



DA NANG CITY



Lessons Learned Report:
Male Advocate Club Project in
Da Nang, Viet Nam



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



Introduction

Partners for Prevention (P4P) is a regional joint programme for the prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Asia and the Pacific. It is supported by UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV, with financial support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Phase II of the programme (2014–2017) involves projects in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Viet Nam.

While initiatives to respond to the needs of survivors of VAWG are growing in the Asia-Pacific region, less emphasis has been placed to date on working with men and boys in violence prevention programmes to change social norms and address harmful masculinities. There is also a lack of literature on these violence prevention programmes.

The Male Advocate Club project was implemented in Da Nang City, Viet Nam from August 2015 to November 2016. This report, on lessons learned from the project, was prepared by Mr. Phan An, who was the P4P UN Volunteer based at the project site, with inputs from UN Women Viet Nam, the Da Nang Women’s Union (DNWU) and the P4P Team. This publication is aimed at government, civil society and UN organizations to help in implementing primary prevention programs.



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Members of the Male Advocate Club.

Background

The Da Nang Women’s Union and UN Women Viet Nam, with the support of P4P, implemented 4 Male Advocate Clubs in two districts of Da Nang over a 15-month period. The project worked with younger and older men to build gender-equitable attitudes, form healthy relationship skills, transform harmful masculinities and engage the men to become male advocates for violence prevention in their

communities. This was done through building the **capacity of local facilitators**, running year-long **participatory learning workshops with men**, and promoting **volunteerism** to sustain the project's results.

At the beginning of the project, the facilitators, youth volunteers and the Da Nang Women's Union adapted a facilitator manual to be used in a Vietnamese context. It functioned as a guide for facilitators, who also went through extensive training on how to deliver participatory primary prevention workshops.

The facilitators worked with 120 male participants (18 to 60 years old) in 16 participatory learning workshops. These participants were selected by the Da Nang Women's Union based on the frequency and the enthusiasm with which they participated in local activities. They were divided into four Male Advocate Clubs. Most participants were local leaders at the community level, and some of the younger participants were students and young professionals.

Volunteerism was a core component of the project. This enabled the male advocates to take ownership of how they wanted to convey issues of VAWG in their communities through advocacy and organization of community activities. Participants planned and implemented a variety of activities, such as mini soccer tournaments, film showings, community quiz nights and role-playing exercises. A Project Coordination Officer (PCO), who was responsible for overseeing these activities, was a UN Volunteer.

This intervention complemented an existing VAWG prevention programme in Da Nang that included positive parenting and community activism components supported by UN Women and the Da Nang Women's Union. The Male Advocate Club pilot project was intended to test the added value of engaging men as positive role models for the prevention of VAWG in the community.

Key successes

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The Male Advocate Club project involved a number of key successes and achievements:

- **Increased awareness and understanding of positive masculinities, gender equality and prevention of VAWG** among participants, and willingness to **share their learnings among the community**.
- The **participatory methodology of learning** was initially challenging for participants. However, by the end of the project, **participants appreciated this method**.
- **Volunteerism was a key source of individual growth, community development and general enthusiasm** during the project. Volunteers used innovative measures, such as utilizing local resources and contributions to produce events and ensure the sustainability of the intervention with a limited budget.
- The project also created an **attitude of accountability and commitment among the volunteers**, because they were able to plan aspects of the workshops such as warm-up exercises, ice-breakers and guided group discussions.

- Participants had **ownership over certain aspects of the workshops** which motivated them to **ensure the regular attendance and participation of fellow volunteers**. This approach also reinforced the **non-hierarchical and participatory nature of the workshops** which reflected the overall **principles of equality and empowerment** that the project promotes.

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“ Since joining the Male Advocate Club, I have become more aware of inequalities between men and women. I understand how to treat my female family members, friends and colleagues with respect. I have shared what I learned from the club with my family and friends. I have even given suggestions to my father on how to treat my mother better.”

