by several informants in interviews. For example, a Cairo-based gender and masculinity consultant said, "Once men feel the economic benefits of women's empowerment, that they gain money and make profits, they forget all about their patriarchal ideas related to women's working and going out, etc. It is the results that matter; they change men's perceptions." Another key informant, a field coordinator in an international organization in Assiut, said, "There were men who welcomed our [women's] programs, thinking they were good…so that their wives would have an independent personality and a better role." This was complemented by a community promoter in a grassroots NGO in Manfalout, Assiut, who said, "Some men I worked with see women's empowerment as a success for them as men. An empowered woman would benefit him and his children, she actively participates with him in their life together, be it their marriage or publicly."

Views of focus group participants were to a great extent aligned with those expressed in interviews. While the term *empowerment* was not explicitly mentioned, reference was made to it indirectly during the course of discussions.

The issue of resistance came up as focus group participants shared about women's involvement in community programs. Such resistance was attributed to lack of clarity as to the content of interventions targeting women and girls, often leading to misperceptions. A 33-year old professional and focus group participant in Balayza said, "Men would object [to women's participation]. Activities at the NGO were wrongly perceived by men. Often men would come to see for themselves what was happening during women's activities." In their discourse, focus group participants referred to resistance as attributed to *other* men; however, they also often referred to themselves and how they thought several years before. For some, it

was an expression of a personal struggle, particularly in relation to debatable issues, one example of which is discussed in the following paragraph.

The biggest obstacle for some communities was to allow women to go out of the house in the first place, since it is not always acceptable for women to spend time outside the house even if for short periods. This was expressed and much debated across focus groups, both older and younger. The view of one participant summarized this as he observed within his community that men, including himself, have to confront traditions which do not welcome women in the public space. An 18-year old focus group participant in Balayza said, "Men were upset because of customs and traditions which dictate that women should not go out of the house." It was observed that conservative views were more commonly expressed by participants of relatively lower educational backgrounds. For example, a 36-year old technician and focus group participant in Balyza believed that men have wrong negative images about women's interventions, whereas a 33-year old lawyer in the same group believed that, on the contrary, not only men's perceptions were positive, but also men's level of participation in community activities.

Other groups of men attributed restriction of women's movement to the level of education of her husband or father. This was articulated by a 31-year old focus group participant in Ezzeya as follows:

[Reactions] differ from one person to the other. An educated man would be happy that his wife is taken care of [by community organizations], while another man who is uneducated would argue with her because she cannot leave her house, regardless of how useful this [program] might be.

Contrary to the above view, a 38-year old participant in the same group believed that men's education is not a determinant. He said, "It is not about being educated or not. I believe it depends on the circumstances inside the house at that particular time [when the wife would

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be away]. She has to manage her own responsibilities and time. The man would understand this." A 43-year old participant in the same group complemented this view saying, "The most important thing for a man is his comfort. I am not ready to take the responsibility of the house [and children] while my wife goes to attend a seminar [at the NGO]."

Another example was wearing clothes and make-up that showed some "city" influence described as "exaggerated" and criticized by men, being foreign to rural community culture. This is related to the fact that in conservative communities, change of traditional socially approved dress code is perceived as a sign of development and often courage. A 48-year old focus group participant in Ezzeya raised this issue, saying, "In terms of clothing, [girls] imitate city girls and wear make-up. Make-up has become exaggerated, often more than in the city!" His opinion was not particularly welcomed by a 38-year old participant in the same group who noted, "Development is good. But it is a double-edged sword, this is my personal opinion, I mean. Exaggeration can cause problems if the girls imitates [others] blindly. She could be perceived in a wrong manner."

On a more positive note, some participants highlighted a more active role which women in their communities were playing. For example, a 42-year old focus group participant in Dekran said, "Most women nowadays know what their obligations and rights are, and what they have to do [in their communities]. At home, women have a role and an opinion. They participate in decision making."

The above paragraphs demonstrated general perceptions about women's empowerment as described by men in this research. The following section will provide more specific views pertaining to key issues e.g. marital relationships, raising children, economic empowerment, among others.

Perceived Influence of Women's Empowerment on the Lives of Men and Communities

This section presents findings under Questions 3 and 4, which read: "What is the impact of women's empowerment (social, educational and economic) on men and households?", and "What is the impact of women's empowerment on the community as perceived by men?" respectively. The two questions were asked in a general manner; however, men's responses tended to focus on perceived positive influence. Negative influence of women's empowerment, whenever mentioned, took the form of resistance by men towards community interventions, and was discussed earlier. The fact that men generally welcomed women's programs is significant in itself and, in fact, puts the rest of the findings of this section into perspective. The findings regarding the impact of women's empowerment cover several areas which could be categorized as follows: contribution to family, children, and household; contribution to income-generation; promotion of female education; avoidance of harmful practices; and participation in public life. Details of each category are provided in the following paragraphs.

Family, Children, and Household. Focus group participants exhibited high level of awareness of women's influence within their families. They believed that prior to empowerment programs, women used to only stay at home without much interest beyond their households. Nowadays, according to focus group participants, with women's involvement in awareness raising activities, men believe that their knowledge has benefited their families. This was observed by men as women could better look after their children's health and education. Other observations included improved knowledge and behavior showing higher levels of general hygiene and cleanliness at home, as well as better communication skills and dialogue within the family, which meant higher participation in decision-making at home. Several focus groups participants emphasized the above. For example, a 33-year old community leader and focus group participant in Balayza said,

"Women [learned to] raise their children better and [to] educate them better," while a 22-year old focus group participant in Dekran said, "An enlightened woman would know how to educate her children right." An 18-year old technical school student and focus group participant in Ezzeya said, "When women learn about raising children, this is always a good thing, and they would outsmart men [in raising children]."

Women's level of participation in decision-making in the family was often debatable, often within the same focus group. For example, a 28-year old married focus group participant in Balayza said, "[A] woman can participate [in decision-making], but should not take the final decision." An 18-year old single participant in his group disagreed and said, "It is not wrong [for women to participate in decision-making]. She is your life partner!" Unlike what would be expected, that men of higher educational level exhibit more gender equitable views, the second participant held a technical institute diploma, whereas the first one was a university graduate. Older focus group participants in Dekran were of the view that the determinant of the level of women's participation in decision-making should be their level of education. In other words, women can have an opinion at home, as long as they are educated.

Key informant interview participants confirmed the previous views and reiterated the fact that married men usually have better dialogues with their wives, who "have an opinion" after being exposed to development and empowerment interventions. Empowered women, according to interviewees, would voice their opinion and express their needs, using the skills they acquired. Besides, they could better understand their husbands' needs, and empathize and communicate with them and this generally improves marital relationships in communities. More than one key informant articulated this view. An area supervisor of an international NGO in Assiut said, "Men like it when their wife's behavior at home improves, when she looks after her children, when she looks after the cleanliness of the house, when she talks respectfully with him. He notices that she changed to the better." The director of a local

NGO in Assiut noted, "A lot of men feel the difference. There was no dialogue [between husbands and wives] in the past, they couldn't talk with one another."

The impact of women's development and empowerment on raising their children was equally noticeable to focus group and interview participants. Knowledge acquired through parental education programs was reflected in mothers being able to better communicate with their children, understand their developmental needs, answer their questions, and ultimately empower them. The director of a national NGO in Assiut supported this view saying, "Women nowadays speak differently, and their children speak differently. The way they raise them up, it is positive discipline. All these are results [of women's empowerment]." The gender program manager of an international organization noted, "Empowered women empower their children as well."

Income-generation. The economic impact of women's empowerment interventions was highlighted by all participants as a significant indicator of concrete change in families and in communities at large. Economic empowerment programs that started in communities helped women to generate income by learning skills such as sewing or producing liquid detergent, or by receiving training courses that would qualify them to work in certain service sectors. Some women were capable of starting small scale businesses by loans provided through economic empowerment programs. Examples of income generating projects include raising poultry or livestock, opening a grocery store, or a pickling or a catering business. Additionally, financial saving groups such village savings and loan associations (VSLA) were established, where women formed self-run common saving groups from which they could take loans.

Focus group participants observed that the small scale home businesses for women made significant changes to the economies of families while being culturally sensitive by allowing women to generate income by working from home. Participants expressed this as

follows in different ways. An 18-year old focus group participant in Ezzeya said, "Women learned about sewing and raising poultry in order to make a living." A 30-year old focus group participant in Dekran said, "Women's income increased [because of developmental interventions]. They can manage small projects such as detergent making."

Interview informants reiterated what was mentioned by focus group participants in relation to women's economic empowerment and how men reacted to increased income of women. For example, the executive director of national NGO in Assiut said, "Men certainly feel the economic impact on their families… the income that was generated for the family," while a community promoter in Manfalout, Assiut said, "[Men noticed that] women started to be economically empowered. They learned skills and started to work and generate income."

According to key informants, it is common that women get supported by their husbands after their projects prove to be profitable, which meant expansion of the business and gaining the recognition of their community. The executive director of a national NGO in Assiut said, "There are success stories of women who started small businesses that went well and expanded. In some cases, their husbands participated with them."

Along those same lines, the same informants emphasized that the financial success of women's projects also gave credibility to other women's empowerment interventions. For example, men who saw the small business successes were then encouraged to allow their wives and daughters to join community activities.

Female Education. Focus group participants and key informants described positive impacts of women's empowerment programs on enhancing commitment to education for girls and women. Such impact was associated with women's increased education by joining illiteracy classes for those who have dropped out of schools at a young age. Mothers with improved literacy skills develop interest in education, according to research participants, and

would support the education of their children, particularly girls, and monitor their children's educational progress.

Older men in focus groups acknowledged that more girls are excelling in education in their communities, in terms of school performance and of completing their education beyond basic school certificates. It is worth noting here that older focus groups included fathers of girls enrolled in schools or universities, hence their first hand experiences with their wives and girls. There was general consensus about this matter within and across focus groups. A 66-year old focus group participant in Dekran said, "We used to educate boys but not girls. Nowadays we educate girls even more than boys," also supported by a 53-year old participant in the same group who said, "In our village nowadays girls excel. They continue their education through secondary school and beyond, unlike boys." In agreement, a 48-year old focus group participant in Ezzeya noted, "Literacy programs developed women. These are very good programs and in high demand. How else can a child succeed in education without having someone to guide at home."

Men across focus groups referred to improved levels of education among women as a change in the "culture" because, to continue their education, young women have to have freedom of mobility beyond their villages and sometimes cities, which is not generally acceptable in communities. Now that young women are allowed more mobility, they can pursue their education even if far from their home towns.

Interview informants also confirmed the important role that women can play in their children's' education. A community promoter in Manfalout said, "Women now are more interested in their children's education and follow on their performance at school. This never happened in our village before."

