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**Strategies and Approaches to Enhance the Role of Men and Boys  
in Gender Equality: Case Study of Yemen**

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\* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

**STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES TO ENHANCE THE ROLE OF MEN AND  
BOYS IN GENDER EQUALITY**

**CASE Study OF YEMEN**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2000, Oxfam (GB) in Yemen started a program for “Ending Violence Against Women” in partnership with 13 organizations from civil society and the Women National Committee, which is the government body, mandated to promote women's rights. This paper reviews the socialization process in Yemen, and external factors that contribute to enforcing unequal gender power relations. It provides a review based on successful empirical field- work on strategies to include men and boys in ending violence against women, and conceptual framework to enhance partnership between women's organizations and influential men in the society. It also describes potential approaches to effectively promote men's engagement and changing their attitudes with regard to gender equity building on positive aspects of men's socialization. The paper provides conclusion and recommendations of strategies and approaches that could be adopted in similar sensitive programs elsewhere in particular in conservative countries.

## 2. BACK GROUND: THE CONTEXT OF GENDER EQUALITY IN YEMEN

### 2.1 Socialization process

Yemen is one of the least developed countries in the continent<sup>1</sup>. In Yemen 47% of population lives under poverty line and experience poverty differently across class, race, age, disability, and gender. In general, the position of Yemeni women is shaped by social, traditional and cultural factors that mostly marginalize and restrict women's participation in social, economic and political development. Gender disparity is significant along different spheres. Young girls have less access to education; women are underrepresented in decision-making positions, and have less access to credit, the labor market, and they work as unpaid labor in rural areas in family farms. The fertility rates are high with large sized families and this may be attributed to many factors associated to religious beliefs, and preference of boys to help the parents in old age, besides other factors.

Females are socialized to be obedient, powerless, voiceless with less capacities compared to men, and to be prepared for being ideal role model as "good wives and mothers". They contribute to the invisible uncounted labor through their reproductive roles in childrearing, as carers of sick and elderly, and maintaining household work such as cleaning, cooking, fetching water etc. Gender power relation discourse is highly associated with poverty. Poor women who are economically dependents on their male counterparts, with less education and skills are the ones who accept "silently" men's domination because they have no other alternative. For economically independent women in urban areas, they feel less threatened by their males' counterparts, because they have space for choice.

However, unequal gender power relations is reinforced and regenerated in households by mothers, fathers and elderly females and males and transformed into individual and community behavior. It gets represented in social institutions and structures such as in the schools' curriculum that shapes and reinforces stereotypes for girls and boys. Females in Yemen are hardly engaged in sports or social community activities apart from only women's gatherings. Men are visible and dominant both in public and in private life. Women's space is more in the private sphere, with less power and less recognition of their reproductive roles.

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<sup>1</sup>. Yemen is ranked 133 out of 148 countries in the GDI estimated at 0.389

The socialization process in the household builds up the patriarchal institution and enforces gender roles and responsibilities thereby leading to unequal power relation between men and women since birth and along the life cycle. Unequal power relation extends in the community at large and within the government institutions reflected in their policies and practices. Males and females are born free and raised up according to expected gender roles. Males are socialized within a restricted "masculinity" framework<sup>2</sup>. The masculinity framework socializes males to be strong, dominating, earners and breadwinners, as guardians for their females' counterparts (mothers, sisters, wives, daughters and female relatives).

In a workshop held by Oxfam (GB) in 2002 with a group of men and women from partners' organizations, the following illustrates how Yemeni women and men demonstrated the socialization process of men:

Men' identity and socialization:

