

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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Q&As

- 1 Why choose either men or women?
constance newman (constancenewman88@gmail.com)
 - "Question: what research exists & what is still needed to rigorously determine the value of a dollar spent on women-only versus on men too? I have long been an advocate for including men - in transformative ways that change gender norms - and promoted such programs. BUT with LIMITED funds and continued needs of UNSERVED women there are zero-sum decisions to be made between involving male partners of women already served and women who do not have access. One multi-country impact evaluation design is being carried out in francophone West Africa: several countries (Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, etc.) are doing Randomized controlled trials supported by the World Bank comparing (1) safe space clubs for girls only in some communities to (2) safe space clubs for girls PLUS ""future husbands"" clubs"" in the same communities. The goal is to test the impact on girls' empowerment with and without changing boys' attitudes. This will help show whether each dollar is better used to add work with boys."
- 2 How can you give women decision-making power without involving men?
Laura Wells (laura.wells@jhpiego.org)
- 3 Allen: I think empowering women without male participation will fragment the family and widen the communication within the household?
Kola Oyediran (Kolawole_oyediran@jsi.com)
 - Men in patriarchal society are decision makers. they have low knowledge of contraception. for example low vasectomy rate in India due to the misconceptions about the method.
- 4 Who will undertake the welfare
S R Murthy Mocherla (murthy2001@yahoo.co.in)
- 5 We all agree that girls schooling is important but are we being asked to put our family planning resources into education if we support putting finances into empowering women. Can we not get resources from the education sector to focus on girls and then have health sector funds for male engagement (and programs for women).
Ilene Speizer (ilene_speizer@unc.edu)
- 6 Who will undertake the welfare of children?
S R Murthy Mocherla (murthy2001@yahoo.co.in)
- 7 If current programs focus on empowering women doesn't it make sense to try and add the male involvement approach and see if effectiveness increases? Is there empirical evidence on male involvement?
Nico van Nimwegen (nimwegen@nidi.nl)
- 8 For both teams: I wonder if you could talk a bit about short- and long-term outcomes. Is there a short-term backlash against women's empowerment that can be alleviated by involving men? There are strong social norms around men's involvement in "women's issues" like FP/RH. How long does it take for these norms to change? What data do we have on long-term change?

Thank you so much.

Michelle O'Brien (mobrien@idmod.org)

- 9 Despite great increases over the past decade in many countries FP uptake has stagnated. It is time to set up an RCT that tests the differential impact of Male involvement versus the current norms of FP programming. Study arms: increasing the female method mix (adding yet another IUD) versus increased male involvement interventions vs integration of male-based methods (vasectomy, male-focused & couple counseling) vs control.
Dominick Shattuck (dshattu1@jhu.edu)
- 10 Anju/Allen: Is men an enemy or partner in achieving equity in SRH? ICPD considered men as partner in SRH rather than enemy. It is better to partner men in order for women to have the full benefits of empowering women.
Kola Oyediran (Kolawole_oyediran@jsi.com)
- 11 If we are focusing on the supply side as Anju Malhotra proposes, then why would we not make the services friendly to women and men and ensure that a broad range of options are available?
Ilene Speizer (ilene_speizer@unc.edu)
- 12 Do we have reliable and risk free contraceptives?
S R Murthy Mocherla ([mrmurthy2001@yahoo.co.in](mailto:murthy2001@yahoo.co.in))
 - Men still have limited contraceptive choices. Hence further empowering women may improve their communication skills in as far as SRH discussions at household level is concerned.
- 13 How will this conversation change when reversible male contraception becomes available in the next 10 or so years? Will we program men's RH services then? Or will they be relegated to private service delivery options?
Dominick Shattuck (dshattu1@jhu.edu)
- 14 Why are we assuming that women's empowerment leaves men out? women's empowered are not looking for replacing men in terms of taking decisions alone but having the possibility of being equally involved as them... with similar capabilities and participation...
Irene Casique (irene@crim.unam.mx)
- 15 Anju/Allen: Men should not be considered as enemy but take men as partners to get excellent SRH outcomes
Kola Oyediran (Kolawole_oyediran@jsi.com)
- 16 I think men involvement and women empowerment are complementary to each other's. However, if women's empowerment is given priority, it will have multidimensional effects even in patriarchal society. One must understand even women's empowerment can bring male involvement indirectly too especially in long term as they can orient sons and daughters on this aspect. However, we also need to convince funding agencies to fund both sides of studies. Most importantly SRH rights from young age must be introduced else all efforts would not be so effective.
Chander Shekhar (buddhabglobe@gmail.com)
- 17 Following Anju's comment: How can we get FP better supported by Ministries of Finance and the like if we don't effectively engage men?
Madeleine Short Fabic (mshort@usaid.gov)
- 18 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.
Julius Sseninde (juliusprh@gmail.com)