Avoiding Harmful Practices. Not only are women who participate in development programs involved in promoting beneficial practices such as female education, according to

participants they are also more involved in preventing harmful practices. Practices such as female genital cutting and early or forced marriage were raised in almost all focus groups and interviews as being significantly decreased due to women's increased awareness through community interventions. The direct benefit of such programs would be seen as mothers decide not to let their daughters undergo genital cutting or marry them before the age of 18 years. As a 42-year old focus group participant in Dekran noted, "There is increased awareness now among mothers and housewives on early marriage [using] lessons learned [on the matter] across families [in the community]."

Men also referred to younger women who were exposed to development programs, primarily their daughters, saying that they manifested signs of empowerment which included giving priority to their secondary and university education, as well as deciding when and who to marry. This not only influenced mothers, but also daughters who heard about the risks of early marriage through awareness programs. Men in groups could enumerate cases they knew first hand in relation to early marriage. A 30-year old focus group participant in Dekran said, "After hearing about the risks of early marriage, a lot of the girls [in the village] broke up their engagements." Another 18-year old participant in the same focus group said, "My cousin has been to those seminars [on early marriage] and after she leaned and understood [the risks] she broke up! She did! And she continued her education."

Participation in Public Life. There was general consensus among focus group and interview participants that communities have witnessed a change in the awareness level of women in terms of increased knowledge of their rights, more independent mobility in the community, increased access to public services, and political participation. Several focus group participants emphasized increased women's participation in public life. A 48-year old focus group participant in Ezzeya said, "Women's awareness is fundamental. [It is about] learning about [women's] community life and what's happening in life in general," while a

30-year old focus group participant in Dekran noted, "Nowadays women are more ambitious. They are capable of benefiting their societies or their workplace."

Expert interview informants also validated these views and referred to more active participation in public life. A community promoter in Manfalout said, "Women nowadays participate in institutions. They have a role in elections. Now they participate. They did not in the past," a view that was also confirmed by the gender program manager of an international organization who said, "[Empowered women] go beyond their own lives and want to change structures as well, so you would see them taking part in political activities."

Men's Awareness of Programs Targeting Women

In the previous sections, men's perceptions of empowerment were explored as well as how this empowerment positively enhanced the everyday lives of women and communities. This section will try to establish another link between women's development and the types of programs that targeted them as discussed by the research informants.

Study Question 2 had two sub-questions: "Which women's empowerment programs are men familiar with? What is their level of involvement in such programs?" The two sub-questions tried to explore the link between women's empowerment programs and men's involvement in its simplest form, which is being aware of the existence of such programs, as well as whether or not men have had the chance to participate. This section presents findings related to the awareness component, while the subsequent one discusses involvement.

The men who participated in focus groups were well aware of the types of interventions targeting women in their communities. The most frequently mentioned examples were interventions addressing harmful traditional practices involving girls and women, including female genital cutting, early marriage, sexual harassment and deprivation of inheritance. For example, a 32-year old focus group participant in Dekran stated, "There

were a lot of programs for women and girls such as addressing violence against women and girls and early marriage."

Men were also aware of the economic empowerment programs that targeted women in their communities. These programs were particularly praised for their benefit. Programs included saving groups as well as training courses that were on sewing, raising poultry, hairdressing, detergent making, etc. Participants described women's involvements in several ways. A 43-year old NGO employer and focus group participant in Gahdam said, "Among the projects we had a loans project for rural women. These would cover a sewing machine, skills training courses," while a 53-year old focus group participant in Dekran noted, "We heard about saving groups where women learn to save a small capital to start a small project." In Gahdam, a 32-year old civil servant and focus group participant said, "[Women were trained on] manual spinning and weaving. They worked in workshops and produced a variety of hand-made products," whereas in Dekran, a 30-year old focus group participant said, "We had project for packaging [of food products] at the [community] NGO. It increased women's income. A woman can continue her education with this money if she wishes."

Focus group participants also mentioned programs with content related to public health and personal hygiene that targeted women in their communities. Additionally, they mentioned literacy programs, and pre-marital courses for young men and women and young couples about marriage and relationships. For example, a 36-year old technician and focus group participant in Balayza said, "There were programs parental education targeting women in our NGO. These [programs] provided [women] with information they needed", and a 19-year old student and focus group participant in Ezzeya noted, "Women learned about how to raise their children. These [programs] were very useful."

Generally, men were aware of efforts exerted by women staff or volunteers in NGOs in the delivery of community work. The men shared about community workers who conduct

household visits to reach out to housewives and raise their awareness about issues of concern such as family and household hygiene, and the risks of female genital cutting and early marriage, among others. According to participants, this level of awareness of activities targeting women resulted from what they would hear from their wives, or from having witnessed such interventions without actually participating. The following paragraphs will discuss a higher level of involvement, where men took part in some of the developmental interventions in their communities.

Men's Participation in Community Interventions

Research sub-question 2 addressed the involvement of men in community interventions. The results of this sub-question are presented in this section. Men of different ages explained the types of programs in which they participated, if any, and the benefits they gained in so doing.

Despite the emphasis on women in most interventions in the four villages represented in this research, according to focus group participants there were some projects that directly targeted male beneficiaries. Focus group participants spoke about the programs in which they participated. The nature of engagement varied depending on age and location.

Some interventions had family activities in which women participants had to bring their spouses, and these were unprecedented community events. Men would then be seen participating in activities that in the past were restricted to women, according to in-depth interview participants. Other interventions with a family perspective included medical outreach visits for family planning and for testing for diabetes and viral hepatitis C, which men appreciated. A 47-year old focus group participant in Dekran testified, "On [viral] hepatitis C, the NGO here used to bring medical professors from the University [of Assiut] to hold [awareness] seminars." His view was seconded by a 53-year old farmer in the same group who said, "We have [attended] free [voluntary] testing outreach [for viral hepatitis C]

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run by the Ministry of Health. We have a lot of deaths here [in the village] and treatment is unaffordable. Also, diagnosis is usually very costly and no one can afford it."

Men also took part in awareness raising sessions about female genital cutting and early marriage as a 22-year old university student and focus group participant in Gahdam noted, "There was a campaign on female circumcision. We learned about its risks. I participated in seminars about it."

Younger men participated in youth-led educational programs that targeted both young men and women and focused mostly on sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence including sexual harassment, and life skills. Some of the examples of life skills programs mentioned by focus group participants included negotiation skills and resisting peer pressure in the context of smoking and substance use. A 22-year old university student and focus group participant in Gahdam said, "I attended seminars on sexual harassment. Young men should treat girls on the streets as if they were their sisters. If you harass a girl, someone else might harass your sister some other day." On a different note, a 19-year old participant in the same group said, "Addiction is so widespread here [in the community]. I attended seminars about it and I am against it."

Participants also mentioned that they participated in parental education programs, which included some for parents of children with disabilities. A 33-year old community leader and focus group participant in Balayza said, "Husbands and their wives participated in the early childhood program, together, in parallel", and a 42-year old focus group participant in Dekran noted, "We participated in programs on inclusion of children with disability. People used to lock them at home. We learned about their rights and people started to seek services for their children."

Participants with experience in community work were of the view that interventions that targeted the whole family were more successful in attracting men, particularly those with

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income-generating opportunities. In other words, when men could feel the benefit for their families they would support any given program, be it for them or for their wives or daughters. This was particularly noted in the older men (above 30 years of age) focus groups whose participants often had an analytical overview, given their age and experience, of how men in their communities approached community programs, particularly of a gendered nature. A 58-year old focus group participant in Gahdam said, "What attracts men the most to NGOs are the *Productive Families* projects supporting family-run home-based businesses," and was supported by another 47-year old NGO employer in the same group who added, "Men could see their families developing and their income increasing."

In addition to the above topics, expert informants mentioned that there were interventions with an economic empowerment component that targeted men as primary beneficiaries, rather than targeting them alongside women. In other words, communities represented in this research have been targeted with some vocational training programs that specifically targeted men. All focus groups participants were aware of or took part in vocational training programs such as mobile phone and satellite dish maintenance, carpentry and plumbing. A 19-year old focus group participant in Gahdam said, "There are training courses on car maintenance, refrigeration and air conditioning, mobile maintenance, carpentry and plumbing," which was confirmed by a 70-year old focus group participant in Balayza who noted, "Youths were trained on maintenance of electrical appliances, plumbing, mobile maintenance. They started their own businesses afterwards. Most of them moved to Cairo to work there."

In addition to taking part in programs which primarily targeted women, participants shared that there were programs that purposefully targeted men. For example, focus group participants took part in programs targeting men with general awareness raising content about various issues such as reproductive and sexual health education, seminars about the risks of

early marriage, which primarily targeted male youths, harms and risks of female genital cutting, awareness against sexual harassment and more general content such as personal life skills (listening, negotiation skills, expression of opinion, etc.). Several testimonies by younger focus group participants demonstrated this. A 23-year old student and focus group participant in Dekran said, "We participated in a comprehensive [youth] program with content on early marriage, female circumcision and first aid. I also attended a workshop on reproductive health in Assiut," and was supported by a 19-year old focus group participant in Gahdam who said, "Now [after having learnt about their risks], I disagree, I am not convinced with female circumcision or early marriage [below 18 years of age]. I myself got married at 16."

Focus group participants below 30 years of age shared that they had benefited from "youth-friendly clinics" where they received pre-marital counselling that helped them better understand issues related to sexual and reproductive health and how to look for a life partner, which they found to be helpful. Testimonies showed general agreement, if not consensus, around this point within and across groups. A 23-year old student and focus group participant in Dekran said, "I benefited from the youth-friendly clinics program. We had one [established] here at the healthcare unit, for awareness raising and advice for future couples." An 18-year old focus group participant in Balayza said, "[I learned about] the importance of engagement period [prior to marriage] so that one can get to know one's fiancée, her personality… [so that we] get used to one another," and he was supported by an 18-year old student in his group, who said, "[I participated in] a program about choosing one's life partner, what to look for, and handling [possible] conflicts or [even] breaking up with respect."

Focus group participants reported that they also took part in health-related programs that specifically targeted men using topics of interest to men, particularly young men, such as

smoking awareness and substance use, as well as benefiting from health outreach and testing programs related to viral hepatitis C and diabetes. Other programs mentioned included initiatives such as first aid and access to youth-friendly healthcare clinics. A 30-year old focus group participant in Dekran said, "We had activities [at our NGO] on gender and social responsibility [where] we organized [community] campaigns," and in the same group a 20-year old participant said, "I used to attend the training [events] or organize them myself. For example, [I organized] a theatre activity on early marriage." In Balayza, a 33-year old community leader and focus group participant stated, "We organized parallel activities for men and women, and seminars for couples – both husbands and wives, so men would participate."