- Boys are treated as superior to girls in the family.
- Women in the family serve men. Best quality food is provided for men.
- Boys' education is given the preference over girls' education.
- Men are not allowed to perform domestic work (cooking, cleaning etc).
- Money is spent on boys' education and entertainment.
- Males have full freedom of movement in public life (boys come home late without being questioned).
- Men are meant to be strong but not emotional. They should not weep or cry. An often-heard statement in Arab families, when a young boy cries " Don't cry. Are you a girl?"
- Men are guardians of their sisters and even mothers.
- Men are socialized to being decision makers and to hold power over women.
- Educational curriculum reinforces the pattern of men and women's socialization (girls cleaning and cooking, boys playing outside).
- Men are socialized to be violent (toys like guns, sticks, games).
- Misinterpretation of Islam that enforces men's guardianship and domination.
- Recreation activities including sport are limited to men.
- Girls' schools don't provide sport activities.
- Social clubs are opened only for men.
- Activities are made during Qat sessions that deprive women from participating (culturally, women are not allowed to sit with men during Qat chewing sessions).

*As a result of the socialization process, partners described men's identity that prevents achieving the vision of gender equality*

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<sup>2</sup>The national costume of men includes wearing a knife at the front enforcing the image of braveness and ability to fight.

- Men dominate the family, society and state levels.
- Men dominate politics and decision-making.
- Men are guardians of women.
- The domination of the culture of masculinity at different levels (a real man should be a fighter and violent).
- Men hold limited vision on gender issues.

*Partners further illustrated men's identity that promotes achieving the vision of violence free society:*

- Men are responsible and carers of their families.
- Men have strong loving parent feelings.
- Men protect the women in the families (fathers and brothers protect their daughters and sisters when treated badly by their husbands).
- Men accepting women's work
- Society dishonor men who mistreat or insult their wives and daughters in public. It is a great shame for a man to batter his wife.

However, it is essential to emphasize that in general terms, in the Yemeni context men resist two terms: **gender** which they view as western concept, and **'equality'** which they view as "impossible", building their arguments based on Islamic codes. However, one may argue that men enjoy different degrees and levels of power along different classes. However, having exclusive power over women unites men. Gender equality is a threatened term for men who fear to lose their identity and masculinity. A man could lose his power in society, however, power over women continues in his household. Men's gains from gender equality are yet to be seen by men.

## **2.2 Factors that contributed to reinforcing unequal gender power relations**

However, for the last two decades gender power relations and women's status have been affected by three major events: the reunification of North and South Yemen, the global spread of fundamentalist movements, and democracy in Yemen. The three aspects have reinforced gender power relations and regenerated expected gender roles and responsibilities.

### **The unification of Northern and Southern Yemen**

Following the unification of the Northern and Southern Yemen in 1990, Yemeni women from the South argued that they have lost several of their legal rights. In fact, the South of Yemen that existed prior to unification signed most of the international conventions adopted by the Republic of Yemen. To mention a few examples, women are poorly represented in decision-making positions and inadequately represented in certain professional fields such as the judiciary. Data reveals that the number of women judges dropped drastically by nearly 80% following the unification, marriage age was left open in law and guardianship was enforced for female marriage, hence depriving women from choices and rights over their decisions. Moreover, as Yemeni women used to argue that very few wore the Hijab (black veil) before unification. Now they have gotten to wearing the veil for fear that men will harass them.

### **The spread of fundamentalist movement**

The Sharia' Law (Islamic Law) is the main source of the Yemeni Constitution and laws in particular the Family Law<sup>3</sup>. The spread of radical movements, which has also included Yemen, has resulted in the presence of Islamic institutions that often misinterpret Islam reinforcing unequal gender power relations. While unequal gender power relation is a global phenomenon, yet it varies along class, race, age, and rural and urban classifications. Yemen's social classification is based on tribalism, and race and gender power relations varies within that. In rural areas for example where women contribute significantly to their triple role (productive, reproductive, and management of community) the gender power gap is significant. Early marriage, polygamy, divorce etc are often legitimized by misinterpreting religious discourse to enforce women's subordination. Women are left with less bargaining power.

### **Democracy and gender power relation**

In 1990 and following the unification of North and South Yemen into the Republic of Yemen, the process of democratization began. This provided space for civil society and women's organizations to build their constituency and agenda to promote women's rights. However, women activists and others were unable to use this space effectively to build a strong women's movement to address gender inequalities that existed. This was due to lack of cohesion and cooperation between women activists and women's organizations and others which in effect was a reflection of the way the development sector operated more broadly. Moreover, limited space was available for elite educated women who were in the fore-front to raise issues around gender equity using equitable development as entry points. However, the challenge that active women's groups and organizations face is to change the patriarchal institutional behavior within households and state.

