



GENDER-NET Plus

Promoting gender equality in H2020 and the ERA

Final Dissemination Conference

13-14 February 2023

PositivMasc

**Masculinities and violence against women among young people:
Identifying discourses and developing strategies for change using a
mixed method approach**



POSITIV MASC



**Karolinska
Institutet**



Universitat d'Alacant
Universidad de Alicante



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University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh



Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
The Ben-Gurion Research Institute
The Center for Israel Studies





Why PositivMasc?

- Traditional masculinities increase VAW risk.
- Anti-VAW masculinities exist in other settings (LA)
- EU few studies identifying masculinities challenging VAW and how these can be supported.
- Traditional hegemonic forms of masculinities must be challenged and addressed if any reduction on VAW is to be achieved.
- Focus on young people important because rising rates of VAW at younger ages and because they are at critical time when values and norms around VAW are forged.



Aims

- 1) To explore and position the discourses that young people (men and women, 18-24 years) in Sweden, Spain, Ireland and Israel use in their understanding of masculinities.
- 2) To explore how these discourses influence young people's attitudes, behaviors and responses to VAW.
- 3) To explore individual and societal factors supporting and promoting anti-VAW masculinities discourses.
- 4) To develop strategies and resources to support and promote anti-VAW masculinities in these settings.

What did we do?

Qualitative studies

- ✓ Interviews and FGD with young men, young women and stakeholders in four countries.
- ✓ **Participants:**
 - 105 young people.
 - 60 stakeholders.

2019-2020

Concept mapping (sorting and rating)

- ✓ **Sorting:** 60 Stakeholders .
141 young people.
- ✓ **Rating 1:** 92 Stakeholders.
314 young people.
- ✓ **Rating 2:** 88 Stakeholders.
272 young people.

2021



Main results

- Young people link VAW to societal understandings of masculinities .
- YP reject more extreme forms of VAW, but subtle VAW (controlling behavior, emotional manipulation, non-consensual sex in couple) less recognized/rejected.
- Sexual violence and consent recognized as important but perceived as challenging due to “gray zones and blurred lines”
- Own bystander intervention to tackle violence against women perceived as difficult and vary depending and constraints on individual action were discussed
- More flexible and positive understandings of manhood are emerging among young people, but traditional, harmful understandings also persist.

Talking about witnessing violence against women:

“... but then we know who it is you have to deal with in a different way, if you have a connection, you know what the other is thinking, you know how to present messages in a good way so that it becomes, if you are friends for some reason too. It's a much more difficult situation if it's a stranger doing it nearby or something like that, it's a hell of a lot more complicated. At least I think so.”