Pham Van Sy, age 25, Hoa Phong commune

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

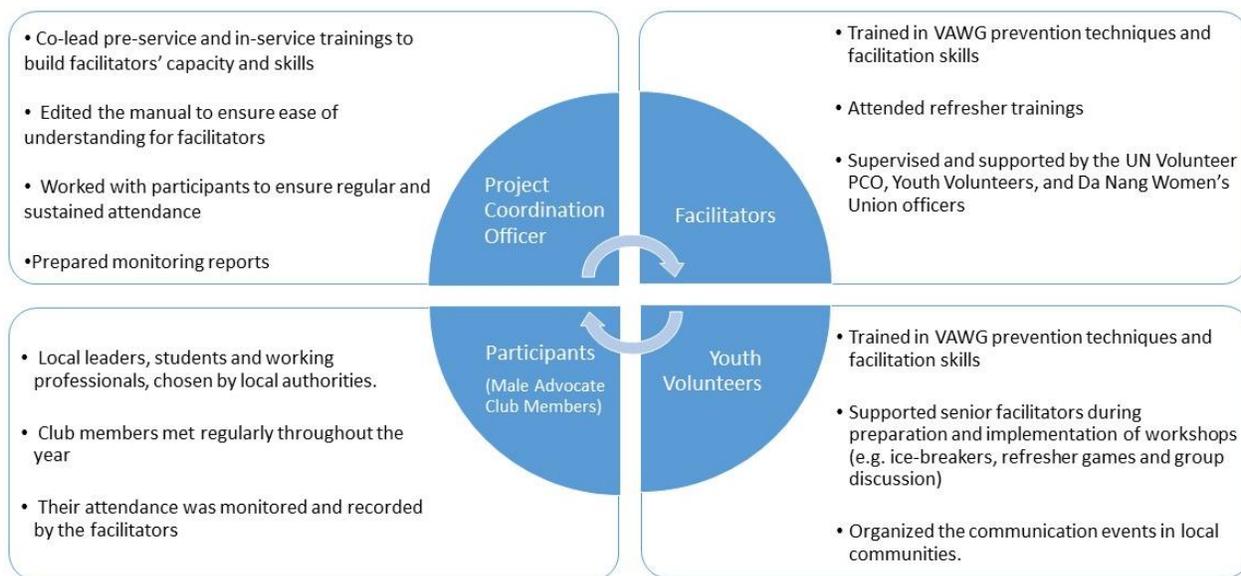
There was uptake of the Male Advocate Club project from key stakeholders at different levels.

- The Da Nang Women’s Union plan to expand the Male Advocate Clubs to other project commune based on the project’s lessons learned and the facilitator manual.
- The Da Nang Farmers’ Union is in discussion with Da Nang Women’s Union and UN Women to expand the model in Da Nang to existing farmers clubs in the city. This will provide more concrete evidence to further advocate for the upscale of the model with Viet Nam Farmers’ Union.
- Furthermore, some participants expressed their intent to continue advocacy and activism against VAWG in their communities. See their stories on the Partners for Prevention [website](#).

Lesson learned #1: Define project roles and engage key stakeholders from the beginning of the project

Key personnel are important to the success of any project. In this project, the roles were clearly defined and the key personnel carefully selected. The facilitators and project participants were at the front line of this project. The PCO and the youth volunteers also played a major role in project implementation.

The project roles and their responsibilities are outlined below.



Stakeholder engagement was another important element in the project's implementation. As shown in the following table, the Da Nang Women's Union, UN Vietnam and P4P were responsible for different levels of project implementation. The PCO, who reported directly to UN Women Viet Nam, was stationed at the Da Nang Women's Union, allowing for effective engagement and coordination between UN Women, P4P and the Da Nang Women's Union. The project also engaged other key stakeholders including the Commune People's Committee, the Farmer's Association and the Youth Union. The Youth Union played an important role through helping facilitators to engage participants and lead warm-up games during the participatory learning workshops.

PARTNERS FOR PREVENTION	UN WOMEN VIETNAM COUNTRY OFFICE	DA NANG WOMEN'S UNION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided technical assistance for the manual adaptation and revision • Conducted a facilitator training workshop • Contributed to monitoring and evaluating the project • Financially supported the manual adaptation, implementation and M&E of the intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technically assisted in the adaptation of the facilitator manual • Contributed to monitoring and evaluating the project • Maintained regular contact with the PCO and Da Nang Women's Union • Financially supported the implementation of the intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned and signed the Letter of Agreement and amendments with UN Women. • Prepared the activity proposals with input from UN Women and P4P. • Managed and implemented all project activities • Contributed to monitoring and evaluating the project • Financially managed the project and provided financial reports to UN Women • Maintained regular contact with relevant stakeholders and local authorities at provincial and district levels • Managed and supervised the PCO

Recommendation: Build and maintain good relationships with key stakeholders

- There was a need to first understand the role of partners including their functions, organizational systems, capacity, experience, needs and expectations as much as possible.
- Good relationships were maintained through regular communication.
- Ensuring that each partner understood their role and importance in the project's implementation was important.

