Position Paper
Developing MenEngage Europe - a Regional Network within the Global Alliance MenEngage

Introduction
This position paper outlines the background and the currently on-going process of developing and establishing MenEngage Europe, a regional network of civil society organizations in Europe working to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality. The paper also provides information on how to become a member organization of the MenEngage global alliance, and how to join the process in developing the regional European network.

This paper was prepared in March 2009 by Klas Hyllander of Men for Gender Equality Sweden. It may be translated, copied and distributed without limitations. Translations must however be marked with the text “Unofficial translation” on the front page.

Men for Gender Equality Sweden (Män för Jämställdhet) is an international member organization of MenEngage. Klas Hyllander is the chair of the interim working group of MenEngage Europe, appointed by the MenEngage Europe Regional Consultation Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, January 14-16, 2009.

Contact information is provided at the end of this document.

Background
Challenging Rigid Versions of Manhood Must be an Urgent European Priority
For a long time, indeed many centuries, men, masculinity and men's powers and practices have generally been taken-for-granted. Gender has largely been seen as a matter of and for women. Men were - and still are for the most part - generally seen as ungendered, as 'just like that', natural or naturalised. In research and activism, this is now changing; it is much less the case than even ten years ago. However, European policies at all levels yet do not integrate a critical masculinities approach, and current gender policies seldom seek to actively address or involve men and boys.

While considerable progress has been made in achieving gender equity and fulfilling the rights of women and girls in Europe in the past 50 years, much remains to be done. Although the situation may vary in different regions of Europe, data confirms that a large portion of European women and girls still report having been victims of physical violence by their male partners or other men and boys. Many women still report that they have experienced coerced or forced sex. In spite of efforts to engage men in sexual and reproductive health, women still assume nearly 75% of contraceptive use. In addition, women spend three to four times more time in caring for children.

In addition to this, current European policies yet fail to effectively identify and address many issues and problems facing men and boys. Often, problems such as the shorter life expectancies of men, higher rates of suicide, accidents, substance abuse, crime, violence etcetera are not recognized as gendered issues. The missing notion of masculinities as social constructs in current policies lead to loss of effectiveness and - in the worst case - no policies addressing these matters at all. This, in turn, contributes to the problems facing women and girls and degrades the results of existing gender policies.

All of these issues require urgent action. It is time to bring men and boys more substantially into all aspects of gender policy in Europe to more effectively promote the wellbeing of girls and boys and women and men.
The Mandate is There
UN agencies, governments and civil society have affirmed the need to engage boys and men in achieving gender equality, reducing violence against women and girls, reducing HIV and AIDS and promoting the rights and well-being of girls and boys, women and men. Numerous UN documents and statements – including the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Program of Action and agreed conclusions from the UN Committee on the Status of Women – have urged the need to engage men and boys to redress gender inequalities. This can in fact also result in benefits to men and boys themselves; for example, studies confirm that for many men, playing a more complete and active role in parenthood enhances men’s well-being and confers a sense of purpose and fulfillment, as well as promoting better life quality also for partners and children.

The Program Base is There and Showing Impact
A growing number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based groups are engaging men and boys in sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment, promoting men’s involvement as fathers, and reducing men’s violence against women as well as men’s violence against children and other men. A recent WHO-Promundo review of such programs found nearly 60 evaluated programmes that demonstrated changes in men’s attitudes and behaviors as a result of such program interventions. Such programs are achieving impact at the local and generally small-scale level, improving the well-being of women and girls, and of men and boys themselves.

The Time Has Come to Scale Up and Engage the Public Sector
In spite of a growing base of program experiences and evaluation confirming the impact of such efforts, most initiatives to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality have been small-scale and short-term. To achieve large-scale change in gender norms and to achieve gender equality, efforts to engage men and boys must be scaled up and must engage policymakers and the public sector in strategic ways.

What is MenEngage?
In 2006, a group of international and national organizations formed an international alliance to develop and promote the engagement of men and boys in achieving gender equality. This alliance – called MenEngage – is working in diverse parts of the world to promote this dialogue and to identify concrete, strategic opportunities for scaling up and engaging the public sector.