In-depth interview informants complemented what was mentioned in focus groups. According to them, some programs targeted men specifically such as awareness raising about the importance of girls' education, effective parenting, and the importance of nutrition for children in order to ensure that such interventions are not met with resistance by men in communities. This was articulated by several informants. For example, the director of a local NGO in Assiut said, "We started what we called the parental awareness [program], and most of the attendees were men, in order to talk about education and its benefits, the importance of good nutrition for children, etc. All of this [work] targeted men not women, because men usually have the upper hand in decisions and they can be very stubborn."

In relation to female genital cutting, according to key informants, men were targeted after they demonstrated resistance to interventions delivered to women. Their engagement increased after the sessions helped them associate their own sexual life challenges with the fact that their wives had undergone genital cutting themselves. This increased awareness about the implications of female genital cutting and helped men accept and understand their wives' sexuality on the one hand, and on the other hand it gave them stronger grounds to

protect younger women, including their daughters, against the practice. The director of a local NGO in Assiut said, "In female circumcision, men were skeptical in the beginning, but when they started to understand the harms [of the practice] and link them with problems they were facing [in sexual relationships], they became more enthusiastic to address the issue." The gender program manager of an international organization explained saying, "Men probably know about [genital cutting] but naturally they want to close their eyes on it. But when they hear about it, really clearly, they [become] passionate about supporting women to abandon this practice."

Men were the primary target beneficiaries in some of the gender-based violence interventions, particularly those aimed at women's safety in the public sphere. Tuk-tuk and microbus drivers in underprivileged communities were targeted in such projects. The objectives of such programs were to change their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to gender. The efforts were reported to be successful by interviewees from organizations that conducted such programs.

According to interviewees from NGOs working in Assiut communities, while donors require that their projects target women beneficiaries, NGOs would ensure that men's engagement became an integral part of their field interventions to minimize community resistance and to ensure more sustainable results. Interestingly, this was expressed by a field supervisor in an international organization in Assiut, whose work was field-based, rather than directly dealing with donors, who said, "The donor always targets women and it is us who try to engage men because empowerment will never be sustained unless there is a positive sector to be a role model for other men to follow."

Types of Interventions Needed by Men

This section presents the results of asking focus group and interview participants about the types of interventions that men would like to see in their communities under

Question 5 which read: "What do men need in the context of gender and development? a) What knowledge do men need to acquire? (psychological, economical, health-related, professional, etc.); b) Which attitudes and behaviors do they need to change?". In answering Question 5, men expressed their views as perceived by them in light of their age group, social and economic challenges, but most importantly according to their personal needs.

Economic and Vocational Training Programs. Economic and income generating projects were the first to arise as answers to the question of what types of programs would men find useful and attractive if delivered in their communities. Almost all focus group participants, older and younger, expressed their concerns about the economic situation in Egypt in general, and in their villages in particular, which directly affected families' incomes and financial stability. The same was reiterated by interview informants, who noted that for economic reasons, migration for work among men in Upper Egypt, including Assiut, to Cairo, Alexandria and to other Arab countries is very common. According to focus group and interview participants, such opportunities to travel for work are decreasing compared to the past. Decreased internal and external migration opportunities eventually led to higher perceived rates of unemployment among men of working age. Financial hardship was also linked to the rise in the age of marriage among youths, particularly in relation to having to secure enough savings for dowries, apartments, and furniture.

Participants articulately expressed the challenging economic situation, placing economic empowerment as a priority for men. For example, a 42-year old focus group participant in Dekran said, "Our town is under [economic] pressure. Its resources are limited," and was supported by a 47-year old social worker in the same group, who noted, "Prices have tripled and incomes stayed the same. There is no balance." A 70-year old focus group participant in Balayza said, "All youths are suffering [economically] and cannot find a job opportunity." In Ezzeya, a 48-year old farmer and focus group participant explained,

"There is social pressure on young men [getting married]. When a young man proposes to a girl's family, first thing they discuss cost of how much gold he will buy her."

Knowledge and skills related to small scale project management, budgeting and budget/loan management and marketing were among the suggested topics for training programs. It was suggested to build on existing interests and skills among youths before starting vocational training activities, as expressed by focus group participants. A 70-year old focus group participant in Balayza said, "We should start by finding out what hobbies or skills youths already have. We need to understand what youths want to learn and plan to develop them accordingly," which was explained by a 55-year old civil servant and focus group participant in Dekran who suggested, "Simple projects such as handicrafts are worthwhile, but these face the challenge of marketing the products, unless there is a NGO or a cooperation to market and sell products."

Participants also suggested projects that were relevant to the rural nature of communities, or those that can be run by families at home such as growing certain crops or livestock for food, and new techniques for recycling organic animal waste. Such views were expressed in older men focus groups, arguably given their age and life experience. For example, a 42-year old focus group participant in Dekran said, "Raising livestock is an example [of projects]. It is not difficult to start [one]. Also poultry farms are not difficult although they require some training [courses]." This was further elaborated by a 38-year old focus group participant in Ezzeya who suggested, "Project ideas include loans to raise sheep with EGP 5,000 as a start. But this requires close monitoring by the NGO until the project starts to pay off (Manfalout, Assiut)." Along the same lines, a 66-year old focus group participant in Dekran said, "Agriculture training courses [are needed]. We need specialized trainers to develop our own crops. We have here wheat and clover. We could also learn about greenhouse agriculture for vegetables."

While older men contributed sustainable ideas for younger men's livelihoods and for their communities, participants of younger age, particularly those below 30 years of age, demanded programs that would provide rather short-term solutions. It was noticeable that students were more inclined to raise concerns about unemployment after their graduation, at the time when technicians and skilled workers emphasized the importance of learning skills through vocational programs. They suggested vocational training programs that have a financial support component such as a loan, because otherwise young men are not able to start a business in the absence of financial capital, or even capital in the form of a toolbox. The vocational field that was suggested the most was construction work and its subsidiary industries such as concrete mixing, carpentry, electricity, plumbing, painting and tile installation. Participants observed that these vocations were particularly booming in Abu Tig and Manfalout. Other suggested fields of work included: maintenance of mobile phones, personal computers and satellite dishes; car mechanics and maintenance; bicycle maintenance; refrigeration equipment maintenance; computer programming; sewing; hair dressing; photography; driving; and general language and computer skills to increase the employability of youth.

A 36-year old technician and focus group participant in Balayza said, "Some of the needed skills [for training] include carpentry, electrical works, plumbing, maintenance of electrical appliances." This was complemented by a 31-year old focus group participant in Ezzeya saying, "Small-scale projects [are needed by youths]. NGOs could give loans for this purpose which youths can return in installments with small interest. This can help young men start businesses."

Matchmaking between youths and employers or companies was mentioned as a potential avenue to support youth employment in communities where the research was conducted. Views in this regard were expressed across all communities where focus groups

were conducted. For example, a 38-year old focus group participant in Ezzeya said, "Those [youths] who learn carpentry or electrical works once they finish [vocational training] they either find an opportunity in labor market or they do not. Often they don't find decent jobs except if we arrange for places to employ them." A 36-year old technician and focus group participant in Balayza suggested, "Technical and vocational training in factories [can be organized] by a company or a businessman. Agreements could be made with private sector companies, like the ones in the industrial city. With such cooperation, more opportunities can be created." This was further elaborated by a 58-year old civil servant and focus group participant in Gahdam, who said, "Vocational training is important, and networking with big companies as well. For the age group of 20-45 years, we need training courses on occupational health and safety for such projects."

The importance of youth employment was emphasized in in-depth interviews, particularly by a government official from the Ministry of Youth and Sports who noted that employment is a "fundamental axis" for the Ministry's work, besides awareness raising and empowerment. The official said that the Ministry work is based on the belief that linking employers with youths would mean not only solving financial problems in families but also other social and gender-related issues such as increased crime and sexual harassment, since, based on their assumption, these issues are associated with high rates of unemployment.

As emphasized by a field coordinator of an international organization in Assiut, "We cannot deny that the economic aspect is the main concern of everyone now." This statement was agreed and further elaborated upon by the Ministry of Youth project manager, who said, "One fundamental axis we work on besides awareness raising and empowerment is employment. Unemployment rates are high. If more people find jobs, we will solve a lot of other problems."

Interview participants demanded that activities targeting men would take this into consideration either by providing relevant income-generating interventions, or by including an economic entry point to any other programs such as those related to gender and life skills for example, which is how the area supervisor of an international organization in Assiut described it saying, "A man's mind goes towards where to get money for the house… towards economic projects. That's it. Men do not care much about participating in other things. If you want men to participate in developmental activities, you have to find them an economic entry point."

Public Health-related Programs. Health was mentioned in focus groups as one of the areas that is equally important for both older and younger men. Some of the health issues of concern that were mentioned include smoking and substance use and addiction which also covers addiction to pornography. Suggestions often linked physical education with rehabilitation from substance use. An 18-year old student and focus group participant in Ezzeya said, "Even after cigarette prices were raised, young men continue to smoke. Parents should not give their children money to buy cigarettes. We should raise sellers' awareness so that they don't sell to under 18." Also in Ezzeya, a 31-year old focus group participant noted, "First thing is to raise awareness on the risks and harms of addiction and reproductive health," further emphasized by a 19-year old student and focus group participant in Gahdam who said, "The most important thing is to hold activities on addiction." In Dekran, a 23-year old student and focus group participant said, "If we have sports activities, this should address the substance use problem we have here. Youths will come to play and forget about drugs."

Reproductive health education was mentioned as well as a need among men. For example, a 58-year old civil servant and focus group participant in Gahdam said, "It is necessary that the community NGO organizes meetings for youths about reproductive health and substance use to stay away from them." In the same village, an 18-year old student and

focus group participant stated, "[We need] courses on reproductive health."

Older men expressed interest in public health issues such as viral hepatitis C. They welcomed interventions related to its diagnosis and treatment particularly that being free of viral hepatitis C is a prerequisite to obtaining a job contract outside of Egypt. As expressed by a 42-year focus group participant in Dekran, "Men welcome hepatitis C testing outreach campaigns. Health issues concern both men and women."

In-depth interview participants also noted that health is an appropriate entry point for interventions targeting males in communities. Programs related to sexual and reproductive health and family planning have been primarily targeting women, while men remained "unaware" of them, according in-depth interview participants. Sex education, which goes beyond sexual and reproductive health, was emphasized as needed among men, particularly youths, in order to correct their misconceptions about sex. One of the masculinity experts interviewed said that sex is "distorted" in the minds of youths because of their poor or incorrect knowledge about it, and that even after their attitudes and behaviors improve, their knowledge about sex and sexuality is the most challenging to change and needs to be frequently revisited. More generally, interviewees also mentioned the importance and need for public health related programs for men.

