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To cite this article: Stephanie Baric (2013) Where the boys are: engaging young adolescent boys in support of girls' education and leadership, *Gender & Development*, 21:1, 147-160, DOI: [10.1080/13552074.2013.769777](https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2013.769777)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2013.769777>



Published online: 14 Mar 2013.



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Where the boys are: engaging young adolescent boys in support of girls' education and leadership

Stephanie Baric

The Power to Lead Alliance (PTLA) is a three-year (2008–2011) project implemented by CARE in six countries: Honduras, Yemen, India, Malawi, Tanzania, and Egypt. PTLA was part of a larger girls' education programme, focusing on basic education (access and quality), and gender equality. The programme aimed to promote leadership skills among girls aged between 10 and 14 from vulnerable communities. It used extracurricular activities, social networks, and civic action. In practice, more than 30 per cent of project participants were male. Working with younger adolescent boys provided an opportunity to pilot activities aimed at changing gender norms and attitudes early in their lives.

La Power to Lead Alliance (PTLA) est un projet de trois ans (2008 à 2011) mis en œuvre par CARE dans six pays : Honduras, Yémen, Inde, Malawi, Tanzanie et Égypte. La PTLA s'inscrivait dans un programme d'éducation des filles de plus grande envergure, qui se concentrait sur l'éducation de base (accès et qualité) et sur l'égalité de genre. Le programme cherchait à promouvoir les compétences de leadership parmi les filles d'entre dix et 14 ans issues de communautés vulnérables. Il utilisait des activités extracurriculaires, les réseaux sociaux et l'action civique. Dans la pratique, plus de 30 pour cent des participants au projet étaient de sexe masculin. Le fait de travailler avec de jeunes garçons adolescents a été l'occasion de piloter des activités visant à modifier les normes et attitudes de genre à un stade précoce de leur vie.

La Alianza Poder de Liderazgo (PTLA por sus siglas en inglés), fue un proyecto de tres años de duración (2008 a 2011), implementado por CARE en seis países: Honduras, Yemen, India, Malawi, Tanzania y Egipto. PTLA era parte de un programa de educación de muchachas más amplio, centrado en la educación básica (acceso y calidad) y en la igualdad de género. El objetivo del programa consistió en la promoción de habilidades de liderazgo entre muchachas procedentes de comunidades vulnerables, cuyas edades se encontraban entre los 10 y 14 años. En el programa se integraron actividades extracurriculares, redes sociales y acciones cívicas. En los hechos, más de 30% de los participantes del proyecto fueron muchachos. El trabajo con muchachos

adolescentes creó una oportunidad para realizar actividades piloto con el objetivo de transformar las normas y las actitudes en relación al género en una etapa temprana de sus vidas.

Key words: leadership skills; extracurricular activities; youth; girls' education; masculinities; gender norms

Introduction

Support for girls' education is often described as the best return on investment in developing countries, as countless studies show that getting and keeping girls in school has a positive impact on development, including reducing maternal and child mortality; delaying the age of marriage; lowering fertility rates; enhancing political participation; and increasing economic growth.¹ Despite a clear link between girls' education and improved development outcomes, gender disparity in education remains a challenge globally as rates for enrolment, retention, and completion are lower among girls. While the past several years have seen a surge in the international development community's focus on girls' education, the engagement of men and boys must not be overlooked in addressing the root causes of gender discrimination and poverty.

This article examines the Power to Lead Alliance (PTLA), a three-year (2008–2011) project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). PTLA was implemented by CARE in six countries: Honduras, Yemen, India, Malawi, Tanzania, and Egypt. In each country, PTLA activities were implemented as part of a larger girls' education programme focusing on basic education (access and quality), and gender equality. The PTLA aimed to promote leadership skills among girls aged between 10 and 14, in vulnerable communities, using extracurricular activities, social networks, and civic action. However, while the project specifically targeted young adolescent girls, we found as the project progressed that in fact more than 30 per cent of project participants across the six countries were boys. Working with younger adolescent boys provided an opportunity to pilot activities aimed at changing gender norms and attitudes early in their socialisation process.

This article draws on the findings of the final evaluation of the project. It begins with a section providing the context of the PTLA project. It focuses on CARE's work on girls' leadership, education, and empowerment. The involvement of men and boys in leadership and empowerment programmes is briefly discussed, together with the cost to children of both sexes of gender stereotypes and harmful social practices.

