

The objective is to promote gender equality in all spheres of life, including family and community life, and to encourage and enable men to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behavior and their social and family roles.

Programme of Action, UN International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994

Equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences.

Platform for Action, UN Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995



Who benefits?

- **Society:** through the creation of more equitable relationships between men and women and an environment where every individual is empowered to make informed and safe decisions about sexuality and reproduction
- **Couples:** through shared decision-making on issues of sexuality, procreation, and paternity
- **Women:** through a greater understanding of reproductive rights and greater power in reproductive health decision-making
- **Men:** through a better understanding of their rights and obligations and by increased rates of diagnosis and treatment of STIs (including HIV), cancers, sexual dysfunctions, and other psychosexual problems.
- **Young men:** by having accessible, relevant, and accurate information on sexual and reproductive health issues
- **Children:** through more care and affection from fathers as well as mothers



Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung



Pan American Health Organization
Regional Office of the World Health Organization



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"Promoting Men's Participation in Sexual and Reproductive Health Programs in Central America"

Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO)
German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)



Women and Maternal Health Unit
(Family and Community Health Area)
in coordination with the
Gender, Ethnicity and Health Unit
(Office of the Assistant Director)

http://www.paho.org/English/AD/FCH/FCH_Index.htm

“Partnering with Men in Sexual and Reproductive Health”

Project purpose:

The purpose of the project is to increase male participation in reproductive and sexual health activities as a way of improving the sexual and reproductive health of Central American men and women while furthering the gender equity goals put forth in the Cairo and Beijing international conferences.

Since the inception of family planning and reproductive initiatives in the Central American region most efforts have targeted women alone and have failed to consider the complex gender and cultural dynamics that influence decisions affecting the reproductive health of both men and women.

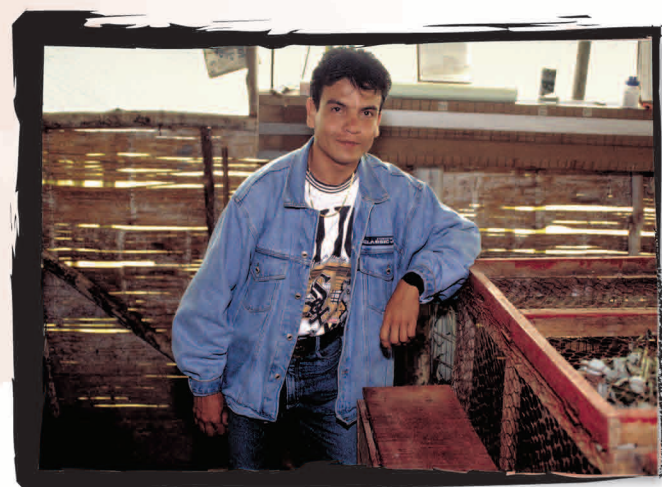
Improving men’s awareness of disease protection and promoting their support of their partner’s reproductive health choices, along with improving men’s access to quality health services, are important goals for the project.

Project objectives:

#1 - Evaluate with formative research methods the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of men 15 to 44 years old with respect to sexual and reproductive health topics.

#2 - Develop two strategies that will promote men’s participation in sexual and reproductive health activities, one at a community site and the other within a health service unit.

#3 - The production and distribution of protocols, guidelines, and training methodologies to increase men’s participation in sexual and reproductive health services.



Some Study Results from Central American Men:

- 80% of the interviewees do not know about or agree with the assertion that “the pill can cause infertility”
- 65% do not know or agree with the assertion that “vasectomy leaves men with less sexual desire”
- more than 70% of the men in the region have never used sexual and reproductive health services or received sexual and reproductive health information
- more than 50% believe that condoms are not effective in preventing the transmission of HIV (many believe that condoms have small pores)
- between 10-25% of men justify the use of physical aggression against women that do not fulfill domestic duties
- at least 50% state that it is normal for pregnant woman to have vaginal bleeding
- 65% state that either a man or a woman can take the initiative to use a contraceptive method
- 75% believe that men should receive more information on sexual and reproductive health topics
- more than 80% of the interviewees believe that women have the right to work outside the home
- more than 50% believe that the most important work of women is to care for the home and to cook for their families

Project Description:

- **Participating countries:** Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama
- **Formative research** carried out by country teams (Project Expected Result #1)
- **Design and implementation** of two intervention models: one in a clinical setting and the other in a workplace or recreational site (Project Expected Result #2)
- **Project partners include:** Ministries of Health in each participating country, UNFPA, Global Fund, EngenderHealth
- **Primary clinical activities:** workshops and trainings for health service providers in gender, sexuality, and the needs of male clients
- **Primary community activities:** engaging men in raising awareness of key sexual and reproductive health issues (HIV/AIDS and responsible fatherhood)

Project Accomplishments:

- **Production of a Comparative Analysis:** regional investigation results summarized by a professional team of demographers
- **Policy Advocacy:** inclusion of male involvement issues in several national health plans. Increasing awareness at all levels in participating Ministries of Health and within the community at large
- **Networking Partnerships:** alliances with local and regional NGOs with experience in the field of male involvement
- **Capacity Building:** an engagement with local clinic staff in training/workshops on gender, sexuality, counseling, and male sexual and reproductive health needs
- **Community Involvement/Commitment:** soccer clubs, youth groups, and workplace outreach efforts provide linkages with and demand for clinical services
- **Regional Conferences:** national teams from participating countries meet regularly to share experiences and lessons learned and to benefit from workshops with experts in the field