Swedish young man, age 18

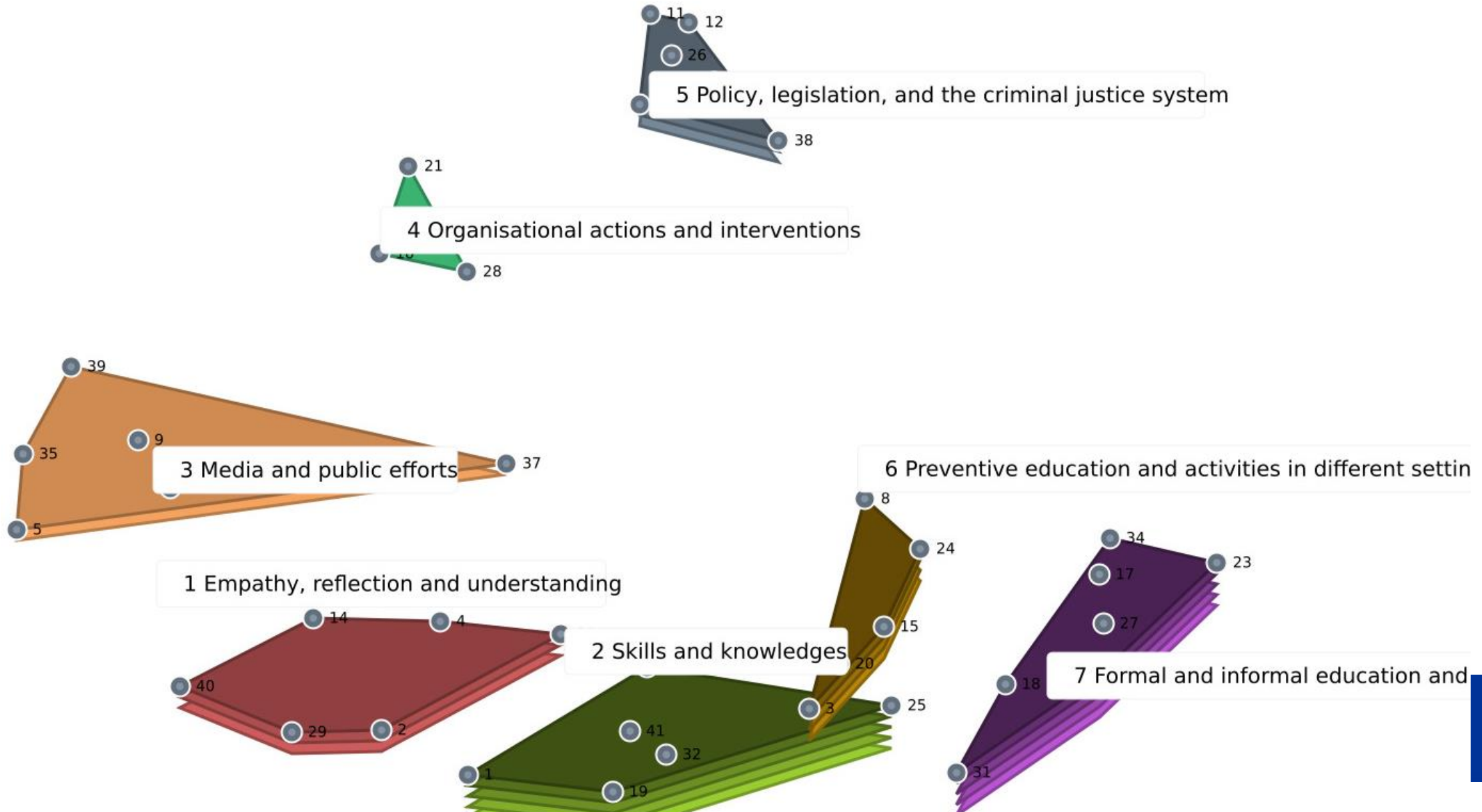
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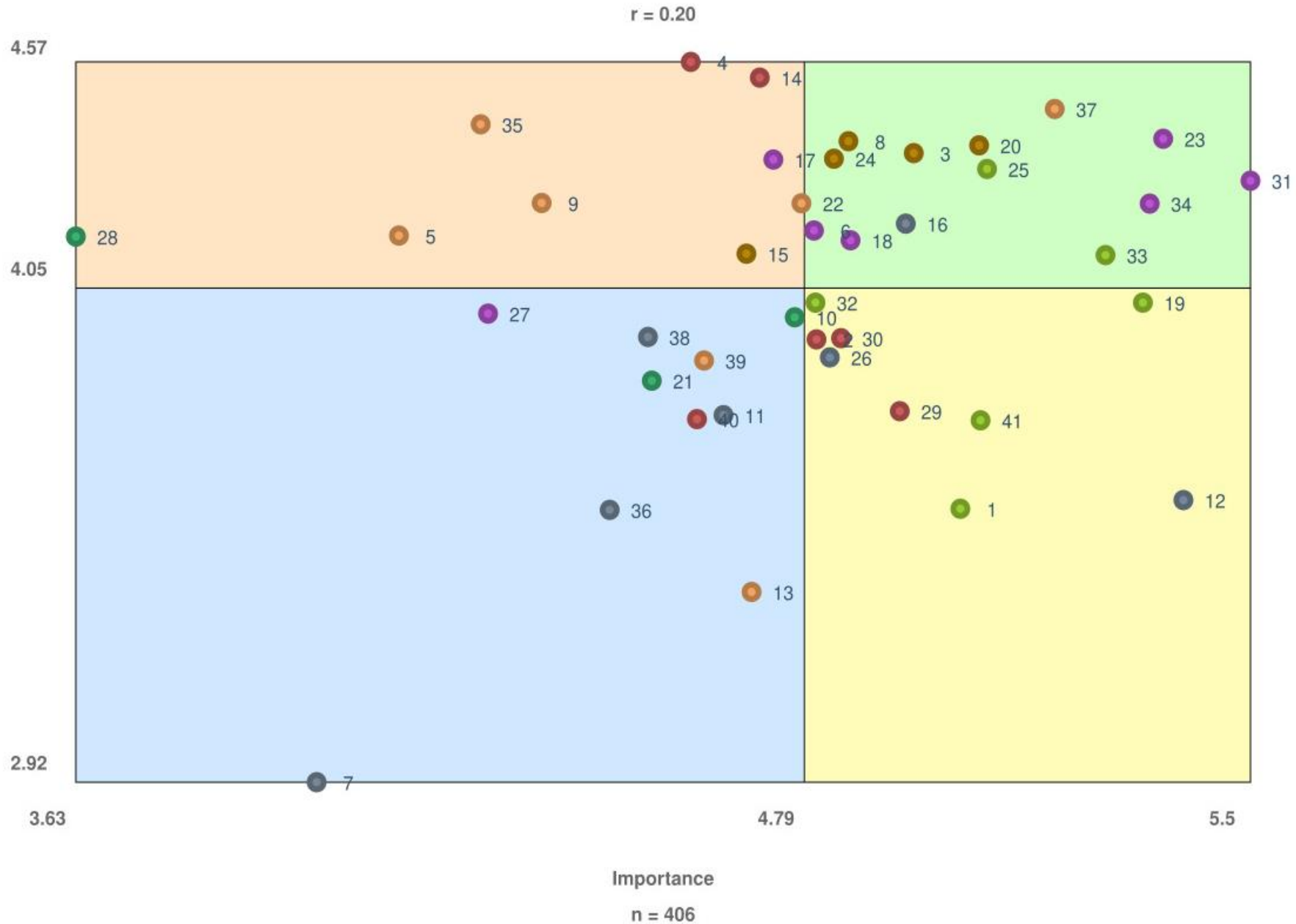


