

# Gender Synchronization: Updating and Expanding the Concept

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and a cast of thousands...



# Gender-transformative approaches

- Examine, question, and change rigid gender norms and imbalance of power as a means of reaching health and gender equality objectives
- Encourage critical awareness among men and women of gender roles and norms
- Challenge the distribution of resources and power between gendered groups
- Address power relationships between individuals and others in the community

# What is missing from focus only on women or on men?

- The broader awareness of how gender norms are reinforced by everyone in the community.
- The recognition that true social change has to come from work with women *and* men
- Programs don't always reflect social realities

# Gender synchronization concept

- Original 2010 paper described new effort to align programs working with men and women for improved health and gender equality
- Gender synchronization has intuitive appeal: that the transformation of deeply held norms requires the participation of all those who uphold and live out that set of interlinking values and expectations.
- Six years later, the gender synchronization concept continues to resonate with colleagues working in health and development, but requires some updates

# Refreshing the concept

1. Address nuances of engaging men, especially in work on gender-based violence
2. Address the implied *heteronormativity* ... and shift to challenging dominant gender norms wherever they are found!
3. Update program examples

# Refreshing the Concept (2)

4. Identify more and better-evaluated programs
5. The field has evolved since earlier paper
6. Need practical recommendations for gender synchronized programming

# Shift in framing question

## **ORIGINAL:**

Can gender inequities and norms that harm health be best addressed by working with men and women in a coordinated or synchronized way?

## **NEW:**

How can working with all gender identities in a synchronized way contribute to reducing gender inequalities and transforming the norms that harm health and wellbeing?

# Defining Gender-Synchronized Programs: Original

1. Are the **intentional** intersection of gender transformative work with men and with women
2. **Engage both sexes** in challenging harmful constructions of masculinity and femininity
3. **Equalize the balance of power** between men and women in order to ensure gender equality and transform social norms that lead to gender-related vulnerabilities
4. View **all actors** in society **in relation** to each other
5. Identify and **create shared values that promote human rights**, non-violence, equality and gender justice



# Defining Gender-Synchronized Programs: Additions

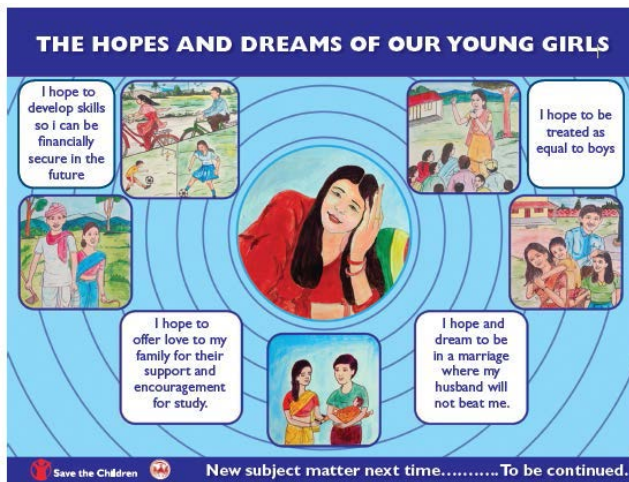
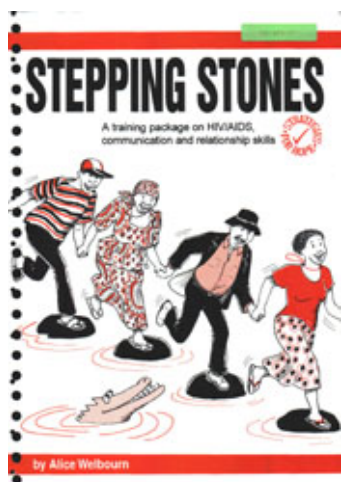
1. Are the **intentional** intersection of gender transformative work with men and with women
  2. **Engage both sexes** in challenging harmful constructions of masculinity and femininity
1. The intentional intersection of gender-transformative efforts **reaching people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.**
  2. Engage people in **challenging harmful and restrictive constructions of masculinity, femininity, homophobia, heterosexism and other limiting constructions of gender identity and expression** that drive gender-related vulnerabilities and inequalities and hinder health and well-being.