Lesson learned #2: Engage participants through a participatory learning methodology

The Male Advocate Club intervention employed a participatory learning methodology, which has been documented as an effective approach in other violence prevention programmes.¹ There were two key factors that explain the success of engaging participants in this project. Firstly, the PCO worked very closely with the facilitators and the participants. Attendance was documented by the head of the club and the PCO. Participation was encouraged by following up with members to understand the barriers to participation and find ways to improve and sustain member attendance. Secondly, the participatory learning workshops offered a space where the men were encouraged to open up about VAWG issues, exchange solutions and encourage each other to continue attending the workshops.

Personal changes are documented in the stories of the participants. Many members attended project activities more regularly, which suggested an increasing commitment and interest in the project. Participants also experienced a measurable shift in their awareness, attitudes and behaviours with regard to VAWG. Many participants have reported that they use more respectful and equitable behavior when engaging with women, especially with their wives. Furthermore, they mentioned they were more considerate of their wives' opinions, more involved in housework and had more equitable attitudes towards women in general. One Male Advocate Club member, for example, mentioned his relationship with his wife had improved and that he was able to share that happiness with his family and neighbours. According to him, women in his community encouraged the men that had not joined the project to do so and they now show signs of positive changes.

¹ See for example SASA! <http://raisingvoices.org/sasa/>; Stepping Stones <http://steppingstonesfeedback.org/>; and the Good Schools Toolkit <http://raisingvoices.org/good-school/>



“Many men, including those with advanced degrees, are traditionally vehemently opposed to men doing housework such as shopping, cooking, washing, etc. After participating in the Male Advocate Club, I share housework more with my wife - whereas before I used to give her more work. I also have more control of and restrain my anger. Before I would often yell and get furious when she did something that I disagreed with [...] I always remind myself to lead by example for my sons to follow.”

Recommendation: Maintain men’s full participation in project activities

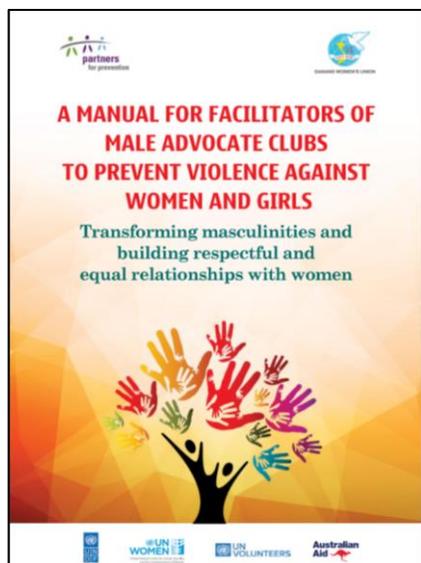
- Ensure Male Advocate Club activities remain interesting and engaging.
- The workshop schedules should be designed with local customs in mind in order to take into account seasonal, agricultural and cultural events that could potentially delay project activities.
- Be patient: At the beginning of the project, participants were more accustomed to passive learning and listening. It was difficult to encourage participants to become more actively engaged in activities.
- Be aware of challenges in attendance: Participants cited work or family obligations, and to a lesser extent illness or disinterest as reasons for not attending workshops.
- Be adaptable: The project also experienced difficulties engaging and retaining youth volunteers. Eight young men were initially selected and trained to support facilitators, yet half of them were unable to maintain their commitment due to competing priorities.