A trainer on positive masculinity through arts in Cairo said, "Sex education [is needed]. It is very much distorted among men," while a community promoter in Manfalout elaborated, "Women have learned about reproductive health and family planning, but men still do not know [much about them]. They are unaware of reproductive health or sexually transmitted diseases." On different issues, the director of a national NGO in Assiut stated, "Men-specific issues are smoking, substance use and addiction. Men are concerned about them."

Life Skills and Psychological Support Interventions. When asked about the content

of programs that would benefit men and youths in terms of developing their attitudes and behaviors in general, both focus group and interview participants mentioned several components that can collectively be characterized as life skills or psychoeducational interventions.

In terms of life skills, research participants suggested that youths in communities need to learn about tolerance and acceptance of the other so that their behavior is improved among their peers. This was raised against the background of communities witnessing increased violent behavior in the public sphere, necessitating more knowledge and training on negotiations and decision-making skills among young men. It is worth noting here that views criticizing youths' behaviors were more commonly expressed by older participants. For example, a 47-year old focus group participant in Gahdam said, "Youths here need [programs for the] development of life skills and psychological awareness such as communications and negotiation skills, self-expression and the like," also confirmed by an area supervisor of an international organization in Assiut, who explained, "Men need to learn how to [develop skills to] deal with [conflict], whether at home or outside."

Psychosocial support was raised among adult men as a means of support for men in the midst of the stresses they encounter, such as financial pressures, work stress, and family-related pressure. Adult men focus groups believed that interventions of psychosocial support nature will provide the space for men to "vent" their pressure instead of having it displaced in the form of aggressive or addictive behaviors. This view was supported by the experts interviewed. They said that men rarely have the freedom, nor the safe spaces, for self-expression of their personal feelings or pain. While described by one key informant as "challenging," creating such space for men and youths was highlighted as a fundamental component to help them re-discover themselves as "whole" human beings and examine their thoughts and feelings, hence their attitudes and practices, in new light.

An 18-year old technical school student and focus group participant in Ezzeya expressed his view saying, "People are [naturally] good-mannered. Shouting and cursing could be because of financial pressures, but there are also personal reasons behind this. He was supported by 19-year old student in the same group who said, "Men should learn to separate between home and work, between problems at home which do not have to do with problems at work. They often cannot help it sometimes, you know."

Interview informants also confirmed the need for men to develop such life skills, particularly through safe spaces in communities. For example, the gender program manager of an international organization said, "We need to open up safe spaces for men, to learn about 'who am I?'"

Children and Family. Some of the needs expressed by focus groups and interview participants were related to knowledge about family and children issues. Raising children was mentioned by men to be one critical area that needs attention. Participants acknowledged that traditionally men tend to focus on being the breadwinners for their families without paying much attention to their children; however, they believed this should change. Some participants shared about their own experiences and how they had benefited from parental education programs in their communities. They believed that there is a need for more of such interventions, admitting that men never learn how to interact with children, unlike women who normally receive a lot of training on the issue within the family and through community programs.

Also, focus group participants below 30 years of age noted the relational aspect between the father and his children, and how it provides protection to male children against negative peer pressure. Across all focus groups, there was general acknowledgement of the importance of the role of fathers in raising their children. Besides, some men, particularly older men, expressed their need for more knowledge about legal matters, including family

laws (personal affairs code) and child law. The need for parental education by men was articulated by a 19-year old student and focus group participant in Ezzeya who said, "Fathers should be guided as to how to deal with their children, what to tell them and how to discipline them. Having a financial crisis at home does not mean a father should shout at his children!"

For example, while focus group participants demonstrated adequate knowledge about the harms of early marriage, they believed that there is still need to hear more about the issue. At the same time, all groups flagged the importance of providing more knowledge about what marriage constitutes because young couples do not seem to be prepared for marriage, according to participants. By marriage, they referred to marital relationship, including sex, communication and negotiation skills between couples, household responsibilities, raising children, etc.

Pre-marital education and counselling were mentioned by participants as a need among unmarried youths. According to participants, communities witness an increasing level of marital problems between couples, often leading to divorce, which were attributed to lack of preparedness among youths before getting married. Besides, exaggerated financial requirements of marriages were criticized as being a hindrance to young men and women getting married. A 48-year old farmer and focus group participant in Ezzeya said, "There is a need for [premarital] seminars for engaged couples to educate them on their new life and what it will be like." This was confirmed in the same group by a 31-year old participant who stated, "There is two important aspects: choose a life partner is one thing, and how to live together after marriage is another. The engagement period is about getting to know one another."

Gender equality was discussed in the broader family context. Focus group participants were of the view that there is a need to teach fathers how this translates in their everyday lives; e.g., when raising children so that they do not discriminate between their male and

female children. In that same context, violence against women, particularly physical beating, was raised by adult men focus groups as an issue to be addressed by better knowledge of gender equality. This view was supported by the expert interviews. An area supervisor of an international organization in Assiut said, "We need to talk to men about how to give their daughters a space of freedom, to finish their education, to be proud of them. And that girls are equal to boys exactly… equality… These are very important issues."

Experts interviewed agreed to the above and emphasized the importance of giving more attention to the relationship between men and their wives. Dealing with marital challenges and developing dialogue between man and wife were highlighted on several occasions by different participants.

One key informant, a gender program manager in an international organization, noted that often there is too much emphasis on intergenerational dialogues in developmental interventions, particularly those which bring young girls or boys with their parents. While these are important, the same informant mentioned that sometimes the dialogue among couples is missed although it is as important, saying, "Men need to learn to listen to their wives. The dialogue between men and women is very important." Another key informant, area supervisor of an international organization in Assiut, summarized this, saying, "Men need to hear about the role of women, about women's empowerment, about how to raise their children and how to treat women, about what marriage means."

General Community Activities and Local Community Development. Men in focus groups exhibited strong interest in community activities and local community development, often with men older than 30 years suggesting program ideas for younger ones. Focus group participants suggested programs that would help youths discover their capacities and talents in rural communities, noting that this might alleviate the frustration of young men in villages. Some said they wanted to learn music, theatre, arts or play sports. It is a need for a space of

self-expression for the younger generation, which individual interviewees also confirmed. As previously mentioned, some of these suggestions were related to other perceived problems such as addiction and substance use e.g. sports activities were proposed as a solution.

There were also suggestions related to encouraging more civic and political participation of men. Along those lines, men suggested having activities which would involve local authorities in order to discuss with them general community issues e.g. sewage, roads or water access problems. Other issues of public concern raised by participants include: waste management and recycling, partnerships with universities or private sector companies as community solutions to high unemployment rates as well as medical outreaches e.g. voluntary testing for viral hepatitis C. A 21-year old student and focus group participant in Balayza said, "With roads and streets [in my community], I know what the problem is, but I do not know where to complain." In Ezzeya, an 18-year old student and focus group participant suggested, "The [community] NGO could gather all art school graduates, buy them color and materials and encourage them to work in decorating their village. You will see what they can do." A 22-year old university student and focus group participant in Gahdam said, "We would like to start an initiative, be it a two-hour weekly meeting for example, to discuss community problems, like a community committee."

Practical Recommendations for Intervention Design

This section presents a more operational view of intervention design targeting men, which was covered by study Question 6: "What are the characteristics of men-targeted and men-friendly interventions?" The following paragraphs discuss practical aspects of achieving what participants suggested in terms of interventions that would be beneficial to men. Practical aspects covered relate to: methodology of program delivery and accompanying activities; location of interventions; timing, frequency and duration of interventions; and characteristics of the organizer or host of interventions.

Methodology of Program Delivery and Accompanying Activities. The importance of creative delivery of activities and use of aids and media material to convey concepts and ideas was repeatedly mentioned across all focus groups and interviews. Participants also raised including experiential techniques in program delivery, regardless of the content. This is against the background that retention of men, particularly in vocational training programs has been highlighted as a challenge. This was expressed by a 55-year old civil servant and focus group participant in Dekran who noted, "A lot of people start [vocational] training projects and find commitment a major challenge. They don't come on time; they don't come at all. They just don't care!"

Younger focus group participants made several suggestions. For example, an 18-year old technical school student and focus group participant in Ezzeya said, "Meetings [of the program] should be entertaining, not boring, so that people would come." In the same group, a 19-year old student noted, "The [vocational] training has to be practical [such as] doing hands-on maintenance so that youths gain confidence in the skills they learn."

Younger men said they also preferred creative arts where they can express themselves such as theater, puppet theater and singing. They explained saying that acting something makes one understands it and believes in it. They gave the example of addiction: writing and acting a short play about substance use is not the same as listening to someone talk about how harmful substance use is. For them, some comedy and laughter in activities is very helpful, because this makes their peers engaged.

Participants suggested tailoring the content of interventions to suit the educational level of participants, while ensuring that like-minded groups of similar backgrounds (e.g., age and type of education) are present together. For those who are educated, according to focus group participants, some religious or cultural activities will be appreciated especially if they contain some contests with prizes for winners. For less educated participants, the use of

media material such as images was recommended. An 18-year student and focus group participant in Ezzeya emphasized, "You have to use simple language so that idea would reach all people. People are of different [educational] levels. Some have modest education so they need simple information in order to understand what is being said."

Besides, arts and theater, participatory activities in general were emphasized by everyone, particularly sports, games, and exercises. According to participants, seminars should not be held on their own, but should be associated with sports or tournaments, particularly if the target is the younger age up to 25 years, or as long as they are single young men. While sports activities were mentioned in the context of younger age, some were of the view that older age groups also enjoy playing sports when given the opportunity and should not be stereotyped as being less physically active. A 25-year old focus group participant in Balayza said, "The program should serve interests of men. If someone likes football and finds it [as a component in the program], he will come." And in the same group, a 28-year old participant noted, "[The program] should not be about talking for an hour or so. We have to have something practical, some real action [in the community]."

For young men, travelling was highlighted as a major attraction to activities. Youths expressed the wish to hold activities away from where they live and suggested camps or trips to other governorates such as Alexandria, Cairo, Hurghada, and Luxor, where they can also get the chance to explore new places. Even visiting Assiut city, which is the capital of their governorate, was suggested by some who do not have the opportunity to go out of their villages often.

Men in the older age group preferred seminars with debates, particularly around family or societal issues of concern to them. They suggested to have panels with speakers of different views about contentious issues in order for people to listen to all opinions and decide for themselves. This was articulated by a 32-year old focus group participant in

Dekran who said, "Awareness [raising activities] should cover all aspects: the religious, the cultural and the social." His view was confirmed in the same group by another participant who noted, "Debates are good… when you bring together a proponent and an opponent, people are more convinced than when one person presents a single view."