# Operationalizing Gender Synchronization

<b>Elements:</b>	<b>Key Questions to Ask:</b>
Explores roots of gender inequality	Does the intervention address patriarchy and power relationships?
Flexible gender roles	Does the program address social constructions of gender expression, particularly around masculinity and femininity? Does the program challenge heteronormativity, binaries?
Intentionality in reaching out to everyone to promote mutual understanding	Does the program provide opportunities for everyone to engage in constructive dialogue? Does the program help explore the gender-related vulnerabilities of everyone?
Equalizes balance of power and pursues gender justice	Does the program provide opportunities for everyone to develop and collaborate for a common cause?
Empathy	Does the program provide opportunities for everyone to engage in constructive dialogue? Does the program help explore the gender-related vulnerabilities of all?
Interdependency	Does the program provide opportunities for men/women to develop and collaborate on common cause?
Freedom from violence	Does the program develop strategies that engage everyone in preventing and responding to gender-based violence?
Human rights for everyone	Does the intervention promote the rights of everyone?
Gender equality as a measure of success	Does the program measure outcomes related to health and gender equity with everyone?

# Other good program experiences

SASA!



# Bandebereho, Rwanda: MenCare+ Couples Group Education

RCT used fatherhood as an entry point

- Highlighted gender inequality as a barrier to MNCH, violence prevention, women's empowerment

15 weekly sessions facilitated by peer educators

- 7 sessions for men to reflect on their roles as fathers and partners
- 8 sessions for men & their partners to strengthen relationships and develop a shared vision