The Alliance is involved in an array of research, interventions, and policy initiatives seeking to engage men and boys in effective ways to reduce gender inequalities and promote health and the well-being of women, men and girls and boys. The alliance includes several major international organizations, as well as local and national groups with extensive experience in engaging men and boys in gender equality and reducing violence. The organizing members of MenEngage include EngenderHealth, Instituto Promundo, Save the Children Sweden, Sahayog, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the White Ribbon Campaign.

MenEngage is currently building a global network of organizations dedicated to addressing gender inequality and violence prevention with men and boys.

A series of regional consultation meetings have been – and are being – held in order to assess the needs and capacities of potential MenEngage members. The consultation meetings are designed to allow the network to best serve its members. Regional networks and country level networks have so far been formed in South-Central Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and in Latin America. A consultation meeting has been held in Europe, and a regional European network is under development. Work is in progress to form similar region networks in other parts of the world.

Core Principles of MenEngage
A first version of common core principles for the MenEngage Alliance have been developed and agreed upon by the organizing members. The full set of core principles are attached to the end of this document in Appendix A. Here follows an extract.
• **Gender as relational:** The Alliance believes that men should be engaged in achieving gender equality and in advancing the rights, health and well-being of women and girls.

• **Questioning men’s violence against women:** The Alliance is dedicated to engaging men and boys to end violence against women and in questioning or challenging violent versions of manhood.

• **Working as allies with existing women’s rights processes:** We are committed to working as allies with women and women’s rights organizations to achieve equality for women and girls.

• **Sexual diversity and sexual rights:** We are dedicated to promoting cultures of masculinities that respect sexual diversity and sexual and reproductive rights of all, and that engage men so that reproductive health and contraception are more evenly shared between men and women.

• **The vulnerabilities of men:** The Alliance believes that the specific needs and experiences of men and boys have often not been well understood nor taken into account in the development of public policy or professional practice across a wide range of areas. We believe that some men and boys are made vulnerable by non-equitable and violent versions of manhood.

• **Engaging men from a positive perspective:** The Alliance believes that women and girls and boys and men and the wider society would benefit from recognition of these issues and appropriate action to transform non-equitable and violent versions of manhood and redress power inequalities related to gender. We seek to build examples of men already acting in more gender-equitable and non-violent ways.

**What does MenEngage do?**

The goal of MenEngage is to increase the number of men and boys reached by interventions that promote and engage them in gender equality, violence prevention and the promotion of well-being of women, men, girls and boys. To achieve this, MenEngage implements three complementary strategies:

1) Advocacy and policy;

2) A learning and leadership network; and

3) Resource sharing in the form of a global online web-based portal, with subsections for every region network

Each strategy will be continuously developed through a consultative process with MenEngage members in each region.

**Who can become a member in MenEngage?**

MenEngage membership is open to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or UN agencies who pledge to adhere to the core principles and to promote MenEngage objectives in their work at the local, national and/or international level.

Specifically MenEngage members must be:

1. A registered NGO working in health, violence prevention, social development, gender equality or related area
2. Willing to sign the statement of core principles
3. Willing to fill out a simple questionnaire describing activities (specifically focusing on activities related to engaging men and boys) on the MenEngage website www.menengage.org
4. Willing to have this information made available on the MenEngage website.

**Applying for membership**

Organizations that fulfil the requirements above can apply for membership at [www.menengage.org](http://www.menengage.org).
European organizations that become members of MenEngage will automatically be invited to partake in the development of MenEngage Europe.

**What is the purpose of MenEngage Europe?**

In brief, the purpose of a regional MenEngage Europe network is to implement the MenEngage strategies in Europe. The intention is to establish a presence at the European level to more powerfully address European gender policies, as well as to support activities of member organizations and the development of policy and programs in all European countries.

**What has been done so far to establish MenEngage Europe?**

**Mapping of organizations and consultation meeting**

In order to promote and initiate a process to establish and develop MenEngage Europe a consultation meeting has been held with potential member organizations from across Europe.