Main results

- YP see some expressions of VAW, especially cyber-harassment and image-based violence as common and difficult to avoid.
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- YP identify the need for education on education on sex and consent, relationships, gender norms, emotional literacy and regulation, bystander intervention, conflict resolution and non-violent communication
- **School**, family and peer environments are those in which young people most strongly desire educational support to address VAW.

Fig 1. Importance cluster map





Most of the actions identified as very important but less applicable were related to young men's individual change.



Conclusions & Recommendations

- Young men need to be equipped with bystander intervention skills, which recognize both the supportive factors and the barriers and vulnerabilities they face when intervening.
- Education on emotions, sex and relationships carried out with young men are key to incorporating exploration around alternative and positive masculinities in addressing VAW.
- Young people desire greater involvement of schools, family and peer groups in exploring understandings of manhood and VAW. Efforts should be made to expand and facilitate engagement in these settings.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- Despite recognition of the need to involve men and boys in gender equity initiatives at the government level, there is little in the way of practice.
- Innovative initiatives are needed to ensure the sustainability of gender equality work that integrates men and boys and explores gender norms, while not sidelining the work of civil society organizations.
- Young people are resourceful. They are aware of the need to address VAW, can identify their needs and have clear ideas about areas for change. Efforts should be made to include young people's voices in decision-making to address VAW from the policy to programmatic level.