Men younger than 30 years said they wished to be heard in the activities which target them, and most of the activities they suggested were of a participatory nature. Often this came up in association with raising issues of public concern such as sewage and road problems which needed to be discussed with authorities. This was supported by in-depth interview participants who emphasized the importance of creating a space of free expression for young men since this fulfils a fundamental need.

Participants also noted the importance of associating activities with some incentive that participants would get such as *per diem* or transportation expenses, for those who would be leaving behind daily wages to participate, or receiving a toolbox at the end of a vocational training course on maintenance of electrical equipment. Similarly, an incentive could be some kind of benefit that would attract men in the first place such as a medical outreach event where they can see a doctor for general tests. Focus group participants said that such clinic visits are good opportunities to convey messages to men particularly those related to their health and general wellbeing. Financial incentives in particular were mentioned as successful in ensuring participants' commitment, as noted by a 55-year old civil servant and focus group participant in Dekran who said, "When there is a decent income (financial incentive), you will find commitment [to the activity]." His view was supported by a 19-year old student and focus group participant in Ezzeya who noted, "Even a small per diem would ensure that people come and attend."

Other incentives included a good snack or meal during or after the activity and payment of transportation costs or per diem as a financial compensation for working men for the time they would have worked otherwise, especially that most of them are daily laborers. According to in-depth interview participants, art is an effective tool to convey sensitive messages without pointing fingers at people. A trainer on positive masculinity through arts in Cairo said, "Spaces for free expression [among men] are very difficult [to have]. There is no such thing as self-expression or expression of pain or opinion." A gender program manager of an international organization reiterated this, saying, "It is important to give boys the possibility to express themselves in different ways and encourage them to use theatre, art, may be even dance… That is a very good way to make them see that they are taken as a whole person."

Location of Interventions. Youths, below 30 years of age, suggested that the activities should reach out to other youths in other locations, preferably with seminars or theatre, rather than be organized at the organizer's premises, because this facilitates the participation of larger numbers. Others suggested governmental youth centers which are widely spread across Egypt. Although not all of them are fully equipped, they continue to be among the popular destinations for leisure and activities. Big nearby sports clubs (e.g. Assiut Cement Club) were mentioned for the facilities they host such as playing fields, swimming pools, etc. A 25-year old focus group participant in Balayza said, "I suggest youths [sports] centers. Often people have reservations against the [local] community association; they would participate in joint activities with it but not inside its premises. But they would go to the youth center."

Some participants believed that religious institutions are convenient venues to reach out to men, especially immediately after times of prayer because this is a "natural" assembly of people. One more reason to support religious venues was that NGOs have been perceived

to be associated with women and girls, so men might be discouraged to pay to them frequent visits, unlike religious institutions which cater to men. Also cafés were suggested as other "natural" places of assembly where men could be reached. An area supervisor of an international organization in Assiut noted, "We have to reach out to men where they are, where they work, where they pray, the cafés they go to. I used to conduct seminars at the mosque right after the evening prayer."

As previously mentioned, participants below 30 years, who were mostly single men, supported travelling for trips and camps in other governorates, as part of program delivery. On the contrary, men older than 30 years did not support this view and preferred that activities be conducted in nearby places, justifying this by the fact that men have families and work to attend to.

Timing, Frequency and Duration of Interventions. When asked about the ideal timings for programs targeting men, focus group participants agreed on the weekend, particularly Fridays after the noon prayer on their way out from mosques. Younger participants still enrolled in universities or technical institutes preferred activities to be in the afternoon after 1 pm, and noted that the ideal scenario would be to hold activities during their summer holidays. On a different note, some participants were of the view that young men travel to other cities for work during their summer holidays, so it is better to engage them during the academic year. A 36-year old technician and focus group participant in Balayza said, "The duration of training depends on the content. For example, one month [is enough] for a computer course, and three months for an English language course." In the same village, a 25-year old focus group participant suggested, "[For a training course], duration should not exceed six months," following which an 18-year old participant in the same group explained, "Participants will commit if they feel there is a personal benefit [of the program]."

Others were of the view that the timing of the intervention should be discussed with participants at the beginning so that the whole group agrees and commits. An 18-year old student and focus group participant in Balayza said, "As participants, we can decide on convenient times for us. I have a lesson from 5-6 pm every day so I cannot make it in the afternoons." Also in Balayza, a 33-year old community leader and focus group participant suggested, "In the afternoon [is a good time], depending on the program. Once weekly, round sunset time or on Friday – everybody is free on Friday."

Some key practical aspects around timing were raised by key informants such as avoiding agricultural seasons when men are engaged in their field. Nevertheless, those same men working in agriculture can otherwise be engaged off-season anytime in the afternoon on their way back from the fields. A community promoter in Manfalout noted, "I have to choose the [right] time. I would not pick the time when men are reaping wheat or gathering crops to organize a seminar! Where will I bring men then?!"

In terms of program frequency and duration, adult male groups were of the view that people do not change their minds overnight about personal or critical issues such as female genital cutting or early marriage; they need repetition of messaging. Long term interventions that require regular attendance or participation should have both good incentives such as a prize to be awarded at the end of the program, and good engagement strategies such as sports activities in the form of tournaments, for example.

Commitment for relatively long interventions could be seen in vocational training programs at the end of which the trainee will be given a job or will acquire a specific skill they will use to get employed. It happened also that programs get extended because men benefit and express their wish for continuous engagement.

Organizer or Host of Interventions. Participants discussed the characteristics of the organizers and hosts of the interventions. They revealed that the credibility of entities is the

most important criteria that communities seek. For example, the Ministry of Youth was among the entities mentioned by youth as a credible organizer. Youth prefer to go to activities hosted by either their local NGOs or youth centers, although they noted that activities might get too formal if senior government is involved. Nevertheless, according to younger focus group participants, people would still engage when government is involved despite the fact they might not actually listen to what is being said! Despite that, the Ministry of Youth has a relatively high level of credibility among communities given its large network of youth centers which all men in Egypt are familiar with. A 33-year old community leader and focus group participant in Balayza said, "Commitment [to training courses] is higher if at the end youth receive a certificate with the stamp of the University [of Assiut] or a ministry."

The characteristics of the persons delivering the interventions were also believed to make a difference in men's willingness to participate. Both focus group and in-depth interview participants mentioned that community leaders, particularly religious leaders, give weight and credibility to interventions in small communities. Events organized or called for by local leaders or in local mosques and churches attract relatively large numbers of men.

Often a religious entry point should be used when men are targeted, according to in-depth interview participants. Interviewees explained this by the "religious nature" of the Egyptian society which makes it necessary to tackle some gender issues from a religious angle when approaching men, especially in older age groups. For this reason, female genital cutting and early marriage, among others, were discussed with men in the presence of religious leaders representing Christian and Muslim authorities who would support girls and women's rights in this regard using religious arguments.

According to key informants, some adult men would only listen to high level religious leaders from Al-Azhar or Awqaf, while others prefer more "neutral" grounds such as youth centers and not NGOs. A 42-year old focus group participant in Dekran said, "Bringing a

religious preacher is worthwhile because a lot of issues have to do with *halal* and *haram* (what is permitted and what is not). The preacher will awaken their conscience a bit." In the meantime, a 19-year old student and focus group participant in Ezzeya highlighted, "Invited trainers should have credibility. They must have integrity and genuine interest in educating people."

The skill of facilitators was highlighted as fundamental for the success of interventions regardless of how good and useful the theoretical content is. Knowledge of local communities and utilization of real stories from the community was mentioned as an important entry point to transformation of knowledge and attitudes.

Technical information should come from relevant and credible specialists e.g. medical doctors, lawyers, social workers, etc. Often invited guests from outside the community are more attractive than insiders and the turnout of beneficiaries is high. For example, in the area of health, a doctor from the Ministry of Health Directorate is likely to attract more attendees to his event, according to focus group participants.

If a series of events is planned, it is essential to ensure that beneficiaries continue to be engaged and participate in the subsequent meetings by developing an attractive program and by selecting competent and talented speakers, preferably guest speakers, whom communities value, who are specialized in the subject under discussion.

Chapter 4 Discussion

This research explored how men wish to be engaged in gender and development (GAD) programs so that women-only gender work can be complemented with the involvement of men. As outlined in the literature review, and contrary to the relational definition of gender adopted in this research, developmental interventions tended to misrepresent gender to be women. In Egypt, men and boys have been rarely involved in community-based gender-related work (El Feki et al., 2017). Involvement of men has been mostly superficial and limited to obtaining permission for women in their families to engage in community work, or to neutralize community resistance to interventions around women and girls' rights. The research at hand could be seen as an attempt to examine how the role of men can be addressed in GAD in Egypt based on insights from men of diverse age ranges who reside in two communities in Assuit that are heavily saturated with GAD interventions. Results from eight focus groups in these communities were largely consistent with additional insights gathered from interviews with 16 key informants from Assuit and Cairo who were experts in gender and masculinity.

The men who participated in the focus groups had a high level of awareness regarding programmatic interventions taking place among women such as early childhood care, education, early marriage, female genital cutting, etc. Discussing women's empowerment through community interventions and how men perceive it revealed a dichotomy among men. On the one hand, there was misconception and distrust; and, on the other hand, there was understanding and appreciation. The former attitude has its foundation in a general underestimation of women's role beyond the traditional housewife and mother roles, simplistic viewing of women's programs and what they can achieve, or perceived threats of women's empowerment and how it might change power relations. The men in the focus groups were largely positive towards interventions for women and referred to other men in

their communities when discussing misconception and distrust. According to focus group participants, this is the reason why men's awareness of programs targeting women was often associated with real change of attitude or behaviour among them and in their communities, at the time when awareness was also manifested in resistance among more traditional circles. This explains why community programs mentioned, and even praised, in focus groups were mostly related to traditional women's roles as a mother or housewife such as raising children and family hygiene. It is worth noting here that some key informants with first-hand experience in communities had themselves witnessed change of attitude and behavior among men they work with, which shows that the shift between misconception and acceptance is possible.

Results of this research revealed that the concept of gender, as manifested by communities represented, varied across a wide range. It could be a dynamic process of the economic and social fabric of society, as defined by Fernandez-Kelly (1994), made clear in how economic hardship is significantly affecting men; a relational process manifested in discussions around direct man-woman issues (such as in the case of early marriage); or an imbalanced process being overridden by hegemonic masculinity features as exercised by men for whom it is not acceptable to allow women to leave the house. The following paragraphs will attempt to explain some of these identified dynamics.

What this research has revealed is that there seems to be a considerable segment of men who started embracing women's empowerment. It has been a learning curve for those men, for communities and for organizations implementing GAD programs, as concluded from focus groups and interviews. Communities started witnessing change as women started becoming proactive members, particularly in relation to the economies of their families as well as enhanced communication and relationship-building with their husbands and children.