The consultation meeting was held in Stockholm, Sweden, January 14-16, 2009 and was hosted by Men for Gender Equality Sweden and Save the Children Sweden. It was preceded by a mapping of organizations in Europe working with men and boys in areas related to gender equality. A planning and advisory team for the mapping activities and for the consultation meeting was organized with the following persons/organizations.

- Ada Dortch, International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN), Belgium
- Klas Hylander, Men for Gender Equality, Sweden
- Nicklas Kelemen, Save the Children Sweden
- Jørgen Lorentzen, University of Oslo, Norway
- Eva Nordfjell, Save the Children Sweden
- Tim Shand, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), United Kingdom

Several advisors from across Europe supported the planning team.

The main purposes of the consultation meeting were to consult participants on their organization’s potential needs of a MenEngage Europe network, and to allow participants to feed into the development of MenEngage, regionally and globally.

The objective of the 3-day meeting was to provide participating organizations with a basis for a post-meeting decision regarding membership in MenEngage, including the participation in the establishment and development of MenEngage Europe.

**Meeting participants**

The consultation meeting was attended by approximately 80 participants, representing 45 organizations from 28 European countries.

The organizations that attended the meeting represent programs and activities within a wide spectrum of issues related to gender equality as well as activities at different levels, such as the community, service delivery and individual levels.

MenEngage was represented by its co-chair Gary Barker, International Center for Research on Women, and by several other international members, including the international White Ribbon Campaign, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Save the Children Sweden and Men for Gender Equality Sweden.

Representatives from the European Women’s Lobby and the European Men’s Health Forum were invited as guest speakers.

Appendix B in this document contains the meeting agenda. PowerPoint files of the presentations as well as other documents related to the consultation meeting can be found at [www.mfj.se/me_europe](http://www.mfj.se/me_europe).
Sub-regional working groups

During the consultation meeting, interim sub-regional groups were created for group work at the meeting itself but also to promote activities after the meeting, such as translating information into languages within the sub-regions, identifying additional member organizations etc. The sub-regional groups at the meeting were made up according to the following division.

- Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Bulgaria (Central South, Balkans)
- United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium (West)
- Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic (Central West)
- Finland, Norway, Iceland, Sweden (North, Scandinavia)
- Portugal, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Israel (Mediterranean)
- Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Georgia (Central, East)

Note again that these sub-regional groups represent an interim structure that may be re-structured as a part of the process of developing the MenEngage Europe regional network.

Outcome from the meeting

The meeting participants reached a unison declaration of will to establish and develop a MenEngage Europe regional network within the global alliance MenEngage¹.

The consultation meeting also appointed an interim working group to take the development and establishment of MenEngage Europe forward. The members of the interim working group are

- Meltem Ağduk, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Turkey
- Adnan Cviko, Association for Sexual and Reproductive Health XY, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Ada Dortch, International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF), Belgium
- Heinrich Geldschläger, Fundación Instituto de Reinserción Social (IReS), Spain
- Klas Hyllander, Men for Gender Equality, Sweden
- Ludger Jungnitz, Dissens, Germany
- Iryna Kharchenko, OLEH, Ukraine
- Andrey Kolpakov, Men XXI Century, Russia
- Sandy Ruxton, independent advisor to the Coalition on Men and Boys, United Kingdom

Klas Hyllander was appointed chair of the interim working group.

The persons appointed to the working group are also contact persons for the sub-regional groups set up at the consultation meeting.

Role of the interim working group and the process ahead

The role of the interim working group is to refine and put forward a proposal of the mission, function and organizational procedures of the MenEngage Europe network. The report from the consultation meeting serves as input to this work, as will suggestions and ideas from participating organizations.

¹ It should be noted that this declaration is regarded as informal on the part of the participating organizations. Following the consultation meeting, each participating organization makes a formal decision whether or not to become a member of MenEngage. Membership is then applied for individually by every organization on the MenEngage web site as described earlier. Organizations that participated in the consultation meeting may of course await the conclusion of the initial development phase of MenEngage Europe before making their final decision regarding MenEngage membership.
The proposal will be presented to all participants of the consultation meeting as well as to European organizations that have become members of the MenEngage global alliance. After feedback, joint discussion and further refinement of the proposal, the interim working group will seek wide approval for a decision to formally establish MenEngage Europe according to the outcome of this initial development phase. The interim working group will then be replaced by for instance a steering committee.

