The MenEngage Africa members met in Gaborone, Botswana for their annual meeting from 15-17th September 2014. The three day meeting started with a steering committee meeting on the 15th followed by a cocktail in the evening that marked both the launch of the three day meeting and the launch of MenEngage Botswana which is hosted by the office of Men and Boys for Gender Equality (MBGE). Some senior government officials, representatives from UN agencies and Universities and civil society, attended the launch.

A full day meeting of organizations/networks that constitute MenEngage Africa was held at the University of Botswana Student Centre and covered different agenda items including updates from members, an overview of the MenEngage Africa project funded by Sweden and Norad,
the SRHR global campaign and the MenEngage Africa advocacy campaign. Further, countries who are implementing part of the MenEngage Africa project met to discuss project specific concerns related to sub-grant, compliance and reporting.

MenEngage members were welcomed to Botswana by Rev Hambira (Former army commander) who gave a background on Men and Boys for Gender Equality as an organisation. He stated that MBGE was founded in October 2013 with a vision to nurture a community where women, girls, men and boys are given an equal opportunity and not judged on their sexual orientation but rather on how much they are able to contribute to development as individuals. He said that the organization seeks to be recognized as a leader in the implementation of gender transformative interventions where both men and boys take action in ending violence against women and children.

The new law states that the name of the biological father of the child must appear on the birth certificate of the child. He called on Men and boys to become more active in eliminating gender based violence. At the event, the MenEngage Africa was represented by the African Coordinator, Remmy Shawa (Sonke Gender Justice) who gave a brief history of the network in Africa. He indicated that MenEngage is an alliance of organizations working to promote the equality of men and women and that they work to prevent gender based violence while also engaging men and boys in work around HIV and AIDS including SRHR. He further clarified that MenEngage is not a men’s right organization or men’s rights network but a network that works to promote the rights of women and girls by working with men and boys for gender equality. He stated that MenEngage is made up of different organizations and in Africa they have 17 member organizations based in 17 countries in Sub Sahara Africa. In closing he mentioned that MenEngage recognized the role gender plays in development.

He called on Men and boys to become more active in eliminating gender based violence.

REV HAMBIRA

Updates from members

South Africa
The network’s focus is on building the operational and programmatic capacity and sustainability of member organisations at the national level so that they can better increase male involvement in preventing gender based violence, improving sexual and reproductive health and rights, and advancing gender equality.

- Developing and sharing advocacy campaigns to be adapted and implemented at the national and regional levels to;
- Increase men’s support for sexual and reproductive health and right
- Engage religious leaders and faith-based organizations to increase their proactive support for gender equality, SRHR and LGBTI rights
- Engage men as involved, non-violent fathers and caregivers.
- Developing more effective Sonke and MenEngage communications strategies, including: new, updated and extended database, a more complex and updated website, social media strategies and engagement with key media platforms.

**Kenya**

- Have 9 member organizations.
- Established in 2006 and officially launched in 2008.
- Strengthened the secretariat (full time employee and Equipment).
- Promoted the Men Care campaign jointly with religious organizations, Nairobi Women Member of Parliament’s office and other partner organizations e.g. CHF International.
- Orientated youth leaders & policy makers from member organizations in engaging boys and men in GBV & HIV prevention.
- Recruited youth organisations through Sensitisation Workshops into MenKen Youth Forum.
- Finalized MenKen Strategic Plan.
- Youth awareness camp with 30 leaders from Kenya Interfaith Youth Network and youth Organizations in Nairobi.
- Briefed Masai Elders on engaging men and boys in care -giving and healthy living.
- Briefed council of elders jointly with the National AIDS Control Council.
- Briefed University student leaders jointly with FHOK on importance and strategies of engaging men and Boys.

**Milestones**
• Scanned GBV laws and policies jointly with Sonke to see their strength in the area of engaging men and boys and produced a policy report.

• Participated in development of National GBV Policy, Kenya AIDS Strategic Frame work, CSE guidelines, National HIV Road Map and the continuing advocacy on the Prevention Against Domestic Violence Bill 2013.

• Trained CSOs on policy advocacy (Jointly with Sonke).

• Orientation of the Journalists on the importance of engaging men and boys in Gender, SRH and prevention of GBV and gender transformative reporting (with NOPE).

• Conducted a baseline survey on GBV and HIV/AIDS in two Counties and disseminated the results.

• Recruited community change agents in project sites through member organizations.

• Trained community change agents on gender transformation and community mobilization.

• Reached 9434 directly 16602 indirectly as at July 2014 in project sites.

• Women Health Empowerment training (Jointly with Sonke).

• GBV Service provider’s orientation (Jointly with Sonke).

Mozambique

☐ Have started to review their 4 year strategic plan in collaboration with the Health Care project
☐ Their strategy is based on GBV
☐ Community mobilization; they have implemented the Unite campaign and they are expanding activities under this campaign to other provinces.
☐ Have also been implementing men’s groups, some of these groups have been considered as good practices by USAID.
☐ Have implemented work in prisons and they have lobbied the minister of justice to support this work.

☐ Have started to engage with development organizations as a new field in terms of how to contribute to their projects.

☐ Are involved in the review of the penal code in Mozambique.

☐ Working with the ministry in drafting a gender based strategy for Mozambique and they are also part of the platform on human rights.
Working together with a group of 20 organizations to advocate for the process of the review of human rights code.

Some of the issues included in the draft code have not been addressed. These include, the protection of rapists, an issue that needs to be addressed and reviewed accordingly.