The article then moves to discuss the PTLA project, and discusses the findings of the final evaluation. These findings suggested that boys who participated in the PTLA project ended up with stronger perceptions of equality of rights and understanding of

gendered social norms. They also revealed that behaviour change is especially challenging, and requires more time and stronger messages to counter the powerful influences on boys from wider society.

The context: girls' education, empowerment, and leadership development

Advancing girls' education and leadership skills

Girls' education has emerged over recent decades as one of the top priorities of the international development community, and is recognised as a cornerstone of development. In 2000, 189 countries signed up for the Education for All (EFA) initiative, pledging to eliminate gender disparities in education by 2005 (see UN Girls' Education Initiative 2002). Additionally, in support of the gender-related EFA goals, the second United Nations' Millennium Development Goal (MDG) strives to achieve universal and primary education, and MDG 3 to promote gender equality and empower women by 2015. There is recognition globally that access to the intellectual and social benefits of basic education ensures the protection and fulfilment of the rights of girls and increases the range of life choices available to them as women. Girls' education is also one of the most important and powerful steps towards challenging gender discrimination and ending poverty.

As an organisation, CARE has been supporting education programmes for more than 50 years, with a focus on addressing gender parity in basic education since 1994. The organisation has drawn on its experience implementing education programmes in more than 40 countries to realise the importance of engaging men and boys in support of girls' education, and gender equality more broadly. In 2008, CARE launched the 'Power Within – Learning to Lead' programme (PW) with the goal of providing support to girls to complete their primary education and develop leadership skills. PW targeted girls between the ages of 10 and 14, as this is the period of early adolescence when puberty brings about physical changes and gender roles become more defined as girls begin the transition to adulthood. It is also the age range when most girls drop out of primary school in developing countries. The programme's three key change domains addressed some of the most fundamental challenges to girls' education, and provided vulnerable and marginalised girls with the opportunity to complete primary education, and to cultivate their leadership skills through a range of opportunities. The programme also included activities designed to foster an enabling environment for girls' education.

Empowering girls through leadership development

The emphasis on leadership skills development stems from identifying ways to support girls to better articulate their needs, protect their personal assets, participate in decision-making, and, overall, shape their futures. Following secondary literature

review and technical consultations with experts, CARE defined girls' leadership as 'an active learner who believes that she can make a difference in her world, and acts individually and with others to bring about positive change' (Baric *et al.* 2009, 10). These characteristics of a girl leader emerged in a study commissioned by CARE.

This CARE description of a girl leader is comparable to descriptions of positive youth development adopted by other organisations, such as the International Youth Foundation's model: 'Many girls may show voice, decision-making, confidence, and organization, but a more limited number will show the characteristic we have called vision and have the ability and desire to motivate others to follow' (Baric *et al.* 2009, 9). The competencies or characteristics of a girl leader identified in the CARE study included:

1. *Confidence*: a confident girl, who is aware of her opinions, goals, and abilities, and acts to assert herself in order to influence and change her life and world.
2. *Voice/assertion*: a girl who has found her voice, is comfortable sharing her thoughts and ideas with others, and who knows she has the right to do so.
3. *Decision-making/action*: a girl who demonstrates sound decision-making, and understands that her own decisions matter for herself, for her future, and, often, for others.
4. *Organisation*: a girl with organisational skills, who is able to organise herself and her actions in order to accomplish a goal, and to take an idea and realise it.
5. *Vision and ability to motivate others*: a girl with a strong and clear vision, who is able to motivate others, and brings people together to accomplish a task.

While girls are the impact group under PW, recognising the position of power and influence men hold in most societies, men and boys are a target group as potential agents of community change who also benefit from improved education access and quality, and more equitable gender relations.

CARE's work with men and boys began with increasing awareness of the importance of engaging them if the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment are to be attained. CARE's awareness of the importance of engaging men and boys stemmed from research conducted by CARE over three years, beginning in 2005, through its 'Strategic Impact Inquiry on Women's Empowerment' (Martinez 2006) which attempted to answer the critical question: were CARE programmes having an impact on the underlying causes of poverty and rights denial, and if so, how? The research into CARE's programmes in different country contexts focused on gender and power, and the question of CARE's contributions to women's empowerment and gender equality. Across the nearly 30 countries that were featured in the three-year study, CARE gained key insights on how to work with greater impact toward women's empowerment.