In the democratic context, the gender power gap remains and women are left more as followers than leaders. Women have been manipulated during elections as voters for different male dominated political parties. During the last parliamentary election (April, 2003) in Yemen, political parties excluded women to stand for election that resulted in only one woman in the parliament out of 301 male members. Due to the weak women's movement<sup>4</sup>, women failed to push their agenda for more representation. The elite educated middle class women now derive their identity from their affiliations to political parties and further they support their parties' agenda and mobilize poor women during elections on behalf of their political parties. By and large women activists felt disappointed and demoralized. For poor marginalized women groups and rural women, democracy makes no difference. The greater challenge for them is to address their poverty and survival issues.

The unequal power relation at households resonates as much in the public life with under representation of women in positions and power for decision-making.

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<sup>3</sup> Family law in Islam has not been turned into civil law. Polygamy, husbands absolute right for divorce, and male guardianship over women have not been challenged so far.

<sup>4</sup> For example in January 2002, the Islamic parties in the parliament, wanted to pass Bit Al Ta'a Law (The house of obedience) that obliges wives to be dragged to their husbands' homes against their wish. However, enlightened women activists from Yemeni Women Union in Aden (South/Socialist) succeeded to stop the endorsement of the law, by sending strong press messages to the government. The cost of that was high. The women from Aden were excluded from the union's recent election carried out in September 2003.

## 2. PROMOTING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN YEMEN: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In 2002, Oxfam (GB) established a project on *Gender Equality and Men (GEM)* that aims to highlight the fact that gender equality is liberating and beneficial for both women and men and that gender equality means moving beyond the notion of masculinity and femininity and opens up a broader and richer set of options for how women and men work, behave, think, feel and relate to one another. As elaborated by the project team, the project will promote building partnership among women and men for gender equality, poverty reduction and better lives for all. GEM is not simply looking at the exclusion or unique circumstances of men in the development process (although that is part of it). It is the inclusion of men". (GEM Project Team, Oxfam GB, 2002).

Oxfam (GB) in Yemen has been part of GEM project. In Yemen Oxfam (GB) started a program for Ending Violence against Women working with 13 partners from Civil Society Organizations. National studies revealed that violence against women is a wide spread phenomena manifested in wife battering, forced early marriage, honor crimes, deprivation of girls from education, prohibiting women inheritance, and women's limited access to claim divorce or alimony.

In May 2002, Oxfam in Yemen in collaboration with GEM *project represented by James Lang held a workshop with partners*. The objective of the workshop was to explore potential role of women and men to work in partnership for ending violence against women and to encourage participants to include men in their analysis and actions on gender equality, to use the results of the workshop in exploring further actions to integrate the GEM approach in Oxfam's Yemen program on *Ending Violence Against Women*<sup>5</sup>.

The workshop explored partnership between women and men in order to combat violence against women, making reference that both women and men will gain from the process. The framework suggests that "partnerships" may remain stuck at one stage. But in the end, we negotiate towards the point of trust where equality is actualized. The conceptual theoretical framework of men and women partnership is as follows:

- 1) Establishing **Shared Goals** – such as ending gender -based violence, improved livelihoods, better governance, or ending poverty – and understanding that both men and women have a role to play in achieving these goals.
- 2) Fostering **Cooperation** – with the understanding that working together is more effective than working in isolation. The division of labor, however, will reflect differing positions of power and voice.
- 3) Understanding **Complementary Roles** – a division of labor will present different tasks that will fall along traditional power and gendered lines. Men and Women articulate agency, willingness and efficiency to perform separate tasks.