Key resources developed by the project

← → ↻ 🏠 <https://positivmasc.ki.se>



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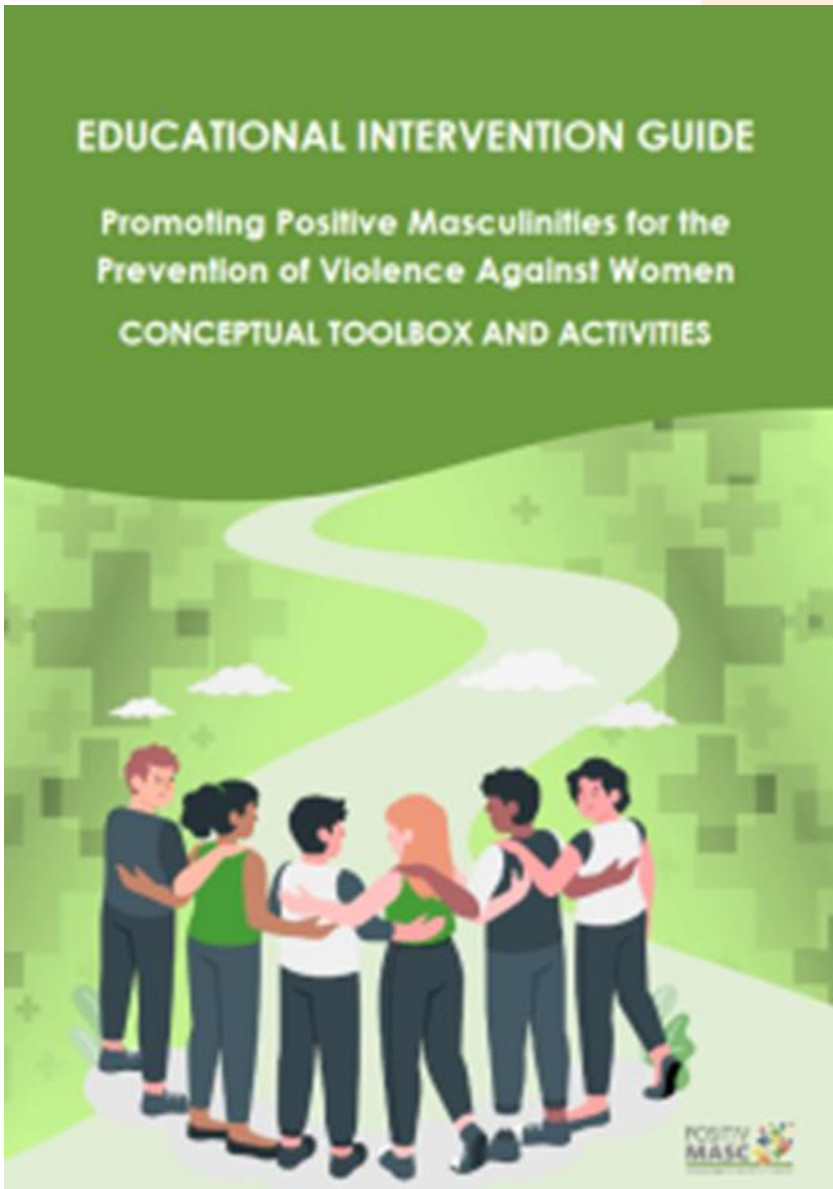
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Promoting Positive Masculinities to Address Violence Against Women in Young People: Evidence From the PositivMasc Project

By: Carmen Vives-Cases^{1,2}, Nihaya Daoud³, Claire Edwards⁴, Ariadna Cerdán-Torregrosa¹, Robert Bolton⁴, Emily Felt and Mariano Salazar⁵

Executive Summary

Violence against women (VAW) is a global problem of significant magnitude that negatively affects women, men and society as a whole and is becoming more pervasive at earlier ages. In the European Union in 2015, one in three women reported having experienced physical or sexual abuse since age 15 [1]. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in four young women ages 15-24 who has been in a relationship will have experienced violence by an intimate partner by her mid-twenties [2]. New forms of violence against women, such as cyber-harassment, image-based sexual violence and controlling behavior via social media are quickly emerging as young people embrace technology in their socialization [3]. This is disturbing, given that VAW has devastating consequences for society as a whole. It not only affects the health and well-being of both women and men, it is estimated to cost the EU about 366 billion euros annually [4].

Recent research suggests that societal gender norms and harmful understandings of manhood are at the

young men [6]. Gender norms are changing along with legislation that favors gender equality, but harmful forms of manhood still persist [7-8], and young people face considerable difficulty in navigating these changes.

Research shows that educational interventions that incorporate and support positive understandings of manhood, referred to as positive "masculinities" in research literature, are a promising approach to VAW prevention in young people [9]. This brief reports findings from PositivMasc, a multi-country research project that aims to understand how young people think about manhood and VAW and to identify strategies to promote positive masculinities in efforts to reduce gender-based violence.

The project's findings suggest that VAW policies and interventions should explicitly reference manhood and gender roles. They should also integrate a gender-transformative approach in VAW prevention education in schools, among families and in communities to build



