Sensibilisation sur la lute contre le VIH/SIDA et violences faites aux femmes et aux filles en milieu universitaire

WINNING "HEARTS AND MINDS" FOR THE HeforShe MOVEMENT

Uwem Essia
Regional Director
Pan African Institute for Development - West Africa, Buea, Cameroon
HEFORSHE IS A SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT BY UN WOMEN

- Engages men/boys for gender equality.
- Launched in September 2014.
- Enlists all to reduce gender inequities.
- HeforShe is a global movement.
- Over a billion signed commitments.
GENDER INEQUALITY

- Obstinate and flagrant human rights violations
- No country has fully realized gender equality.
- Hence, the UN-Women HeForShe solidarity movement.
- HeForShe seeks to make gender equality a reality.
- With men and boys as advocates and stakeholders.
- HeForShe meets its audience in their own space.
- Takes the movement to the social media.
- Kicked off with an inaugural speech by Emma Watson.
- The video of his speech went viral/earned global solidarity.
HeForShe: FROM A MOVEMENT TO MINDSET CHANGE

- Gender inequality is already common knowledge.
- The benefits of gender equality are well accepted.
- But for many gender equality is still a myth.
- Many use it to attract grants for self-enrichment.
- Many ‘heart and minds’ not converted for gender equity.
- Even among women:
  - Maltreatment of female domestic workers is rampant.
  - Facilitation of the global sex trade is common.
HeForShe: FROM A MOVEMENT TO MINDSET CHANGE

The predominant gender discourse focuses on:

- How to end marginalization of girls and women;
- Women’s access to socioeconomic opportunities.
- Women’s participation in community activities.
- Supporting political inclusion.
- And, access to healthcare and education opportunities.

Much is being achieved, but fundamental gaps still exist.
Bitty alteration of few inequities is not enough.
A new vision of the world is required.
All gender groups should be involved.
This calls for:
- Supportive communities, and families;
- A favorable policy environment;
- And, social systems that are fair and progressive.
No “one-size-fits-all” model is adequate.
Inclusion programs should suit local realities.
DEMOLISHING HARMFUL MASCULINITY

- Harmful masculinity legitimizes violence.
- A holistic approach is required:
  - Check harmful masculinity in schools, army, etc.
  - Manhood symbolized as a fierce, handsome warrior.
  - Certain jobs, like driving, kept only for men.
- The curriculum tends to promote male superiority.
  - Fragility of women blown out of proportion.
- Hypercompetitive sports promotes violence.
BLEND TRADITION WITH FORMAL LEGAL SYSTEMS

- Deliberately seek to update old-style systems.
- End harmful practices and customs, e.g:
  - Make bride price a token (5,000FCFA or less);
  - Outlaw the return of bride price for divorce;
- The girl/woman is not a commodity;
- Love should have no monetary price.
- Traditional rulers need continuous training.
BLEN D TRADITION WITH FORMAL LEGAL SYSTEMS

- The religious leaders need training.
- Outlaw unhealthy interpretation of religious texts.
- Reconstruct warped gender-specific social roles.
- Division of domestic chores to boys and girls;
  - promotes unhealthy masculinity and femininity.
- Boys and girls alike can cook with mothers.
BLEND TRADITION WITH FORMAL LEGAL SYSTEMS

- Both can sweep and wash dishes.
- Boys can also care for younger siblings.
- This will teach them husbanding.
- Boys should be checked as much as girls.
- Traditionally boys are more outward-oriented.
- And girls are more home-oriented.
- It explains why girls are ready for marriage earlier.
UNHINDERED ACCESS TO EDUCATION

- Education is the most vital tool for gender equality:
  - Education promotes control over fertility;
  - Qualitative care for children;
  - and, productive participation in public life.
- Educated women tend to have smaller family sizes.
- Educated women enroll their children in schools more.
- Therefore, no girl should be excluded from schooling.
- Possible causes of exclusion are:
  - Household chores and child care;
  - Pregnancy and child birth.
UNHINDERED ACCESS TO EDUCATION

- Reconstruct gender-roles to lessen chore per head.
  - Each family member can support in many ways.
- Simple machines/devices make chores simpler and easier.
- Day-care can lessen the burden of child care.
- Married and pregnant girls/women should attend school.
  - This is so in Botswana, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia.
- Flexible schooling hours introduced in Bangladesh, China, India, Morocco, and Pakistan.
- Being pregnant should not a reason for victimization.
- In Africa, children are considered the crown of womanhood.
For many, children are the primary reason for marriage. Women without children may be considered accursed. Or accused of eating up their children through witchcraft. Not having a child can make a family feel unsuccessful. Bearing children is a distinct exercise from marrying. Having children in wedlock may be desirable, Yet it is discriminatory to think that it must always be so: Pregnancy is a age-bound biological function; But wedding is a socially constructed ritual; A girl or woman cannot wed herself;
SAY ‘NO’ TO VICTIMIZATION OF PREGNANT GIRLS

- She just must wait for a man;
- Pregnancy out of wedlock need not attract labelling.
- Early sex should be discouraged by all means, by the media, family, schools, community leaders and FBOs.
- But a pregnant school girl needs love, not condemnation.
- The pregnant girl, the boy, and unborn child all need love.
The pregnant girl deserves good healthcare and counselling.

Healthcare system should manage such cases well.

It is gender inequity to label such as “unwanted pregnancies”.

It is gender inequity to label the child a “bastard”.
PROMOTE FAMILY VALUES

- Encourage progressive training on gender equity.
- Compel FBOs to teach gender equity.
- Abolish doctrines subjugating any gender.
- Freedom to seek divorce should be respected.
- Stable families should underlie gender programs.
- Avoid empowering the woman alone.
- It can be counterproductive:
PROMOTE FAMILY VALUES

- She may be alienated from her family;
- Family enterprises should be promoted.
- It encourages joint tasks and bonding.
- Lending policies should favor family enterprises.
- Marriage counselling should institutionalized.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


- European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), (2013) Mainstreaming gender into the policies and the programmes of the institutions of the European Union and EU Member States: Good practices in gender mainstreaming. Luxemburg.


International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) 2013 Journeys from Exclusion to Inclusion: Marginalized women’s successes in overcoming political exclusion.


Parker, S. W. and C. Pederzini (2001) Gender differences in education in Mexico

The economics of gender in Mexico: Work, family, state, and market pp. 9-45.


United Nations (2010), Achieving Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Office.