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<sup>5</sup> The core discussion was based on how partners view a violent free society and guided by five questions: What would a violence free Yemen look like (Physical violence in public and in the home)? What is it about men's identity that prevents achieving this vision and promoters? What about up brining/socialization of men that creates this identify? (Why are men this way)? How do women and men need to change the way they think and act to reinforce the positive? What can you (the participants) do differently to make Yemen violence free? What new partnerships are needed, programs, changes in ideas and beliefs (policy, practice, ideas)

- 4) Showing **Commitment** - motivations for men and women may be different, but commitment to the process is crucial for partnerships.
- 5) Gaining **Trust** - that benefits of partnership will be shared equally; each partner will uphold their end of the bargain, that unequal power relations will not be re-established.

Female partners emphasized the importance of “building partnership” between men and women working in ERAW, which requires building trust between men and women partners. Women were in doubt whether men who work with them in ERAW genuinely believed and/or were committed to challenge unequal power relation (Oxfam meeting with partners, Taiz, March 2002). This attributes to the fact that men working to challenge gender inequality require deviations from masculinity framework and threat to their status quo by the patriarchal society.

### **3. THE PROCESS OF BUILDING PARTNERSHIP AMONG WOMEN AND MEN TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES**

Building partnership between women and men to combat violence against women focused on two main strategies with regard to involving men as targets and actors to combat violence against women. The basic strategies included:

- a) Working with men and boys as recipients for awareness raising sessions on VAW.
- b) Working with men as allies to combat violence against women in particular key government officials and key actors in the society such as academicians and religious leaders.

The partnership strategy will be examined along the partnership theoretical and conceptual framework and will explore different approaches used for each particular strategy.

#### **3.1 Men and boys as recipients of awareness raising sessions on VAW**

It is evident that the partners of Oxfam (CSOs) targeted men to change their attitudes and practices to respond to the issue of VAW, which would eventually influence policy and legal reforms. Key influential policy makers were targeted by Oxfam partners from CSOs to promote bringing up the issue of VAW as a public issue that requires further attention by policy makers and key influential men in the society. Gender balance was maintained in most educational campaigns and along partners training sessions and workshops additionally, the Scout Association targeted boys at different age groups to raise their awareness and change their attitudes regarding VAW and gender equality using many methods to measure changing the attitudes such a poetry and drawing. Young men and women participated in joint events where young men and boys listened to young women and girls concerns.

This process has formed the basis of building **common goal** and generates recognition among men that they have a role to play in combating VAW.

The significant approach used by partners is a process approach. Partners dealt with the sensitivity of using the term gender and gender equality very carefully. The approach used focused on stimulating awareness through using Islamic codes that promotes humanity and respect to women. It focused on the welfare of the family, which is highly appreciated rather than **females** as a separate entity. It also focused on starting with least sensitive issues for men such as importance of men support to girls' education and participation in public life rather than open up to domestic violence where men would resist its existence. The sensitization

sessions have targeted also schoolteachers and parent's councils where parents and teachers enforce socialization.

However, while the above approach focused on socialization at community/society level; yet a gap remains on challenging the power of the socialization process at household/family level that could be challenged through strategies targeting parents, and elderly.

### **3.2 Working with men as allies to combat violence against women**

Along the program implementation, and in order to enhance partners' lobby, alliances' building and advocacy for EVAW, Oxfam encouraged partners to form Advocacy Groups from potential male key actors in their area of work and in their respective governorates to support combating VAW.

Working with men in the Advocacy Groups will take the below case studies of partners for review: The Yemeni Women Union in Taiz and Hadramut (directors are females), and the Women National Committee (the director is female). The three case studies will be examined along the partnership between women and men theoretical and conceptual framework based on the program strategies.

