

Findings from the Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) study conducted in line with the MenCare+/ Bandebereho Project that was implemented by Rwanda Me's Resources Center (RWAMREC) in Rwanda indicates that gender-transformative interventions, which confront and transform gender norms, can lead to measurable changes in fathers' attitudes related to gender equality, including caregiving and domestic work.

 Based on feedback from women regarding the need for men to take on a greater share of care work, organisations such as Promundo and RWAMREC recognise the importance of engaging men as caregivers in order to promote gender equality for the overall family well-being.

According to the research findings, well-designed programmes with men and boys show compelling evidence of leading to changes in men's attitudes and behaviour, as regards sexual and reproductive health, maternal health, interactions with children, and use of violence.

MenCare is a global initiative to engage men in promoting family well-being and gender equality as equitable, caring, and non-violent partners and caregivers, and is active in more than 25 countries.

It includes campaign and programme activities that use fatherhood, and the prenatal period in particular, as an entry-point to involve men in transforming gender dynamics, and redistributing the burden of care work.

Research from RCT, mentioned above, indicated that, on average, 84 per cent of men in six in Rwanda attended at least one prenatal care visit with their pregnant partner highlighting a critical moment to begin to involve men in caregiving.

Through the Bandebereho Project, Group education for young men, young women and couples started in Rwanda in April 2014, after an intensive first year of development.

So far, 112 young men and women have trained as group facilitators and 2,880 young men and women reached by group education on gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, partner violence and drugs and alcohol.

In addition, 2,304 men / couples reached by group education about gender equality, pregnancy and childbirth, family planning, raising children, sharing household

responsibilities, violence and drugs and alcohol.

Also since its inception, 1080 men/couples (Inkingi z'amahoro) who use intimate partner violence have been reached by group education and 30,000 community members sensitized on men's involvement in Family planning, sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and maternal and Child Health (MCH) and 200 health providers trained on engaging men in SRH/MCH.

"Before, I thought women were supposed to do all the things in the household – fetch water, prepare meals, sweep. After having three kids, it was a challenge," says Jean Pierre, a 29-year-old father of triplets in Rwanda.

"After group education," he continues, "I am now aware that I have to be a part of all the household activities – including caring for children, feeding them and preparing their clothes."

Jean Pierre learned how taking more responsibility for housework and childcare has a positive impact for both him and his family, after participating in fathers groups through Rwanda's MenCare+ project.

MenCare Campaign, Promundo is working with the Rwanda Men's Resource Center (RWAMREC) to engage men, ages 18 to 35, as partners in sexual and reproductive health and in maternal, newborn and child health in Rwanda as part of the three-year MenCare+ project.

MenCare+ Rwanda was implemented by RWAMREC in four districts, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and local authorities: Karongi, Musanze, Nyaruguru and Rwanamagana. The project is funded by the Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs and implemented in collaboration with Rutgers WPF.