**How to take part in the development process**

Organizations wishing to take part in the development process of MenEngage Europe can do so by joining an e-mail list set up specifically for this purpose. Membership is restricted to participants of the consultation meeting in Stockholm and to European MenEngage members.

The e-mail list, hosted by Google, is located at [http://groups.google.com/group/developing-menengage-europe](http://groups.google.com/group/developing-menengage-europe).

To become a member of the e-mail list, please go to the web address above and choose the alternative “Sign in and apply for membership”: If you do not already have a Google-account, you are required to get one as part of the procedure above in order to access the e-mail list. The Google-account is for free, and does not require that you use any other Google-services such as Gmail.

The e-mail list is intended for communication and discussion regarding the development of MenEngage Europe. It may be used to forward suggestions and ideas to the interim working group. The interim working group’s pending proposal will be presented via this e-mail list.

The e-mail list will also serve as a temporary means of communication for European MenEngage members. When the development process has been finalised, the e-mail list will be renamed accordingly, and will then only be open to European members of MenEngage.

Please note that the list may be accessed either via your e-mail service or through the web site itself at your choice. The e-mail group is managed by Klas Hyllander. Questions regarding the group should be addressed to Klas.

**Contact information**

Here follows contact information to all members of the interim working group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meltem Ağduk</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td><a href="mailto:meltem.agduk@un.org.tr">meltem.agduk@un.org.tr</a></td>
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<td>Adnan Cviko</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

To address the interim working group as a whole, please use the following e-mail address: [menengage.europe@mfj.se](mailto:menengage.europe@mfj.se).

As a member of the e-mail list the following e-mail address may be used for postings to the list: [developing-menengage-europe@googlegroups.com](mailto:developing-menengage-europe@googlegroups.com)

The web site for the European section of the MenEngage web site can be reached via [www.menengage.eu](http://www.menengage.eu).

Documents related to MenEngage Europe can be found at the temporary site [www.mfj.se/me_europe](http://www.mfj.se/me_europe). They will be transferred to [www.menengage.eu](http://www.menengage.eu) at a later stage.
Appendix A

Full set of MenEngage Network Core Principles, first version

- **Gender as relational**: The Alliance believes that men should be engaged in achieving gender equality and in advancing the rights, health and well-being of women and girls.

- **Questioning men’s violence against women**: The Alliance is dedicated to engaging men and boys to end violence against women and in questioning or challenging violent versions of manhood.

- **Promoting existing UN mandates**: We are dedicated to engaging men and boys to fulfill the mandates, statements of action, and principles of ICPD, CEDAW and CSW statements (48th session), and CRC and working collectively to encourage governments to do the same.

- **Engaging men as caregivers**: We are dedicated to promoting more equitable participation by men and boys in caregiving, the care of children and domestic tasks.

- **Working as allies with existing women’s rights processes**: We are committed to working as allies with women and women’s rights organizations to achieve equality for women and girls.

- **Sexual diversity and sexual rights**: We are dedicated to promoting cultures of masculinities that respect sexual diversity and sexual and reproductive rights of all, and that engage men so that reproductive health and contraception are more evenly shared between men and women.

- **The vulnerabilities of men**: The Alliance believes that the specific needs and experiences of men and boys have often not been well understood nor taken into account in the development of public policy or professional practice across a wide range of areas. We believe that some men and boys are made vulnerable by non-equitable and violent versions of manhood.

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- **Participation**: The Alliance will strive to include and take into account the voices of men and women, boys and girls, at the community level, and the voices of community-level NGOs.

- **Non-discrimination**: The Alliance will actively advocate against, question and seek to overcome, sexism, social exclusion, homophobia, racism or any form of discriminatory behavior against women or gay/bisexual/transgender men and women, or on any other basis.

- **Transparency**: The Alliance will be transparent, honest, fair and ethical in all of its actions, including making public its sources of funding and annual budget.