#### **Case study I: The Yemeni Women Union in Taiz and Hadramut (NGO) and the Women National Committee (WNC), a government organization.**

##### **Establishing common goal**

The Yemeni Women Union is a large pioneer NGO in Yemen with branches all over the country. The Union's mandate is to promote women's status (income generating activities, literacy classes etc) using Women and Development approach. It has been exclusively working with women before the combating VAW program. Beyond Oxfam's expectation and in a very strategic way, both branches of the Union targeted men in key positions and who have a role to play in EVAW. In Taiz, the Yemeni Women Union (YWU) formed its advocacy group composed of 15 males in addition to the head of the branch, the coordinator of Oxfam's project and a secretary (the three are females). While the project started last August 2002, the union held eight meetings with the advocacy group and formed its mandate jointly with the members that devote their time voluntarily to support the mission of the union to end violence against women. The union stated the main mission of the advocacy group as: *promoting the rights of men and women in the society, monitoring and documentation of cases that violates women's rights in particular domestic violence, and harassment in work, raising the awareness of women and men on issues related to violence against women*. The men identified in the group are described by the leadership as respectable in the community with a high level of power to influence (security, police, judges, lawyers, and academicians) and are committed to support women's issues in specific and human rights in general<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> The male members of the advocacy group have been divided based on their working positions into 6 committees including: Monitoring and documentation, Rights and freedom, awareness raising, security and defense (working with police and security in raising their awareness on VAW with a particular focus on juvenal rights and cases), and media.

In the Yemen Women Union branch in Hadramut, a similar structure was established for the advocacy group while gender balance was maintained in terms of representation. Ten men were represented compared to nine women. The represented male members are: The Chairperson of the Legal Affairs Office, the Director of the Security Office, The Director of the Lawyers' Union, Vice Chairperson of the Criminal Department in the Ministry of Justice, three media persons, Director of the Social Affairs office, etc.

The entry point of the union's branches directed by women to gain the support of key male actors was to develop dialogues expressing that women have problems that could not be resolved without men's support. This has generated extreme interest by men to recognize that women's issues concern men also. This highlights the process of building alliances with men focusing on women's needs to men, which is highly related to men's socialization process, which refers to their context of guardianship that is accepted by them. Therefore, the process helped in developing **common goal**, which integrated and targeted both women and men. The context of shared common goal is as expressed below.

*" We can not work on ending violence against women focusing only on women without relating to men. Men in the Advocacy Group have been of great help in raising the awareness of men in particular police officers. Key men in society who joined us has helped in increasing the role of both women and men in combating violence and reactivated grassroots linkages with poor women. Men in the group know by now what types of violence women experience, which help in society's acknowledgment that violence against women exist" (Interview with Soad and Ishraq, Yemeni Women Union, Taiz, September 2003)*

### **Fostering Cooperation**

Because of the socialization process and inferiority of women in the society, the effect of women's role in raising awareness around gender issues among men remains minimal. In sensitive issues such as violence against women or HIV/AIDs and gender equality in general, men should take a lead role in educating other men. Most of female trainers who carried out awareness raising on VAW in particular in rural/traditional areas have been attacked by men. During a field visit to the YWU in Taiz, we met with a male member of the Advocacy Groups and explored how he collaborates with the Union in combating VAW.

Mr. Hussein Alademeei, a human rights activist argued that"

*"I am collaborating with the YWU to raise the awareness of men and police and security on rights of women and men in detention. Because Yemen is a conservative and religious society my entry point has been on Islam codes, then moving to national laws and thereafter making linkage with international Human Rights Conventions. I don't use the term gender, which is not accepted in Yemen. It is about absolute equality between women and men, which is not possible in Yemen. We may need to Yemenize the gender concept"*

The above reflects the full understanding of women to their limitations in addressing gender issues with men, which necessities cooperation with men. Men also are so sensitive to entry points to challenge men's attitudes and practices through using process of entry points.

