

IUSSP Debate:

IUSSP Debate: Should family planning programs in patriarchal societies use limited funds to further empower women or to involve men?

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Chat

- Jackeline Romio: We need support a new masculinity actions always, but not share funds, but create new fund specifically to involve men. Empower women is fundamental in all levels!
- Kent Klindera: My experience indicates Its difficult to engage men in FP/RH and gender equality work, when women are not empowered themselves. In communities where women do not support gender equality, its challenging to get men to understand the benefits of gender equality. Ensure women are empowered first, and then engage the men as partners....
- Jackeline Romio: Men need lose the patriarchal privilege then will help women to help all comunity.
- "Kill two birds with one stone" actually summarizes why involving men is more important, especially in the context of patriarchal societies.
- Jackeline Romio: abortion legalization is a general need, the criminalization still killing women where is ilegal.
- Lia Mikaberidze: absolutely agree !!! ability to make choices is only one aspect of empowerment!!! More on Supply than demand side!
- Lia Mikaberidze: excellent points
- Dominick Shattuck: Anju, there is plenty of research supporting male involvement.
- Dominick Shattuck: More importantly - to your point, they are also impacting the quality of the relationship and often empowering women...
- Lia Mikaberidze: quality services focused on women's needs are a pre-requisite
- Dominick Shattuck: All men need to be involved. You shouldn't create a program for only some women. The programs will have to evolve to find ways to fold in all men.
- Judith Helzner: there is evidence about programs with men, BUT there is little to no evidence COMPARING a dollar spent on male involvement to a dollar spent on empowering women or improving supply
- Dominick Shattuck: If 10-year studies are important, how many women use their FP methods for 10 years and never change or discontinue? I think this argument is weak.
- KAYVIN: Thank you Judith. I totally agree with you. That's why still argue that if it's a question of limited funds, then empowering women the more is the way to go
- Margaret Greene: If family planning programs are focused only on women, does this not simply strengthen the patriarchal notion that reproduction is a 'woman's issue' that men need not be concerned by? If the goal is to challenge the patriarchy, wouldn't it make sense to challenge that rather than reinforce it?
- Alessandra De Rose: Very exciting debate! I think the two are linked by a virtuous circle: increasing female empowerment creates mothers who raise more responsible sons and

daughters who are increasingly able to involve their partners in a more equitable gender relationship and this, in turn, favors FP programs

- Margaret Greene: To build on Nkechi's point on the 'moral argument', much of this discussion has ignored the reproductive and FP needs and rights of men as individuals. Men also have right to be able to have control over if, when and how many children to have (though ultimately not fully equivalent rights to women). If we position FP programs as only 'for women', we are also making the decision to ignore/sideline those questions - that may make sense given limited resources etc., but morally is problematic and should be acknowledged. Balancing the rights of men and women within FP programs is very difficult, but is something we should try and figure out rather than shy away from.
- Dominick Shattuck: Sorry I have to drop off. Good job! Increase male involvement is the next step to increased access and use of FP for women now... and men late on.
- Margaret Greene: More fundamentally, full reproductive empowerment is far easier to achieve when women and men can draw on their partner for support and engagement in achieving their reproductive goals. If the eventual goal is reproductive empowerment, we have to find ways to involve both men and women. I agree with Anju that we don't fully know how to best do this and as a result have to be extremely careful in when and how to engage men, but we can't learn how to do that without actually trying to do that...
- Madeleine Short Fabric: +to all of Meg Greene's excellent comments!
- Julius Sseninde: In Africa culturally Children are born for men, if you exclude them from the family planning and funding as a whole who will cater for the children. Dont be suprised that today's educated man seems to like fewer children than his counterpart the woman. as the later keeps pushing for more children in a bid to get a boy child.
- Lia Mikaberidze: thank you! very interesting positions
- Madeleine Short Fabric: Yes, excellent debate and really fun way to learn!
- Madeleine Short Fabric: Thank you to the presenters/debaters!
- Jackeline Romio: thank you