

FPA Sri Lanka Policy: Men and Sexual and Reproductive Health

Introduction

1. FPA Sri Lanka is committed to working with men and boys as clients, partners and agents of change in our efforts to meet the goals and objectives of the Association's Strategic Framework. This applies to males of all sexual orientations (homosexual, bisexual and transgender) and regardless of HIV status.
2. This policy reflects the importance the Association attaches to addressing male sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the need to work with men and boys, together with women and girls, as equal partners in the provision of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services. This is critical to meeting today's global public health challenges, and is in line with the ICPD Program of Action, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and a wide body of international research.
3. This policy builds upon existing programmes and initiatives within FPA Sri Lanka, and provides guidance to volunteers and staff on where these may need to be developed or expanded. It outlines a number of steps to be undertaken by the organization, in line with this commitment. All policies and programmes within FPA Sri Lanka should be planned taking account of this policy, and implemented and evaluated accordingly.

Men's role in Promoting Gender Equity in Health

4. FPA Sri Lanka believes that in order to address underlying power and gender imbalances, and their effects on health, it is essential to work with men in promoting gender equity. Strategies and programmes seeking to challenge the practices and structures creating gender inequalities should, therefore, explicitly engage men and highlight their positive and influential role. Such engagement should, at all times, enhance rather than diminish women's autonomy. FPA Sri Lanka undertakes, where possible, to:
 - i. Promote gender equity as an issue of concern for men as well as women, and highlight the benefits of a more equal society for everyone.
 - ii. Work with positive male role models and undertake campaigns and educational programmes to empower men and boys to fully understand and promote gender equity and support the sexual and reproductive health and rights of others, in particular women and young people.
 - iii. Work with both sexes to challenge often 'negative' gender norms/stereotypes, tackle homophobia, and promote more equitable ways of living and loving.
 - iv. Work with women and girls to support the development of more equitable attitudes and behaviours amongst men and boys.

Reaching Boys and Young Men

5. FPA Sri Lanka is committed to reaching boys and young men, together with girls and young women,¹ through comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, counselling and services, to address the specific vulnerabilities and sexual and reproductive health needs of this group. The Association also recognises the importance of early intervention to foster healthy sexual health attitudes and behaviours among boys and young men. The Federation undertakes, where possible, to:
 - i. Address the specific needs of boys and young men within existing sexual and reproductive health programmes, clinics and youth friendly services.
 - ii. Provide appropriate information, counselling and outreach that empower boys and young men to feel respected and confident in accessing support, services and using condoms.
 - iii. Work with young men and boys through comprehensive sexuality education and peer education programmes to increase their life skills and understanding of personal health, equitable relationships and the negative impact of traditional gender stereotypes.

Men as Partners in preventing HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections

6. FPA Sri Lanka believes that the programmes and services provided by them would recognise the critical role that men and boys play as partners in addressing the HIV epidemic and preventing HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), and seek to promote their participation in STI and HIV prevention activities. FPA Sri Lanka undertakes, where possible, to:
 - i. Increase male access to, and utilisation of, voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) services, and to increase their uptake of necessary treatment, care and support from them or from the Government or their partners working with HIV.
 - ii. Advocate for the involvement of positive male role models (particularly those living with HIV) to encourage other men and boys to use condoms and be tested for HIV and STIs.
 - iii. Address the sexual and reproductive health and positive prevention² needs of men living with HIV, their partners and family members, including providing support for men in serodiscordant relationships.
 - iv. Support the involvement of male partners in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT).
 - v. Involve men in strategies to reduce HIV and STI related stigma and discrimination.

Men as Partners in preventing unsafe abortions

7. FPA Sri Lanka acknowledges that men and boys have a role to actively participate in and support a woman choice to use contraceptive methods in regulating their fertility and that they would share the responsibility

¹ Boys, young men, girls and young women refer to those between the ages 10-24

² Positive prevention is defined as prevention for, and with, people living with HIV.

when and where there is an unplanned pregnancy in either accepting it and supporting her throughout or support a women's choice to explore other suitable options. The support and understanding on the harm reduction model and Post Abortion Care including Family Planning options, may contribute to a decline in maternal morbidity and mortality related to unsafe abortion. This approach to working with men and boys should, at all times, be underpinned by support for a woman's right to choose but within the existing legal context of the country. FPA Sri Lanka undertakes, where possible, to:

- i. Provide specific information and education for men on fertility, family planning, abortion, law on termination, health consequences on abortion, where possible referral safe abortion services and Post Abortion Care.
- ii. Work with men and boys to advocate for changes in legislation, to address stigma and discrimination, and to broaden the scope for abortion to include rape, incest and foetal abnormalities as reasons.
- iii. Enable and encourage men and boys to participate in all counselling services related to pregnancy and post- abortion counselling sessions, if a woman so desires.