### **Understanding Complementary Roles**

Based on the position of women in Yemen and their limited access to and control over decision making positions; they have found that men could play a significant role in complementing their efforts geared towards ending VAW. Women lawyers in the union branches have been providing legal support to women survivors of violence. However, in courts, and along looking at their cases women are discriminated against by officials. The complementary role of male key actors' members in the advocacy group is illustrated below:

*"The presence of men from key positions in Hadramut in the Advocacy Group has really provided us as members of the union which used to be women domain only, with great moral support. Having men who came to support us was so meaningful for us. When we talk now, we feel that men understand us. Their presence has changed the way society used to think. Women issues are not any more women's issues; it is now women and men issues. In Hadramut, men occupy key positions in government and non-government institutions, where women are not represented such as courts and police stations. They have access to power and decision makers; therefore they act as mediators between decision makers and us. They facilitated and helped in many cases of women prisoners and women who are discriminated against in court through the dialogues and actions they pursue with other men. The presence of men in the Advocacy Group, gave the group strength because it brings new image in our society and that men are with us in combating VAW" (Interview with Alyaa and Hanan, Hadramut, September 2003)*

Complementary role based on division of labor and women's less access to decision-making position has created a harmony and understanding among women and men that each has a role to play to implement one common goal.

### **Showing Commitment**

It should be understood that the socialization of men and gender roles are embedded and requires much courage of men to promote gender equality. Promoting gender equality per se may not be the main motive behind men support to women's issues; but the commitment to the process is counted and could eventually change men attitudes to be fully committed to gender equality.

Dr. Mohammed is a lecturer in the faculty of Law in Taiz University and also a member in the Advocacy Group, when asked about the motive behind joining the Advocacy Group, he argued that:

*" At the beginning the YWU asked me to provide training for police on the rights of accused persons. That request was appealing for me, because I have seen the accused women and men are treated badly, aggressively and sometimes violently. I wanted to change that practice to ensure that accused persons are treated according to law. Just for police officers to come to the Union and receive the training is a success by itself. I then joined the group, because I thought it is amazing that a woman organization took that initiative. This has further motivated me to leap on new graduates from the school of Law. I have a group on new graduate lawyers (women and men) to provide legal support to poor women free of charge." (Dr. Mohammed, Taiz, 2003)*

Moreover,

*"Women are half of the society. The woman is the mother, the sister. Women are our daughters, wives, and colleagues at work. I believe in women's legal and social rights and recognize the violations of these rights. I highly encourage any man who cares of his mother, sister, wife and daughter to join the Advocacy Group to advocate for women's rights and to enable the society to understand that women have rights that should be respected. I have been advocating for that among male colleagues in the University"(Interview with Mr. Abdelrahman Saeed, Hadramaut, September 2003)*

From the above, it is quite evident that men hold strong feelings of humanity and justice that generate their commitment to gender equality. The commitment of men generates strong recycling of their commitment to gender issues. Men value blood relations; men's obligations towards the female family members are tremendous in Yemeni context, which provides strong platform to invest on "gains of family" rather than women gains.

### **Gaining Trust**

The basic reasons for men joining the group have varied, however, they have been eventually related and committed themselves to support ending violence against women, while significantly not by necessity explicitly challenging gender power relation or promoting gender equality (impact of embedded socialization).

In gaining trust women organizations have initiated bargaining process with key policy actors such as in the case of the Women National Committee (WNC), which is a government organization, charged with promoting gender equality. The committee established contacts with the Ministry of Endowment, the highest religious institute in Yemen that relates its work around Sharia Law. Members from the WNC argued that the Ministry was open to listen to women's issues with full understanding to violence against women, where key actors in the Ministry stated it contradicts the principles of Islam. They asked the WNC what messages that want to send through mosques with regard to violence and women's rights and which the ministry will take ahead to be included in Friday Prayers.

It is evident that the WNC has mobilized male policy makers in better understanding to women's issues which has eventually influenced their attitudes and started to challenge harmful practices that affect women. Getting persons from the Ministry of Endowment to support ending violence against women from religious perspective reflects the full understanding of the committee to the importance of linking up with religious leaders and linking up the whole VAW discourse with what is accepted in Yemeni context to ensure mass changes with regard to the issue.