- **Collaboration**: The MenEngage partners seek to work in collaboration, dialoguing openly about institutional differences and achieving consensus whenever possible.

- **Evidence base**: The MenEngage partners seek to build on evidence-based approaches to engaging men and boys.

- **Human rights perspective and life cycle approach**: The partners recognize the need to apply a human rights perspective in all their activities and to take into account a lifecycle and ecological approach that incorporates both the individual as well as the broader social and structural contexts that shape gender inequalities.
Appendix B

Agenda (as revised during the meeting)

Day 1 – Wednesday, January 14

09.00 - 09.30  Sign in – Coffee and tea

09.30 – 10.00  Welcome and Introductions
                  Overview of the Program

10.00 – 10.45  Building a sustainable European Network

              Guest speaker:
              Eva Fager
              Board member of The European Women’s Lobby (EWL) &
              Chair of The Swedish Women’s Lobby

11.00 – 12.00  Why work with men and boys? The Emerging Field of Engaging Men and Boys

              Klas Hylander
              Secretary of Organization, Men for Gender Equality &
              regional coordinator MenEngage Europe

              Gary Barker
              Senior Technical Advisor, International Center for Research on Women &
              co-chair MenEngage Alliance

12.00 – 13.30  LUNCH

13.30 – 15.00  Gallery Walk: each participant provides information about his or her organization in an
                  interactive format (see instructions in separate message)

15.00 – 15.30  Coffee & tea

15.30 – 16.00  Discussion and Commentary on Gallery Walk

16.15 – 18.00  Orientation: Framework and approaches to engaging men and boys on the individual,
                  service delivery, and community levels

              Gary Barker

              Tim Shand
              Youth and HIV Officer, International Planned Parenthood Federation &
              member of steering committee, MenEngage Alliance

              Todd Minerson
              Executive Director, White Ribbon Campaign &
              member of steering committee, MenEngage Alliance
Day 2 – Thursday, January 15

08.30 – 09.00 Informal meetings, Coffee & tea
09.00 – 09.45 Prevention of men’s violence: some findings from research on practice in Europe
   Guest speaker:
   Ludger Jungnitz
   Researcher
   Dissens, Germany
10.00 – 11.00 Presentation of the MenEngage Alliance: what is MenEngage and what does MenEngage do
   Tim Shand
   Eva Nordfjell
   Advisor, Sexual and Reproductive Health/HIV/AIDS and Children’s Rights
   Save the Children Sweden &
   member of steering committee, MenEngage Alliance
11.10 – 12.00 Group discussions on MenEngage Europe in small working groups
12.00 – 13.30 LUNCH, in working groups
13.30 – 14.15 Presentation of the European Men’s Health Forum (EMHF)
   Guest speakers:
   Svend Aage Madsen
   Board member of the EMHF & president of Men’s Health Society, Denmark
   Erick Savoye
   Director of the EMHF, Belgium
14.30 – 15.00 Groups reports from pre-lunch and lunch working groups from Day 2
15.00 – 15.30 Coffee & tea
15.30 – 16.15 Groups reports, continued
16.20 – 17.00 Skills building: approaches to evaluations of work with men and boys
   Gary Barker

19.00 DINNER RECEPTION

Day 3 – Friday, January 16

08.30 – 09.00 Informal meetings, Coffee & tea
09.00 – 09.30 Individual Reflections or Lessons Learned and Implications for our work
09.30 – 10.30 Group discussion on MenEngage Europe
10.30 – 11.00 Coffee & tea
11.00 – 12.00 Next steps: planning ahead
12.00 – 13.30 LUNCH
13.30 – 15.15 Time slot reserved for workshops in smaller groups for skills and capacity building or
   for continued group discussions, by choice of participants.
   - MenEngage partners or guest speakers will be prepared to lead workshops within
     different relevant subjects.
   - Any participant is welcome to suggest a workshop or discussion topic
   - Will include a workshop for representatives from European White Ribbon
     campaigns or other community wide campaign efforts seeking to engage men and
     boys in violence prevention.
15.15 – 15.45  Coffee & Tea
15.45 – 16.15  Evaluation and Closing