Lesson learned #3: Ensure suitability of project materials and content for participants

The project workshops were delivered using a facilitator manual. The content of the manual was drawn from the Regional Learning Community for East and Southeast Asia’s *Transforming Masculinities towards Gender Justice Curriculum*² as well as other violence prevention programmes.³ The modules in the manual

² Tumursukh, U., Chanthavysouk, K., Uysingco, P., Hernandez L., Hasyim, N., Muttaqin, F., Trang, Q.T.T., Sananikone, S., Nakagawa, K., Greig, A., and Pawar, A. (2013) *Transforming Masculinities towards Gender Justice*. Produced by the Partners for Prevention Regional Learning Community for East and Southeast Asia, <http://www.partners4prevention.org/resource/regional-curriculum-transforming-masculinities-towards-gender-justice>

³ Gevers, A., Jama-Shai, N., & Jewkes, R. (2014). *Skhokho Supporting Success for Families*. Pretoria, South Africa: South African Medical Research Council, Jewkes, R., Nduna, M., & Jama, N. (2010). *Third South African Edition of Stepping Stones: A training manual for sexual and reproductive health communication and relationship skills*. Pretoria, South Africa: South African Medical Research Council, Michau, L., Hundle, A., Chevannes,



covered a range of topics such as gender equality, conflict resolution, violence against women and girls, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.⁴ One of the main challenges with the facilitator manual was ensuring that the content was relevant to the local context. The PCO, facilitators, UN Women Viet Nam, and a national consultant spent a lot of time reviewing and adapting the manual to the Vietnamese context. They worked together to make the technical content more easily understood by the local facilitators, some of whom had lower education and literacy levels.

Recommendation: Development of the facilitator manual

- Include more visually appealing graphics in the manuals.
- Ensure that the translation of the manual from English to Vietnamese is accurate and in line with local culture and language.

Lesson learned #4: Invest in ongoing capacity building of local facilitators

The capacity building of facilitators was one of the key components in this project. Yet, it was also the most pressing challenge. The initial facilitator training workshop did not fully equip and build the confidence of the facilitators to independently facilitate the club meetings. The facilitators initially struggled with the participatory learning methods of the workshops because they were more used to a didactic teaching style. In order to address these challenges, the PCO regularly held supportive supervision meetings with the facilitators to identify capacity gaps and offer timely solutions. UN Women and P4P also provided regular refresher trainings to help the facilitators improve their facilitation skills and foster their understanding of VAWG issues.

With continued support, the facilitators found it both effective and enjoyable to have participatory meetings. This indicates the need for rigorous awareness raising, support, and ongoing capacity building for project managers, supervisors, and facilitators to promote buy-in and ensure they have the skills to apply these methods.

Recommendation: Provide ongoing capacity building for facilitators

- Ongoing training and support for facilitators was needed along with quality control by key partners to ensure that workshops were engaging and effective.
- In order to engage facilitators, the expectations and time commitment involved in project activities should be made more clear and evident. It is also recommended to train a larger number of facilitators at the outset of the project to minimize the impact of attrition.

C., Sekitoleko, D.E., McMullen, K., Moreaux, M., & Sauve, S. (2008). The SASA! Activist Kit for Prevention Violence against Women and HIV. Kampala, Uganda: Raising Voices

⁴ See <http://www.partners4prevention.org/resource/manual-facilitators-male-advocate-clubs-prevent-violence-against-women-and-girls-0>

- Facilitators should be selected based on prior experience with facilitation of groups (giving presentations and feedback and actively listening to participants), enthusiasm, passion and a clear commitment to the project.
- Facilitators were often experienced in didactic or traditional teaching styles which are contrary to participatory learning methods. Therefore, time needs to be spent promoting experiential learning and a role modelling approach to build skills for participatory learning workshops, which are central for the effective primary prevention of VAWG.

Lesson learned #5: Promote volunteerism to reinforce and sustain results

The Male Advocate Club project resulted in lessons learned on mobilizing and engaging the men as volunteers through community-based initiatives. These volunteers organized a number of community-based events that promoted VAWG prevention, employing role plays, quizzes, crossword puzzles, drawing sessions, video clips and posters. The volunteer events drew community attention and enabled the male advocates to raise participants’ awareness and knowledge on VAWG prevention.

The PCO mobilized volunteers, informed them about the project activities and how local community members could contribute to VAWG prevention through volunteerism. The PCO also supported volunteers through attending volunteer events, and supporting volunteers with any challenges or difficulties that they faced in implementing events. The experience of volunteerism in the pilot project in the target area of Da Nang City was shared with the Provincial Departments of Labor and Social Affairs in Hai Phong and Yen Bai Provinces.



Community volunteer activities organized by the Male Advocate Clubs.