Men as Partners in improving access to services

8. FPA Sri Lanka recognises the importance of working with men to reduce barriers and increase access to sexual and reproductive health information, sexuality education and high quality family planning services. This includes sensitising men to their responsibilities in promoting women and adolescents' sexual and reproductive health, well-being and rights. FPA Sri Lanka undertakes, where possible, to:

- i. Strengthen information and education which promote male responsibility and the sexual and reproductive health needs and rights of women, men and adolescents.
- ii. Work with men to encourage them to assume full responsibility for their sexual behaviour and to protect the health, well-being and rights of their partner and family.
- iii. Promote joint decision-making and shared responsibility by men and women, particularly in relation to use of contraception and other safer sex techniques, within a gender equity framework.

Men as fathers

9. FPA Sri Lanka promotes the important role that men play as fathers. The Association supports the development and promotion of gender equitable fatherhood, and recognises the important role of fathers in safe motherhood and antenatal care, as well as in the promotion of women and adolescents' physical and psychological well being. The Association undertakes, where possible, to:

- i. Provide specific support, education and information to fathers, and promote the role of responsible fathering in improving family health and reducing fatality risks pre and post child birth.

- ii. Embrace fatherhood in its diversity of forms, recognising that working with men as parents provides an important opportunity to also address other sexual and reproductive health needs and issues.
- iii. Provide support and counselling services to facilitate the greater sharing of family responsibilities and the concerns for pregnancy support.

Men as Partners in eliminating Gender Based Violence

10. The Association is committed to involving men in the reduction of gender based violence. The Association believes that policies, programmes, services and campaigns should explicitly highlight the role of men as part of the solution to addressing and preventing this violence. Such an approach should remain accountable to women, and promote their empowerment. FPA Sri Lanka undertakes, where possible, to:

- i. Highlight that violence against women also negatively impacts upon men and boys and their families, and that an end to such violence will bring benefits to everyone's health and wellbeing.
- ii. Support men's anti-violence activism that demonstrates clear alignment with principles of gender equity.
- iii. Promote violence prevention strategies which address the root causes and impacts of violence, including violence and abuse against men and boys, particularly in high-risk settings.
- iv. Partnerships with other organizations working on GBV to refer clients for services that are not provided by FPA Sri Lanka and to provide screening and counselling to persons affected by GBV.

Men's Sexual and Reproductive Health Needs and Rights

11. The Association is committed to ensuring that programmes and services also identify and address the sexual and reproductive health needs and rights of men and boys. FPA Sri Lanka believes that this is necessary both to improve the health of men and boys themselves, and as an important way of encouraging men to enhance the sexual and reproductive health of others, in particular women and young people. The Association undertakes, where possible, to:

- i. Create or expand programmes and services to specifically address men and boys' sexual health and reproductive needs and concerns.
- ii. Review existing sexual and reproductive health policies, programmes and interventions to ensure that they actively promote the greater engagement of men and boys and facilitate their access to services.
- iii. Promote the use of male role models to encourage other men to take greater care of their sexual and reproductive health.
- iv. Enhance understanding among men of the sexual and reproductive health rights and needs of their partners, lovers and children.
- v. Provide comprehensive SRH services for men that include the provision of counseling to men on family planning, contraception, STI transmission and couple communication

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

In line with this policy, the FPA Sri Lanka Governance and Management will raise awareness and urge among the volunteers and staff to develop their own appropriate strategies. More specifically:

12. All Programmes should endeavour to:

- i. Integrate, based on the appropriate areas of this policy, a focus on working with men and boys, and addressing their sexual and reproductive health needs, within existing policies and programmes.
- ii. Provide training and support to build the capacity, skills and attitudes of staff, service providers and peer educators to work with men and boys, particularly the most vulnerable.
- iii. Create and maintain strategic partnerships with other organisations working with men and boys, including linkages to enable appropriate referrals.
- iv. Work with parliamentarians and other decision-makers on this issue.
- v. Use language that will not exclude men and boys from our work.
- vi. Review and/or plan, implement and evaluate programmes and activities in line with this policy.

13. The Governance and the Senior Management Team will seek to:

- i. Support development of these programmes and services and, where possible, provide programmes and projects with technical support. The South Asia Regional Office and the Head Office will also endeavour to raise funds for the implementation, and scaling-up, of this work.
- ii. Ensure that relevant IPPF standards and guidelines (clinical and non-clinical) reflect the above policy.
- iii. Develop strategies, where possible, to integrate a stronger focus on men and boys within the Federation's core business, including a monitoring and evaluation and gender analysis framework for this aspect of the strategic framework.
- iv. Establish and/or develop existing links with organisations working on this issue.