

Reshaping Male Masculinity to Combat Gender-Based Violence and Foster Gender Equality in West Africa: A Case Study of the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency Kings Club

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Abstract : Gender-Based Violence has persistently been an enduring epidemic rooted in various homes and cultures worldwide throughout history. Despite numerous multifaceted approaches aiming to eliminate gender disparity by empowering girls with independent, survival, or entrepreneurial skills, positive transformation efforts for boys are often neglected. This gap, particularly in West Africa, hinders the reshaping of generational perceptions of men's roles in eradicating all forms of violence against women, creating an imbalance in providing holistic, sustainable solutions in our society. In response to this, the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency established the Kings Club initiative in 2018 in Lagos, Nigeria, aligning with UN SDG 5 on 'gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.' This initiative aims to debunk sociocultural misconceptions, educate on sexual and Gender Violence issues, and promote positive masculinity among schoolboys. The objective is to foster a balance in the behavioral and attitudinal mindsets of young boys, contributing to the success of an equitable society for all in the eradication of gender disparity. The ongoing project demonstrates an annual 89% success rate in behavioral and attitudinal mindset shifts among schoolboys by employing qualitative assessments of participants aged 10-17. The paper uses data from 161 secondary school students drawn from 15 schools in Lagos State Education District 6, exposed to modules on Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health, Masculinity, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Anger Management, and transitioning from boy to man in a 6-week program, with observations and feedback analyses. The paper evaluates changes in attitudes, behaviors, and gender role perceptions among the boys who are now pioneers of the Kings' Club in their respective schools, serving as positive influencers among their peers in schools and at home. The paper's findings provide a nuanced understanding of cultural dynamics shaping male masculinity in West Africa and offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of innovative interventions to end all forms of violence against women. In conclusion, by intentionally reshaping young boys alongside girls, who represent the future, we stand a chance to create culturally sensitive societal norms that bridge the gap of gender inequity and end all forms of violence against women. The paper posits that its outcomes hold research significance, providing targeted interventions in male masculinity in patriarchal societies.

Keywords : cultural dynamics, gender equality, gender-based violence, positive masculinity

Conference Title : ICDSV 2024 : International Conference on Domestic and Sexual Violence

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : November 07-08, 2024