Recommendation: Promote volunteerism to reinforce and sustain project results

- Set clear expectations, guidelines and goals to provide the volunteers with the necessary tools to be successful and motivated in their service to the community.
- Partner with volunteers to work collaboratively on developing a sustainable and feasible plan for implementation of activities, meetings and projects.
- Provide regular support meetings for volunteers and recognize and celebrate their successes. Motivate volunteers by encouraging volunteerism as a method of gaining individual growth and supporting their community. This could be done by providing certificates at the completion of the project, which would also encourage steady attendance and participation.
- Share information about volunteers' contributions with community leaders, local authorities and relevant stakeholders.

Lesson learned #6: Share project results through communications and advocacy to achieve a wider impact

The Male Advocate Club project was supported by communications and advocacy activities to raise awareness and promote the primary prevention of VAWG. The communications activities were coordinated by P4P and implemented in Vietnam by the PCO. The project used various mediums to promote project activities and achievements including local media, TV and newspaper interviews, as well as social media (see, for example, the Male Advocate Club Facebook [page](#)).

TV and newspaper interviews provided an important opportunity to share information about the project and the organizations involved. The PCO also collected stories of change in the field to highlight changes caused by the project on an individual level. There were two main ways that stories of change were collected. The first was by conducting direct interviews with participants. The second way was through participant observation which involved listening carefully to the workshops and collecting stories of change.

Recommendation: Foster communication on outcomes and positive impacts

- The Male Advocate Club project highlighted the importance of documenting individual stories of change from facilitators and participants.
- Informed consent should always be requested and documented to collect stories of change and photographs of participants.
- Careful preparation is needed for the content and messages of communication materials. Interview preparation for TV and newspapers is also needed to deliver messages during the time of the interview, which may be limited, and to dress in a presentable manner.
- Different audiences require information to be delivered in suitable ways.
- Communications materials and interviews should be supported by specific data and evidence from the project.

- News of the project was often published by the media on special occasions and dates such as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Happiness Day and Family Day. Therefore, it is important to research the history and key messages of these occasions to create links with communications from the project.

Lesson learned #7: Regular and rigorous monitoring, evaluation and learning is needed to resolve challenges, adapt as needed and ensure smooth implementation.

The project was monitored regularly by the Project Coordination Officer, the Da Nang Women’s Union and facilitators. Monitoring activities were conducted 1 or 2 times per month. The monitoring results were shared and reported in regular meetings among facilitators, club management boards, the project management unit at the Women’s Union and the PCO. They were also regularly discussed with UN Women Viet Nam and P4P to seek advice and resolve bottlenecks.



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PERSONAL REFLECTION - Project Coordination Officer

“This experience has taught me that it takes significant effort to promote, connect and develop volunteerism among youth volunteers, facilitators and participants with the hope that volunteerism ensures that the changes and values of the intervention last in the community.

Prior to the start of my experience with this intervention, I would have liked to have had a deeper understanding of how to connect with men on ending VAWG. I also would have liked to have had a more comprehensive understanding of the UN system.

This intervention allowed me to learn about the ways I can foster change in communities through volunteerism and encourage others to contribute to awareness and action on ending VAWG. I also had the opportunity to learn more about the subject of ending VAWG, gender attitudes and healthy masculinities in this program, which has helped me shape my future career aspirations.” (Mr. Phan Thanh An, PCO)

Recommendation: Regular and rigorous monitoring shows accountability and evidence and facilitates shared knowledge

- Making home visits to meet and talk with club members about why they did not regularly attend workshops was difficult due to participants' work commitments and the location of their homes. In these cases, the PCO had to be flexible and ensure that meeting conditions were suitable for participants.
- Interviews with participants about their stories of change had to be performed outside their work and family commitments.
- A strong monitoring system should be developed. The monitoring plan needs to be discussed and agreed to by all relevant stakeholders at the beginning of the project.
- The monitoring plan should outline what will be monitored, the process that is involved, the frequency and who will perform monitoring activities. It is important to clarify the roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders for project monitoring.
- Monitoring plans should be adjusted over time to reflect the ongoing situation of the project based on observation and review.
- Monitoring tools must be suitable to the conditions and resources of the project, as well as the implementer's capacity.

Further resources

For further information, see the following resources:

- The Male Advocate Club [Manual](#)
- Videos on the Male Advocate Club: [English version](#) and [Vietnamese version](#)
- Partners for Prevention [website](#)
- UN Women Vietnam [website](#)

STAY CONNECTED

Partners for Prevention: Working to prevent violence against women and girls
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