CARE's *Strategic Impact Inquiry on Women's Empowerment* emphasised the importance of three actions. First, it is critical to understanding the complexities of male–female relations, acknowledging that these contain binding as well as divisive forces, which people value in ways which are not necessarily allowed for in development approaches which stereotype gender relations. Second, men need to be taken seriously as central players in processes of transformation to gender relations, and time needs to be invested in supporting them to open up to the idea of more gender-equitable ways of being and doing. Thirdly, development programmes need to create valuable entry points and safe staging grounds for men and women to grow into change. The same study also prioritised defining women's empowerment.

In line with this, following a literature review among practitioners and academics, CARE duly developed a Global Framework for Women's Empowerment. The Global Framework has been critical in exploring the links between education, leadership, and empowerment for girls. It addresses three interconnecting aspects of social change: agency, structures, and human relationships. All of these aspects are considered key factors in the construction and entrenchment of poverty and gender discrimination. Change – in this case, improvement in the physical, economic, political, or social wellbeing of girls and women – will not be sustained unless all three components of the framework change – individuals, structures, and relations.

The three components of women's and girls' empowerment are defined in the Global Framework as follows:

1. *Individuals change*: poor women become *agents* of their own development, able to analyse their own lives, make their own decisions and take their own actions. Women (and men) *gain agency* by gaining skills, knowledge, confidence, and experience.
2. *Structures change*: women, individually and collectively, challenge the routines, conventions, laws, family forms, kinship structures, and taken-for-granted behaviours that shape their lives – the 'social order', accepted forms of power and how these are perpetuated.
3. *Relations change*: women form new relations with other social actors, build relationships, form coalitions, and develop mutual support; in order to negotiate, be agents of change, alter structures, and so realise rights and livelihood security.

Empowerment is not the only precondition for leadership development, but it is a critical one, and if leadership development work is to be accomplished, programmes must have a full understanding of how empowerment of girls may be accomplished. This involves moving from a focus on the first component of empowerment laid out in the Global Framework (that is, individual change which enables girls to exercise more agency and control over their own lives), to the second and third components. In essence, this means that development programmes need also to promote and support

changes in structures which constrain girls' agency, and to promote supportive relationships for girls.

Working with men and boys is a critical component in this work. Men and boys are required to support changes in social relations in the household and community, and changes in the institutions whose workings structure women's lives and provide the framework for their choices. Men and boys can support positive change in their capacity as both formal and informal leaders (e.g. religious leaders, clan heads, and teachers, among others). They can also act as community role models, changing their peers' perceptions of gender, as well as acting as agents of change in their own right, supporting and enforcing gender-sensitive policies and laws. Engaging men and boys helps create awareness of the damage caused to both sexes by gender stereotypes, norms, and attitudes, which limit choices and behaviour, and penalise individuals who refuse to conform to particular societal standards.

Children are often constrained by social expectations and practices which not only limit their vision of the future, but also cause emotional or physical harm. For example, girls may face such practices as early (that is, child) marriage, and female genital cutting. Boys can face violent initiation ceremonies. For both sexes, exploitative child labour is a reality – though the nature of the work is very gender-specific (e.g. boys may be employed as heavy labourers or herd-boys, while girls may face exploitation as domestic workers). All these gendered experiences can deeply affect a child's future aspirations as well as his or her social and physical mobility. Furthermore, conceptualisations of masculinity and femininity can place burdens on both genders that inhibit equitable relationships. A key consideration in the design of PW is the varied roles that men and boys, more specifically young peer adolescent boys, play in shaping a supportive environment, including renegotiating traditional gender roles, for girls to become leaders and access their rights, including an education, and substantive freedoms.

The PTLA project

Acting as a core initiative of CARE's PW programme, the PTLA project sought to create and strengthen different kinds of leadership opportunities for girls in vulnerable communities in the following six countries: Egypt, Honduras, India, Malawi, Tanzania, and Yemen.