**Bandebereho**  
Indatwa mu buzima

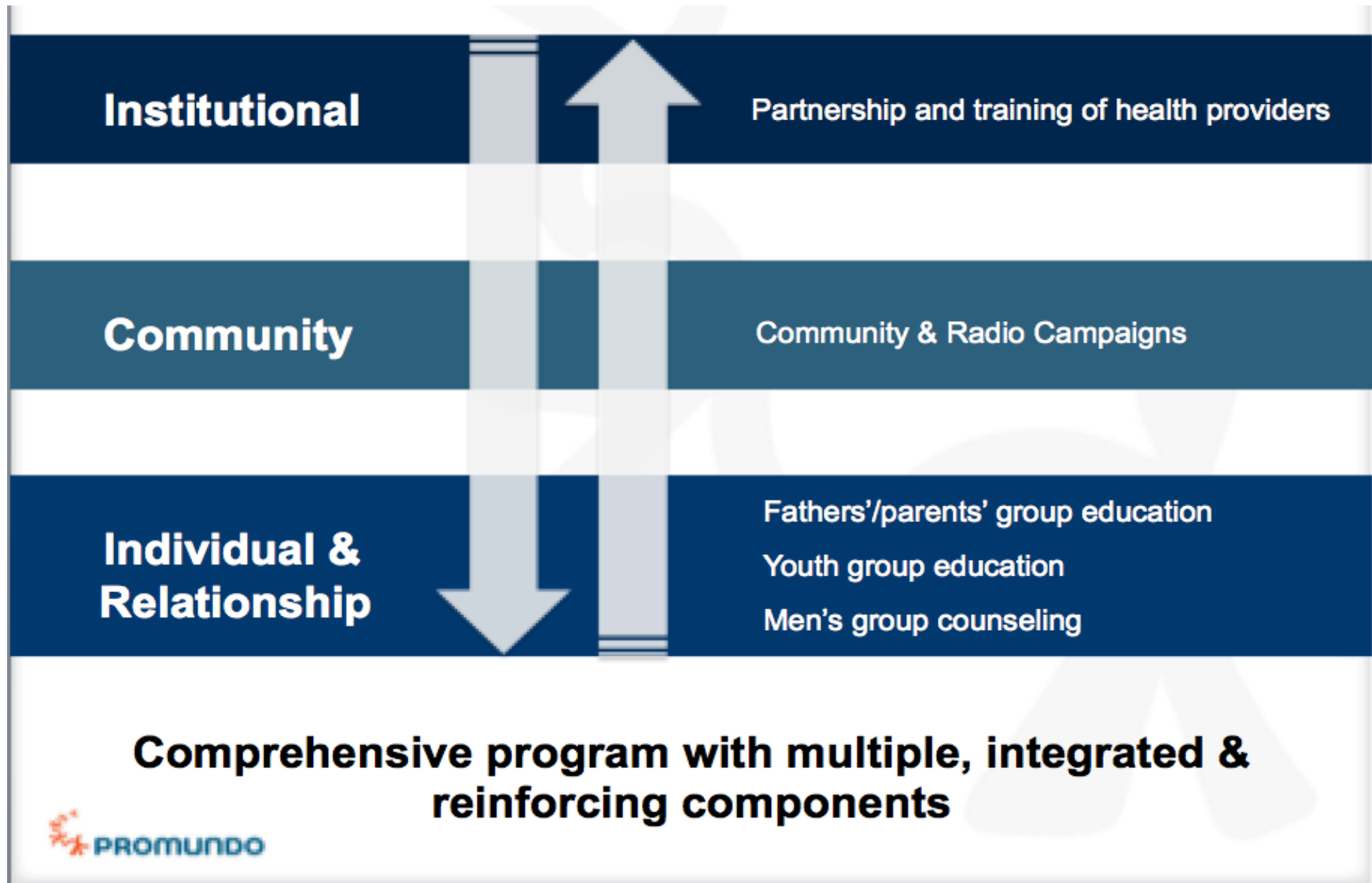


**INYOBORABIGANIRO**

Gushishikariza abagabo kugira uruhare mu buzima bw'umuryango,  
mu buringanire n'ubwuzuzanye



# Bandebereho: Ecological approach



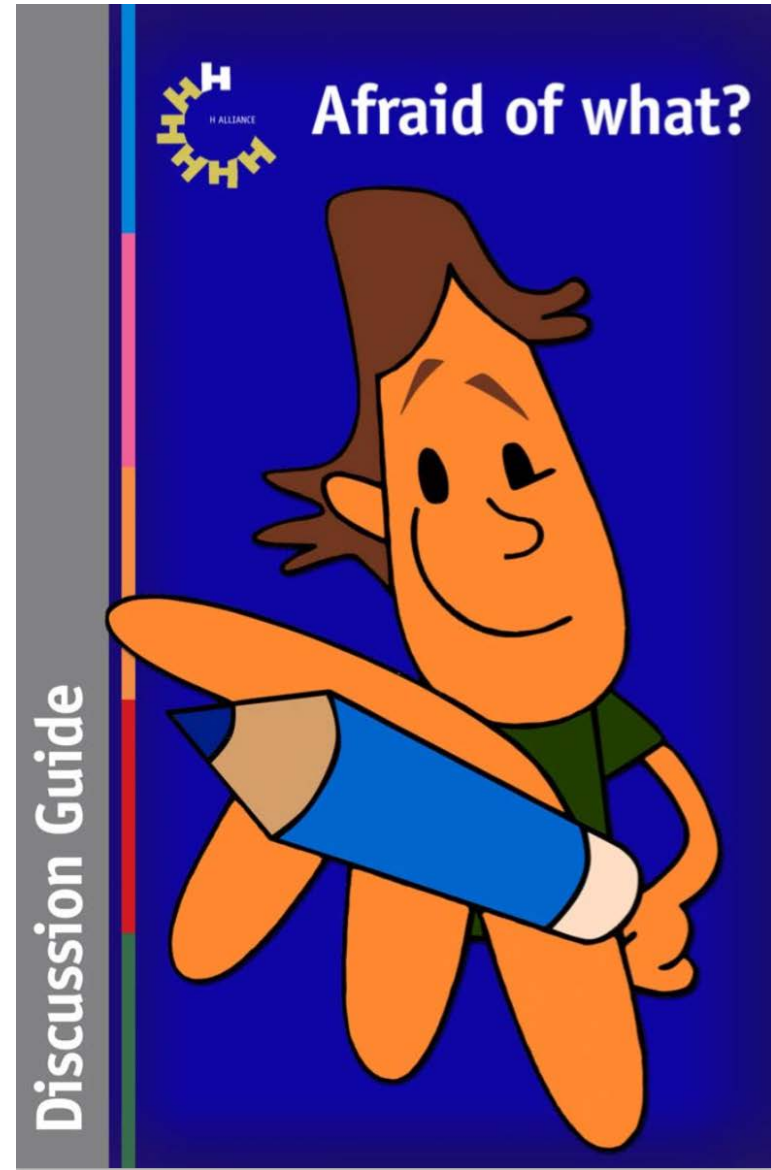
# Bandebereho findings

- Men's greater accompaniment at MNCH visits
- Greater support of partner in pregnancy
- Greater use of modern FP
- Less intimate partner violence
- More equitable attitudes and relationships
- Less violence against children



# Programa D, Brazil: Promundo, ECOS, Instituto Papai, Salud y Genero

- Engages broad range of people, not just LGBTQ in issues of homophobia
- Not oriented toward solving a public health challenge of a stigmatized group
- ... not evaluated



# Next steps

- Webinar to share the findings and get additional input
- Further work on the non-binary aspects of gender synchronization with expanded partners in the LGBTQI community
- Working to complete an applied paper and one that is more theoretical