These findings show the diversity of important issues that GAD programs have targeted to empower and improve the lives of women. Women have progressed at several fronts, most importantly inside households where they could apply new knowledge and behaviors related to raising children, family and house hygiene, prioritizing children's education, and better communication and negotiation skills with husbands and children. Also, women were noticed to have acquired more active roles in their communities, particularly through local NGOs. Yet from among all the issues targeted, women's economic contributions to households was among the first that men mentioned about witnessing changes related to women's empowerment. The public and civic participation of women was noted as an obvious indication of change among women, denoting development and empowerment, and yet, despite the social significance of the increased political participation of women, men highlighted economic contribution as being of more significance. Literature shows that historically Egyptian men showed some resistance to women working outside the house, or participating in public life (El Feki et al., 2017). This seems to be changing in light of the current economic conditions.

It is crucial when discussing women's empowerment to be aware of the potential risks entailed in it. As Riger (2002) argued, empowerment supports individualism which is likely to result in conflicts leading to shaking the traditional gender relational set up founded on male supremacy and hegemonic masculinity ideals. While positive on the one hand, on the other hand, arguably, such changes might not be fully accepted by some communities. In fact, this conflict, while implicit, can be drawn from the results of the research at hand and, realistically speaking, is expected to remain a challenge for community-based interventions related to gender.

With regards to programmatic priorities for men-targeted interventions, as revealed by this research, they were diverse and responded to perceived men's needs in communities.

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Economic empowerment was emphasized as a fundamental component in discussions future programs. The current ailing economic situation in Egypt has dominated participants' narrative in this research since it is severely affecting lower socioeconomic segments, including rural populations. When proposing interventions, men's narrative in focus groups was influenced by the economic circumstances they experience themselves, and this observation was reinforced by the views of the experts interviewed. Accordingly, economic empowerment interventions were among the first to be suggested by men across all age groups. This is certainly a priority area which should be considered when designing interventions targeting men, not only as an end in itself, but also as an attractive entry point for all other issues identified as perceived developmental needs. Economic empowerment was spelled out as vocational training and skill development in areas such as carpentry, plumbing, painting, tile work, electrical works, maintenance of mobile phones and computer, car mechanics and maintenance, and industry-specific training aimed for specific factories. In addition to these, some economic activities were raised in relation to the agricultural nature of communities in which this research was conducted and included raising cattle and poultry and introduction to advanced agricultural technology.

In terms of other priorities for men, it was not a surprise to hear men mention their need for health programs. In fact, this confirmed what literature has shown about the success of men's engagement in the area of health, particularly reproductive and sexual health, as related to gender (Connell, 2005b; Cornwall et al., 2011; Inhorn, 2012; Rizzo, 2014; World Health Organization, 2007&). The relevance and acceptability of health-related interventions and topics as an entry point to gender, and to other topic areas, was clear in this research as demonstrated in testimonies. Health-related awareness and health outreach activities are areas to which almost all focus group participants were exposed, to various degrees.

Men across age groups exhibited a strong sense of community responsibility. They expressed genuine interest in wider community development issues such as sewage, cleanliness and road problems which necessitated communication with local authorities; something which they were ready to engage in.

As discussed earlier under literature review, Baydoun (2007) argued that gender interventions that disproportionately targeted women and were far from the balanced relational definition of gender, tended to focus on violence against women and ignored deeper issues such as the psychology and behavior of men and women. In fact, this argument was confirmed by the research findings as men across different age groups expressed the perceived need for psychosocial, psychoeducational and life skills programs in various ways, with applications in the areas of sexual and reproductive education, premarital counselling, marital communication, positive parenting, and other relational issues. Besides, men identified a need for a focus on addiction, particularly substance abuse in communities, especially among younger age groups. Addiction, regardless of its type, was raised as a health-related issue, hence emphasizing a perceived medical model approach to addressing it. Yet, interestingly, focus group participants established a connection between social issues and addiction attributing it to high levels of unemployment and inability of younger men to settle in a job or a marriage for economic reasons.

Examining how men have engaged in GAD in Assiut within the scope of this research revealed that men's engagement, albeit limited, is not new. Men's engagement has most of the time taken place in interventions in a rather non-intentional manner; that is, in interventions that were primarily designed for women or with a focus on women's issues. Hence, the participation of men went unaccounted for or undocumented unlike women's participation. This type of engagement was common in programs for which men's resistance needed to be minimized or when trust needed to be established in the community before

women engaged. As discussed earlier, Ali (2003) pointed out that men were targeted by family planning campaigns in Egypt so that they allow their wives to use contraceptives; this kind of peripheral involvement of men is an example of what the focus group and interview participants described. In fact, this is changing as more recent programs, discussed by younger men participants in particular, revealed more deliberate engagement of men in interventions which catered for their needs such as reproductive health interventions targeting young men.

Regardless of intentions behind engaging men, men have surely benefited, according to the findings of this research. Arguably, they have also indirectly supported women in their change process. Thus, and as discussed under the literature review, men themselves can play a role in challenging patriarchal practices (Inhorn, 2012; Kaufman, 2004). With an application on the context of Assiut, the most significant examples are issues of avoiding cultural practices that are harmful to girls and women such as female genital cutting, early marriage, and deprivation of women's inheritance, where community mobilization and awareness raising could not have taken place without the engagement of community leaders and religious leaders, who are primarily men.

It could be argued that the successful engagement of men in the past, as supporters of women's issues, paved the way for more organized and substantive involvement that would respond to the needs expressed in this research. Nevertheless, men's support to women's issues could also be regarded as a manifestation of hegemonic masculinity in Assiut communities. As highlighted by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), social interactions do exist between subordinated and dominant forms of masculinity in communities. Based on this, they recommend an emphasis on the agency of women along with the recognition of geography of masculinity, emphasizing context-specific programming. In this regard, masculinity-related interventions should be placed in the context of global dynamics as well

as developmental and economic agendas whose influence cuts across local, regional and international levels (Connell, 2005a; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Morrell & Swart, 2005).

From a community psychology perspective, the acknowledgement of successful involvement of men in the past would be key component of asset-based programming; that is, one that builds on strengths and resources of communities which resulted from previous interventions. Besides, the resulting programming process should be inclusive and empowering to communities, including its men, because its content would not be effectively developed otherwise. That said, the engagement of men will not only fulfil an ecological necessity, according to the ecological model, but will also ensure integrating and practicing several community psychology competencies particularly in terms of adopting an empowering and a participatory approach which have emerged from the results of this research (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Dalton & Wolfe, 2012). Community psychology, through participatory design and intervention, can create the space and means for reversing the power differential in communities. Safe and transparent spaces for interaction, discussion, and action around gender issues are prerequisites for the transformation of gender relations in communities, as previously discussed. Besides, community psychology theories and competencies, when applied, will ensure the fulfillment of important aspects such as community sensitivity and acceptability of programmatic interventions.

Paying attention to the delivery methodology and practical aspects of interventions targeting men is prerequisite to their success. Relevant participatory, empowering and creative programming is what summarizes findings in this regard. When designing future programs, participants also indicated several desired characteristics of the methodology of content delivery, location, organizers, and speakers. A community psychology approach to engaging men would necessitate customizing interventions to the needs of the beneficiaries

and ensuring that the mentioned suggestions are addressed for greater sense of ownership and belonging. That said, community participation at earlier stages of assessment and design could produce more effective interventions as community needs and values get reflected in intervention design (Kloos et al., 2012). Thus, this research project, with its adopted methodology, is the first step of a participatory approach that can be applied.

The set up and atmosphere of the focus group seemed to be an empowering experience for almost all participants, especially younger ones who have articulated this at the end of focus groups saying that it was an opportunity for them to express themselves. This was consistent with results from the focus groups and key informants that emphasized the importance of creating more spaces for sharing and self-expression among members of the community when designing interventions. It could be argued that such need emerges from the current political situation in Egypt, where young community voices are facing restrictions and limitations. Safe spaces for creative self-expression can be powerful transformative tools in this regard as noted by several key informants representing various sectors of government, gender and masculinity, and arts and media.

It is important to make a distinction between the different levels of work, based on the Ecological Systems Theory, and be clear on what could be achieved in terms of gender equality at each of the levels. Policies do influence programming, hence type and nature of interventions in communities; however, it takes time for policies to translate into practices. This research looks at how best to effect change at the community level, based on an existing and adequate body of literature, lessons learned and success stories in Egypt and in other countries. Legislation and policies pertaining to gender in Egypt, while still need to improved, provide the space for work at various ecological levels, particularly in light of political support given to gender equality issues.

In other words, this research sought to explore the perceptions, preferences and design of interventions at the *microsystem*, in light of dynamics in the *exosystem* and *mesosystem*. Theoretically, in the long term and provided proper channelling, practical and incremental changes at the *microsystems* can have strategic influence over higher levels. Community psychology can play a significant role in bridging the levels in reality. Communities themselves, as men and women, should develop their own visions of what gender equality entails, which could be as simple as allowing women to go out of their houses. The relative nature of gender concepts has to be acknowledged in this type of work. Also, masculinity has to be understood both regionally and comparatively, as Pease and Pringle (2001) argue, hence interventions involving men have to ensure culture sensitivity and relevance.

Strengths and Limitations

The scarcity of literature written on the engagement of men in GAD work in Egypt makes this research unique and valuable. It fills a significant research gap and it is expected to inform intervention design related to gender and masculinity across Egypt, which was achieved by reaching out to the communities and engaging with men themselves in discussions about their lives and wellbeing.

One particularly strong aspect about this research is that it, while having a prospective approach as to how men's interventions would look like, managed also to capture in retrospect some of the programs that successfully engaged male participants. This provided some history, context, and framework to future work. Accordingly, relevance and continuity of interventions can be ensured, because it is important for beneficiaries to feel the natural development of programs in their communities. Needless to say, responding to participants' needs and building on existing community assets and successes is the best guarantee to successful community programming.

The number of participants who turned out for focus groups was impressive across all ages. A purely voluntary process, participation cost participants their time especially those who work. However, active engagement in this exercise sent a strong message about communities' willingness to engage in discussions about their lives and needs.

The process of this research seemed to be an empowering participatory process for the participants as expressed by them in different ways. Young men who participated in focus groups were particularly articulate about this and expressed gratitude and appreciation before leaving the focus group venue. The researcher observed that normally focus groups are conducted in communities for evaluation purposes, so participants come prepared to show that 'everything works;' otherwise the NGOs they belong to would be judged as inadequate. The researcher was aware of such attitudes in communities and made sure the purpose of the meeting was clear to participants before starting the focus group. After almost all focus groups, participants were thankful at the end of their focus group, saying they appreciated the experience of being asked about their views. For some of them, this was the very first time they took part in such an exercise as they mentioned.

