

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

MEN AGAINST VIOLENCE AND ABUSE (MAVA): Umang (meaning Aspiration)

Executive Summary

Background

Gender-based violence against women is, currently, a serious public health and human rights issue. While effort to address the issue has been largely focused on empowering women and girls; there is a dearth of sustained, long-term serious efforts that address the root cause of issue i.e. changing the male-dominated outlook / male mindset.

Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA) is India's first voluntary organization, established by a group of sensitive and concerned men in 1993, working towards women's safety and dignity, especially towards stopping and preventing gender-based violence against women, by engaging Boys and Men.

For the past 23 years, MAVA has been primarily engaging adolescent boys and young men, in schools and colleges, in healthy conversations around sexual health and preventing violence on women through leadership-driven training.

MAVA started a One-Year Pilot Project called 'Umang' in July 2014 to work with adolescent boys of 13 -17 years' age in 2 disadvantaged communities of Mumbai, on issues of gender and sexuality.

The communities and organizations, with whom MAVA has been collaborating, for the Project are as follows:

1. Shivshakti Nagar and Garib Nagar, Colaba - children from slums, their parents mostly work in fishing, with support from **YWCA** – Young Women's Christian Association, a reputed international women's organization working closely with the community.
2. Kamathipura, Falkland Road - children of women in prostitution with support from **Prerana**, noted organization working for the development of women in prostitution.

The MAVA youth team now would like to work long term with 40 boys from the 2 disadvantaged communities. It would build their capacities, mentor them and help them reach out to peers and spread message on women's right to safety and dignity.

Project Activities

Through this Project, first of its kind in India, MAVA would be providing a safe, non-threatening platform for adolescent boys to deconstruct and redefine Masculinity through experiential learning and personal dialogue. The work would finally lead to empowerment of women, enabling them to live a life of dignity and safety.

The Objectives of the Project are:

1. Gender-Sensitization and Mentoring of 40 adolescent boys from 2 disadvantaged communities
2. Equipping the mentored boys to communicate with peers on gender matters

Objective 1: Gender-Sensitization and Mentoring of 40 adolescent boys from 2 disadvantaged communities

Activity 1.1

Weekly interactive Sessions with the Boys in 2 Communities

From August 2016, these sessions would be conducted in each of the 2 communities in the form of participatory exercises and stimulating discussions (one and half to two hrs.) with the boys (approx. 20 per community). The topics would include Self-Awareness, Psychological Issues related to Adolescence / Puberty, Nutrition (focusing on Anaemia) and Women's Health, Menstruation - Myths and Misconceptions associated with it, Masculinity – existing form, its impact on Women and Boys / Men, Positive Model of Masculinity, Power and Violence. As a part of the weekly sessions, there would be also games like Power Walk, Story-Telling, film-screenings.

Activity 1.2

There would be a 3-Day Gender-Sensitization (Residential) Camp in August / September 2016, wherein the perspective of the boys on gender would be built. Experienced Professionals would be invited to conduct Sessions on Understanding Specific Aspects relating to Gender, Patriarchy, Sexuality, Violence and Abuse. This will also include a Personal Change Plan, which the boys would be encouraged to work upon for empowering girls / women in their personal lives. Video Documentation of the Camp would be done by the Project Team.

Activity 1.3

A 3-Day Refresher Camp would be conducted in December 2016. The Sessions at the Camp would enhance their understanding on gender issues. Based on the feedback received from the boys, the sessions would be suitably designed to provide specific inputs.

Objective 2: Equipping the mentored boys to communicate with peers on gender matters

Activity 2.1

Few of the Weekly Sessions with the Boys would cover activities that develop their communication and other leadership skills.

Activity 2.2

A 4-day Workshop on Street-Theatre would be conducted wherein the boys would be taught basic skills in theatre enabling them to come up with a street-play that would be performed for various communities (including their own) spreading message on preventing violence against women.

Activity 2.3

The boys would be engaged in Community Outreach and Advocacy Events. These would include putting up of around 20 Street-play performances for groups across the city, Poster Exhibition with new set of posters printed, Placards carrying slogans at a Solidarity Walk, distribution of Awareness Pamphlets for Campaign, distribution of printed FAQ Booklets on Gender and Violence against Women. Interviews of potential mentors (among boys) would be undertaken to inspire peers and other adolescent boys.

Project Impact :

The impact of the Project would be evaluated on the involvement of the boys during the interactive sessions, workshops and camps; their working on Personal Change Plans periodically and their effort in communicating with peers in their respective communities on gender matters. Process and Video documentation would be done through observations at various phases. There would be professionals from the 2 partner organizations visiting the Project at different phases. Their comments and suggestions would be taken into account while implementing the Project.

At this Umang Program, MAVA's Vision is of a **significant number of sensitive Boys taking up ownership of issues** (of women's safety and dignity, living without violence or fear of violence), that are largely seen as women's issues. The Vision is that these boys **talk comfortably and in a healthier manner** (not demeaning to women) on issues of masculinity and sexuality. They would be evolving positive model of masculinity **through their own examples** i. e. by taking specific, active stands for women in personal lives – whether it is stopping of swear words or sexist jokes / remarks, talking against any form of discrimination against girl siblings or violence on women in the neighborhood, doing household chores without any hesitation and respecting mother's work in homes.

While gender and sexuality / life-skills education to boys and girls, in formal educational system in India, is to a small extent being provided by non-governmental organizations, there is a **woeful dearth of any effort that will reach out to adolescent boys in disadvantaged communities on these matters**. And in the absence of this, **the ideas about masculinity and sexuality reinforced (largely through blue films and pornographic material) on these boys get perpetuated**, resulting in possible addictions and gender violence (as it was evident in the capital city gang-rape incident in Delhi in Dec. 2012 or the Shakti Mills gang-rape case in Mumbai in August 2013).

Through the Project, **first of its kind in India**, MAVA would be providing a safe platform for adolescent boys to deconstruct and redefine Masculinity through experiential learning and personal dialogue. The work would finally lead to empowerment of women, enabling them to live a life of dignity and safety.