Building trust while is a long term stage, yet responses of men to women's needs represent steps towards gaining trust which is the ultimate goal of men and women partnership to end violence against women.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“ If you change the attitude of one man regarding gender equality, you will change the attitudes of the whole society. And if you change the attitude of one woman regarding her rights you will change the attitude of that woman only” (Magda El Sanousi)

This paper has attempted to explore potential strategies and approaches that could be applied to promote gender equality through working with men and boys. The paper has provided a review of the evolving socio-economic and cultural context of Yemen that is essential for analyzing the magnitude of gender power relation. It has argued that changes that have taken place following the unification of Yemen, a weak women's movement, a new and evolving democracy, and spread of radical misinterpreted religious movements, patriarchal socialization processes, and gender stereotypes at all levels (household, community and state levels) have posed as challenges and sometimes opportunities to confronting unequal gender power relations. However, significant variations in gender power relations do exist along class, rural/urban and along social status.

The paper suggests key strategies and approaches to mainstream boys and men to contribute in gender equality. Essential and prior to establishing strategies and approaches is the need for in-depth analysis to the socialization process and external factors that reinforce unequal gender power relation (radical religious movement, democracy, laws, poverty etc) and along social classes and diverse groups.

Targeting men and boys to sensitize them about gender equality and their potential role should be built around using Islamic codes that promotes respect of humanity, mercy, and the welfare of the family. It should be around stimulating and reinforcing the positive emotions of men as lovers and carers of sisters, wives, mothers, and daughters. This will contribute to establishing common goals between men and women, boys and girls at different levels.

Since in most developing countries such as Yemen there are many women groups and organizations that work to promote women's rights, with little focus on men. The paper suggests from empirical successful work of NGOs a **partnership** framework/strategy that promotes different forms of relationship between women's organizations and key actors in government and non-government organizations to be alliances to support gender equality. However, women's organizations should at the beginning get convinced that men are key players in shifting and/or generating equal gender power relation. The approach along this strategy line focuses on using acceptable entry points building on positive characters of men (protecting women) to reach key men to positively contribute to ending violence against women and encourages men to take a lead in changing other men's attitudes while accepting on the short run their limitations based on their identity.

*A summary of strategies and approaches is attached in annex (i).*

Annex (I)

STRATEGY	APPROACHES
<p><b>Understanding the dynamics of gender power relations at macro level and along different social groups.</b></p>	<p>In-depth gender analysis and mapping to different forms and magnitudes of gender power relation. Consider external factors that affect the map of gender power relations and impact resulted from changes in external environment</p>
<p><b>Understanding the socialization process at different levels (household, society) and relate to external factors.</b></p>	<p>Dialogues between women and men, boys and girls among different social groups on how socialization is reproduced and by whom.</p> <p>Explore positive characters of men to support gender equity and understand the threat they face and how to overcome it.</p>
<p><b>Awareness raising for boys and men to promote gender equality</b></p>	<p>Use youth forums; media, and use language acceptable to men and boys (Islamic codes, humanity and morals, family welfare) build on their positive attitudes as supporters to women and girls. Focus on how gender equality and justice will promote the welfare of all family members (men, women, boys and girls)</p> <p>Reflect gains at all levels (family, community), and establish common goals through dialogues between boys and girls and the role of boys on supporting gender equality. Extensively capitalize on the role of religious leaders.</p> <p>Consider the vulnerability of boys and needs that restrict them from an effective role in prompting gender equity (boys and men have their own gender needs that focus on women have oversight). Establish counseling phone lines and support boys and men who experience violence from other men or society in large because of their gendered role.</p> <p>Complement direct work with boys with working with parents and influential members in the family (the elderly)</p>
<p><b>Building partnership between women organizations and key male policy makers</b></p>	<p>Establish dialogues with women's groups and organizations to generate their understanding and acceptance to men as holding power that could support gender equity.</p> <p>Women organization use discourses that are accepted by policy makers and key male actors and avoiding discourses that challenge men's identify, which may put them under threat.</p> <p>Men are trained to change the attitudes of men and</p>

influence change using appropriate and accepted dialogues (e.g building on Islamic codes and morality in Yemen context)

Women organizations consider all levels of partnership and accept to go along the process of partnership with men.

Women's organizations promote trust building and influence laws, regulations, media, and school curriculums to be gender sensitive and challenges gender stereotypes.