The research benefited from the support of an international NGO which operates in Assiut as an umbrella organization for a large number of small community-based NGOs. This could not have been done without positive relations and respect which developed through longstanding partnerships in the field.

With the need for such a research about engaging men in Egypt, one of the principal limitations is that the geographical scope studied was limited to four villages in two districts in Assiut. With adjustments and considerations of local contexts, the results can be reservedly generalized to rural communities of Assiut. However, while Assiut is arguably representative of Upper Egypt, the research cannot claim that it is representative of the whole of Egypt. Data collection from other governorates, for example, in Lower Egypt could have provided a

different perspective to the results, which could have then been applied to Delta cities. In the meantime, while Assiut is a sizeable and relatively developed city, its results cannot be generalizable to other cities in Egypt such as Cairo or Alexandria which are predominantly urban and heavily populated.

Enrolment of focus group participants was done through the office of an international NGO in Assiut, which in turn reached out to local NGOs to invite men to participate. Accordingly, as a result of this purposive sampling, focus group participation was limited to those men who were interested in joining and who were free during the focus groups scheduled times (which were between 9.00 am and 2.00 pm). While this is considered a limitation to the representation of men in the four villages, it could be argued that purposeful enrolment of focus group participants ensured that only interested individuals with greater awareness and experiences in the topic matter took part. This was something that may have enriched discussions and led to valuable contributions. However, the results would have been certainly different had the enrolled men been not at all aware or involved with community interventions. For example, the men who participated in the focus groups expressed favorable views of programs for women unlike some of the other men they observed in their communities. Also, because focus groups were conducted at the NGOs where most of the community programs take place, presumably it was rather sensitive for men to criticize these programs or their outcomes in their communities.

During the course of conducting the focus groups, it became obvious that differences in the participants' educational levels or levels of exposure to discussions in a formal setting affected the degree with which they engaged in focus groups. Some participants were more reserved than others, as observed by the researcher, and this could have been because of difficulty understanding questions and concepts discussed, or because of social unease in the group setting, which prevented them from freely expressing themselves. The researcher was

aware of these limitations and mitigated them through repetition and paraphrasing of questions in simple language as needed, and by facilitating focus groups in a way that ensured that all participants took part in the discussion. That said, responses varied in language, dialect and format, depending on the respondent's educational background; however, the researcher, being a native Arabic speaker, could extract core content of responses during the focus groups, regardless of how they were formulated, ensuring smooth flow of discussion, and also later during analysis.

Focus groups had only male participants, whereas the main researcher was female. This was a research concern before conducting the focus groups, because of the discomfort it might cause to men in the presence of a female in terms of reservations to discuss certain issues, despite the fact that the content of focus groups was unlikely to touch on personal or intimate details that a man would feel uncomfortable sharing in the presence of women. To avoid this, the researcher engaged an Assiut-based male colleague to co-facilitate the focus groups and the researcher attended the groups to take notes and co-facilitated the discussion, where relevant. It was observed by the researcher that the focus group facilitation by a male from the same governorate seemed to produce a sense of ease among participants, which helped the discussion flow smoothly since it was a male-dominated circle that belonged to the same wider community of Assiut.

Should this research be expanded upon, future research is recommended to take place in other governorates in Egypt for more contextualized findings and recommendations. Egyptian cosmopolitan cities (e.g. Cairo and Alexandria), urban settings and governorates in Lower Egypt (Delta) are all expected to generate different results from the ones in this research. Also, in future research enrolment of participants should ensure more representativeness of communities in focus groups for more diverse views and set of recommendations. In terms of topics, future research is recommended to further explore

aspects such as the feasibility of the different economic empowerment interventions targeting men in rural communities. For example, more data is needed on the types of self-run projects which men prefer to have, including those of agricultural nature, and how this relates to migration. Some of the issues raised by men require further research into how to best design relevant interventions to address them such as addiction, particularly among younger age groups.

Recommendations

Exploring how men can be better involved in gender and development interventions through this research has revealed findings that go beyond the research questions. The following paragraphs will point out some of programming implications and recommendations emerging from this exercise.

Re-connecting Gender Policy and Programming with Men in Egyptian Communities. It is important to adopt a bottom-up participatory approach when engaging men in gender interventions. Responding to men's perceived needs, which are not the same as women's, can only be achieved by engaging them in consultative processes. This should inform programming at all levels depending on location and beneficiaries, starting from what content is prioritized, to logistics of when and where to hold activities. In fact, operationalizing this particular recommendation necessitates revisiting gender discourse, so that that gender does not translate into *women.* That said, transforming gender discourse is a shared responsibility by the different stakeholders who influence it such as media and opinion leaders, academics, community leaders and civil society organisations, particularly at the grassroots level. Change could be as simple as employing more gender-sensitive terminology in day-to-day work, or even coining new gender terminology in Arabic language for use by the public. There is a key educational role to be played by NGOs at the grassroots level in

this regard, which is to disseminate knowledge about gender as a relational concept in a balanced manner.

Placing Gender and Masculinity Interventions in the Economic Context of Egypt. Men need to improve their economic conditions, and it is against this background that interventions should be designed. Policy and programming cannot run in isolation of the political and economic situation of Egypt; hence, the importance of using the economic empowerment entry point to engage men in gender programs. Awareness raising on gender and positive parenting, among others, can follow or run in parallel to the economic interventions.

Participatory and Asset-based Programming by Building on Men's Leadership in Communities. Men's engagement in Egypt has been taking place on the sidelines of women's interventions. Engaging men entails building on community assets. This should not be limited to resources and people, but needs to cover historical assets and explicitly build on the success of programs in the past where men took active roles in gender issues. Wisdom accumulated in communities, represented in male natural community leaders, can guide design and delivery. Besides, adopting a participatory approach would ensure acceptability of interventions in communities in terms of delivery methodology and logistical details pertaining to timing and location, for instance. Given the scarcity of empirical data on previous interventions involving men (e.g. systematic monitoring and evaluation exercises), capturing successful stories in communities can be an alternative.

Adapting Successful Interventions from Other Country Contexts. With the increasing numbers of successful positive masculinity interventions worldwide, there is opportunity to prioritize men's engagement in Egypt as well. As Egyptian communities are ready for more involvement of men, programming can combine lessons learned elsewhere

with evidence and experience in Egypt to deliver gender transformative interventions targeting men.

Achieving Sustainability through Community Capacity Development. Investing in community capacity is the best way to sustain change on the ground. Capacity development of men, particularly key community leaders, should be part of a long-term strategy towards positive male engagement. Training of trainers on the various programs outlined above (for example, economic empowerment and income generation, positive parenting, health related programs) and providing men with necessary tools and resources will elicit positive change among men beyond the project-based nature of interventions and funding limitations. Paying attention to resource persons in charge of such capacity development activities is crucial to ensure credibility based on proven expertise in a given area. Once adequate momentum is created in communities, change can be self-sustained and sustainability ensured.

Adopting a Psychosocial and Psychoeducational Approach when Working with Men. There is a need to create spaces of learning and personal development among men, particularly youths, where gender and masculinity social construction can be deconstructed in a safe and inclusive environment. A psychoeducational approach is useful in this regard, entailing careful selection of specialized curricula and personnel.

Investing in the Personnel Implementing Programs in Communities. Trained personnel are themselves one important bridge between policy and programming on one side, and men in communities on the other. Enrolment and training of personnel who deliver programs in communities is crucial to successful implementation. Training should cover a personal development component, besides training material or curricula content, delivery methodology, being resourceful in low-resource settings, among others.

Mainstreaming Men Engagement in Gender and Development in Egypt. The engagement of men needs to go beyond projects to become a standing programmatic component mainstreamed across interventions. This is a lesson learned from gender programming in Egypt and elsewhere. Attitudes and behaviors require time to change, which should be translated into the timelines of interventions. Donors have a principal role to play in this regard, by moving away from the short intensive projects to more long-term programs that contribute to sustainable results and impact. Mainstreaming also requires robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place in order to measure the impact on the ground.

Conclusion

Exploring the masculinity components of gender interventions in Assuit revealed that men were present in the scene, and often their role was acknowledged. Moreover, programs that targeted women had positive impacts on men such as enhancing marital communication and family finances. Over time, men's attitudes and views towards women's empowerment programs became increasingly positive and appreciative. While men's engagement in the past was not central to the programs, it is now an opportune time for men to be explicitly involved in gender programming in a participatory and empowering manner.

Men, young and old, articulated their views and needs regarding development programs. Accordingly, designing relevant interventions for men in Egypt is possible, as long as such design takes into consideration the socioeconomic situation of the country and of beneficiaries. There is a need for a long-term transformative strategy with a focus on knowledge, attitude and behavior change of men in areas of health, gender and masculinity, and positive parenting. Besides, successful programs in these areas, and others, are in increasing numbers around the world especially in developing countries with similar cultures of gender relations as in Egypt.

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THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study

Project Title: Exploring the missing masculinity component in gender and development and the involvement of men in Egypt

Principal Investigator: Heba Wanis, MA in Community Psychology student, AUC

Email address: hebawanis@aucegypt.edu

Mobile number: +201223180314

You are invited to participate in a research study about the involvement of men in gender and development work in Egypt.

Purpose

The purpose of the research is to identify design and content of interventions that would succeed in attracting and engaging men in Egypt.

The findings of this research will be published in the researcher's thesis, in academic journals, and may also be presented in conferences.

Duration

The expected duration of your participation is the length of this focus group or interview which will be 1 hour to 1 hour and thirty minutes.

Research procedures

The research procedures include conducting an interview or a focus group, where a list of relevant questions will be used for an in-depth discussion of the issue under study.

Risks and benefits

There will not be any risks associated with this research. Some minimal risks include discomfort result from recalling certain memories or personal situations.

There might be some benefits to you from this research in terms of exchanging thoughts and views on the issue under study.

Confidentiality

Your identity and the information you provide for purposes of this research will remain confidential. Voice recording is done for research purposes only in order to be transcribed afterwards for as much data as possible

Questions about this research and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject should be directed to the principal investigator: Heba Wanis +201223180314.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you agree to these terms, please sign underneath.

Thank you for your valuable contribution.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

استمارة موافقة مسبقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية

عنوان البحث : استكشاف مكوّن الذكورية المفتقد في تدخلات النوع الاجتماعي والتنمية في مصر وكيفية إشراك الرجال.

الباحث الرئيسي: هبة ونيس، طالبة ماجستير علم النفس المجتمعي، الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة

البريد الالكتروني: hebawanis@aucegypt.edu

الهاتف: +201223180314

أنت مدعو للمشاركة فى دراسة بحثية حول إشراك الرجال في تدخلات النوع الاجتماعي في مصر.

هدف الدراسة هو التعرف على محتوى وشكل التدخلات التنموية التي تنجح في جذب وإشراك الشباب والرجال في مصر.

نتائج البحث ستنشر في رسالة الماجستير على الموقع الإلكتروني للجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة، وقد تنشر في دورية علمية متخصصة أو تعرض في مؤتمر علمي أو كليهما.

المدة المتوقعة للمشاركة فى هذا البحث هي مدة المقابلة في إطار مجموعة بؤرية أو مقابلة شخصية، وتتراوح بين ساعة وساعة ونصف.

إجراءات البحث

تشتمل إجراءات هذا البحث على القيام بمقابلة (فردية أو في إطار مجموعة) عن طريق طرح بعض الأسئلة المتعلقة بالموضوع من أجل مناقشة متعمقة له.

المخاطر المتوقعة

المشاركة فى هذه الدراسة لن يترتب عليها أية مخاطر إلا أنها قد يترتب عليها استرجاع بعض الذكريات أو المواقف الشخصية المؤلمة والتي قد ينتج عنها شعور بالضيق.

الاستفادة المتوقعة من المشاركة في البحث تشمل قضاء وقت قيّم في مناقشة وتبادل الآراء والأفكار بخصوص موضوع الدراسة.

السرية واحترام الخصوصية: بياناتك الشخصية ستعامل بسرية تامة في إطار هذا البحث، كما أن هويتك ستكون غير معلنة ولن يتم ربط الكلام بقائليه.

التسجيل الصوتي يتم فقط لغرض بحثي كي يتم تفريغه لاحقا من أجل ضمان الحصول على أكبر قدر من المعلومات من المشاركين بعد الانتهاء من اللقاء.

- للحصول على المزيد من المعلومات عن الدراسة وحقوق المشاركين وكذلك فى حالة حدوث أية عواقب سلبية أثناء المشاركة فى هذا البحث، رجاء التوجه إلى الباحثة الرئيسية: هبة ونيس، ورقم هاتفها 201223180314+.

- إن المشاركة فى هذه الدراسة ماهى إلا عمل تطوعي، كما أن الامتناع عن المشاركة أو التوقف عن المشاركة في أي وقت لايترتب على أي منهما عقوبات أو فقدان لأية مزايا تحق لك. في حالة موافقتك على ما سبق، رجاء التوقيع أدناه.

شكرا لمشاركتكم القيمة.

التوقيع:

اسم المشارك:

التاريخ :

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Data collection for research on: Exploring the missing masculinity component of gender and development in Egypt and the involvement of men

Thesis for MA in Community Psychology, Spring 2017

Introduction

- Thank the participants for coming and for their time.

- Introduce the FGD: this group discussion is part of a research on involving men in gender and development interventions in Egypt. The objective is to explore the type and content of interventions for men in Egypt.

- Introduce and read the informed consent form, and ask participants to sign it before starting.

- Start the audio-recording.

- Start asking questions.

Questions

1. There are numerous women programs that have been implemented in your community to support and develop the lives of women. Which programs are you familiar with? Have you been part of any of these educational or developmental programs in your community?

2. What impact has women development programs had on the lives of men who are close to them? What has changed? (probes: household relations, dialogue, children upbringing, money matters, managing finances, marital relations, decision-making, etc.)

3. How has the development of women impacted your communities at large?

4. For your community to develop more, what do men need to learn or acquire? (probes: what type of knowledge, skills do they need to acquire? What attitudes and behaviors do they need to change?)

5. How can this (answer to previous question) be practically achieved? How can we involve men with women in developmental activities in an attractive way. Describe the activities. (probes: where, what does it offer you, activities, duration, frequency, day/time, with whom, etc.)

6. What additional comments or ideas would you like to add?

Questions for Focus Groups in Arabic

أسئلة المجموعات النقاشية

تهدف هذه الأسئلة إلى جمع بيانات في إطار بحث عن استكشاف مكوّن الذكورية المفتقد في تدخلات النوع الاجتماعي

والتنمية في مصر وكيفية إشراك الرجال.

رسالة ماجستير علم النفس المجتمعي، الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة، 2017

مقدمة

- شكر الحاضرين على مجيئهم وعلى وقتهم

- تقديم المجموعة: هذه المجموعة النقاشية هي جزء من دراسة بحثية حول إشراك الرجال في تدخلات النوع

الاجتماعي في مصر. هدف البحث هو التعرف على شكل ومحتوى تدخلات تنموية من أجل الشباب والرجال في

مصر.

- عرض ورقة الموافقة المسبقة وتوقيعها من قبل المشاركين

- طرح الأسئلة

الأسئلة

1. في برامج عديدة تم تنفيذها لدعم الستات في مجتمعكم. إيه البرامج التدريبية أو برامج التوعية اللي اتنفذت من

اللي سمعتم عنها؟ هل شاركتم في أي منها؟

2. دة كان إيه تأثيره على الرجالة اللي حواليهم؟ (أمثلة: العلاقات داخل المنزل، الحوار، تربية الأطفال، إدارة

الميزانية، العلاقات الزوجية، اتخاذ القرارات داخل الأسرة، إلخ)

3. كيف كان تأثير تطور الستات على مجتمعاتكم من حواليكم بشكل عام؟ (من وجهة نظر الرجالة)

4. لو عايزين مجتمعاتنا تتحسن وتتطور، تفتكروا إيه اللي الرجالة محتاجين يتعلموه؟ (مواضيع يسمعوا عنها أكثر،

يتعلموا مهارات جديدة، يغيروا فكرهم بخصوص بعض القضايا، يغيروا من بعض سلوكياتهم، إلخ)

5. إزاي نحقق دة بشكل عملي؟ يعني لو عايزين نشرك الرجالة مع الستات في البرامج التنموية بشكل يجذبهم ،

تفتكروا إيه المواضيع اللي نبتدي بها؟

a. إيه الأنشطة اللي تحبوا تشاركوا فيها؟ وهل من الأفضل أن تكون الأنشطة مشتركة ولا منفصلة؟

b. نعمل البرنامج فين؟

c. كم مرة في الأسبوع؟

d. يوم إيه والساعة كم؟

e. إيه أنسب جهة تنظمه؟

6. إيه اللي تحبوا تضيفوه في نهاية الجلسة؟

Background Information for Focus Group Participants

- Village: ……………………………………………
- District: ……………………………………………
- Age: …………………………………………
- Sex: …………………………………………
- Highest education attained: …………………………
- Occupation: ……………………………………………
- Marital status: ……………………………………
- Number of children, if any: …………………………………………
- Previous involvement in development/community activities, if any:

  ……………………………………………………………………..

  ……………………………………………………………………..

بيانات المشاركين في المجموعات النقاشية

القرية: ....

المركز: ....

السن: ....

الجنس: ....

أعلى مؤهل دراسي: ....

الوظيفة: ....

الحالة الاجتماعية: ....

عدد الأطفال، إن وجد: ....

خبرات سابقة في التنمية أو العمل المجتمعي، إن وجدت:

....

....

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Data collection for research on: Exploring the missing masculinity component of gender and development in Egypt and the involvement of men

Thesis for MA in Community Psychology, Spring 2017

Introduction

- Thank the participant for their time and for accepting the interview.

- Introduce the KII: this interview is part of a research on involving men in gender and development interventions in Egypt. The objective is to explore the type and content of interventions for men in Egypt.

- Introduce and read the informed consent form, and ask the participant to sign it before starting.

- Start asking questions.

Questions

1. In your opinion, how does women empowerment get perceived by men?

2. What impact has women empowerment programs had on the lives of men who are close to them? What has changed? (probes: household relations, dialogue, children upbringing, money matters, managing finances, marital relations, decision-making, etc.)

3. How has the development/empowerment of women impacted their wider communities?

4. What type of knowledge and skills do men need to acquire? What attitudes and behaviors do they need to change?

5. How can this (answer to previous question) be practically achieved? What are the characteristics of a program that would successfully engage men? (probes: location, time, content, activities, duration, frequency, organizers, etc.)

6. Would you like to add or comment on anything?

Questions for key informant interviews in Arabic

أسئلة المقابلات الفردية

تهدف هذه الأسئلة إلى جمع بيانات في إطار بحث عن استكشاف مكوّن الذكورية المفتقد في تدخلات النوع الاجتماعي

والتنمية في مصر وكيفية إشراك الرجال. رسالة ماجستير علم النفس المجتمعي، الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة، 2017

مقدمة

- شكر المشارك/ة على الحضور وعلى قبول إجراء المقابلة

- تقديم المقابلة: هذه المقابلة هي جزء من دراسة بحثية حول إشراك الرجال في تدخلات النوع الاجتماعي في
  مصر. هدف البحث هو التعرف على شكل ومحتوى تدخلات تنموية من أجل الشباب والرجال في مصر.

- عرض ورقة الموافقة المسبقة وتوقيعها

- طرح الأسئلة

الأسئلة

1. في رأيك، كيف يتصور الرجال مفهوم تمكين المرأة؟

2. ما تأثير برامج تمكين المرأة على حياة الرجال من حولهم؟ (أمثلة: العلاقات داخل المنزل، الحوار، تربية الأطفال،
   إدارة الميزانية، العلاقات الزوجية، اتخاذ القرارات داخل الأسرة، إلخ)

3. كيف يؤثر تمكين المرأة على المجتمعات؟ هل يرى الرجال في المجتمعات هذا التأثير بنفس الطريقة؟

4. ما الذي يحتاجه الرجال من معرفة ومهارات؟ ما التوجهات أو السلوكيات التي يحتاجوا أن يغيروا منها؟

5. كيف يمكن تحقيق ذلك بشكل عملي؟ إذا أردنا تصميم تدخل تنموي جذاب يستهدف الشباب والرجال في المجتمعات
   المحلية، ما المواضيع التي نبدأ بها؟

   a. ما الأنشطة المصاحبة لبرنامج التدخل؟

   b. أين ننظم النشاط/ البرنامج؟

   c. كم مرة في الأسبوع؟

   d. ما اليوم والساعة الأنسب؟

6. ما أنسب جهة تقوم بتنظيم هذا البرنامج؟

7. هل تود/ين الإضافة أو التعليق؟

Background Information Sheet for Interview Informants

- Age: ……………………………………
- Sex: ……………………………………
- Occupation/Title: ………………………………………
- Organization: …………………………………………
- Years of experience: …………………………………………
- Occupation: ………………………………………
- Involvement in gender and masculinity activities:

  ………………………………………………………………………..

  ………………………………………………………………………..

  ………………………………………………………………………..

بيانات المشاركين في المقابلات الفردية

السن: ....

الجنس: ....

الوظيفة: ....

اسم المؤسسة: ....

عدد سنوات الخبرة: ....

علاقة المشارك(ة) بالعمل في النوع الاجتماعي والذكورة:

....

....

....