The project's three objectives were as follows:

- *Objective 1:* To cultivate opportunities for girls to practise their leadership skills through a combination of extracurricular activities, social networks, and opportunities to participate in civic action.

Leadership skills were developed and practised through 13 categories of activities. These were: music; debate; sports; arts and drama; youth councils; parliaments and boards;

health; life skills groups; awareness campaigns; classroom support; academic clubs; scouts; and environment work. According to the final evaluation of the project, sports and arts and drama had the strongest involvement across all countries for project participants. Through participation in social networks, girls were given an opportunity to socialise with peers and the networks served as a 'safe space' for girls to explore challenging life issues, such as safe sex or early marriage. The third key activity under this objective, participation in civic action, facilitated a variety of collective actions through initiatives in the surrounding community. PTLA activities were developed based on consultation with the Girl Scouts of the USA for empowering girls and developing girls' leadership skills.

- *Objective 2:* To create partnerships to promote girls' leadership that not only bring in financial and technical resources to support this work, but also engage in advocacy work to advance girls' rights.

Under this objective, country offices and headquarters developed partnerships with non-government organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. NGOs implemented activities in the six countries and the US partnerships with NGOs were often linked to advocacy initiatives around adolescent girls' rights. Since the project was funded under USAID's Global Development Alliance, which promotes public-private partnerships, private-sector funding was leveraged to support the girls' education programmes.

- *Objective 3:* To enhance knowledge to implement and promote girls' leadership programmes by learning and sharing lessons learnt about barriers to, and openings for, girls' leadership.

At the time of the design of PTLA in 2008, a review of relevant literature showed that research and learning around girls' leadership had been restricted, for the most part, to the developed North (Baric *et al.* 2009). PTLA provided an opportunity to see how girls' leadership is developed and expressed in six different developing countries with considerable social and cultural differences. Each country involved in the work presented a unique combination of gender norms and attitudes, policies and programmes for girls, type of governance, educational systems, and economic environments.

The PTLA and the involvement of boys in its work

As highlighted at the start of the article, PTLA aimed to target young adolescent girls. However, a demographic analysis of participants during the start-up phase of the project revealed that approximately 30 per cent of participants were actually boys, across the six countries. The PTLA developed its work accordingly to respond to these male participants. It aimed to change perceptions among male project participants around issues such as caregiving and domestic roles, education, work and leadership,

violence, and reproductive health decision-making. The approach was largely based on the work of Instituto Promundo's Program H² which has focused on sexual and reproductive health, in contrast to PTLA's focus on girls' education and leadership.

Working with peer boys presented an opportunity to look at the role they could play in spurring change in the area of gender equality by implementing activities intended to challenge the 'social order' which perpetuates accepted forms of power and discrimination. With joining in extracurricular activities and civic participation alongside girls in some of the countries through structured activities supervised by adults, they witnessed girls stepping out of traditional gender roles, and did the same themselves. The project also exposed them to messaging around the importance of behaving in ways which encourage gender equality. The social networks were intended to be 'safe spaces', and were run as gender-exclusive spaces (that is, as boys-only and girls-only) which gave the children the opportunity to socialise with their peers and freely explore many of the life challenges they face as early adolescent boys or girls.

As a key component of the leadership activities, participation in civic action introduced adolescents to concepts of governance, and more active and engaged citizenry. Again, boys and girls participated – this time, together – in activities that were intended to expose children to the basics of governance – and to be more specific to development processes. They learnt about the steps of identifying an issue in the community, developing a plan for addressing the issue, and then working collectively to implement the plan. In most countries where PTLA ran, the civic action component included activities such as student government and community service. Through enabling children to learn about and explore these processes of active citizenship, PTLA reinforced the importance of bringing different perspectives (in this case, perspectives which differ by gender) to social action and processes of change.

The Gender Equitable Index: assessing boys' perceptions

As PTLA sought to change the ways in which both girls and boys thought about concepts of gender, this required understanding gender perceptions that contribute to gender inequality. The project developed the 'Gender Equitable Index' (GEI) as a tool for assessing the success of PTLA in changing boys' perceptions about gender equality.

Following the Gender Equitable Attitudes in Men Scale (GEM Scale) model, a series of statements were developed with which respondents would either agree or disagree. While the GEI tool is based on the GEM Scale, when comparing the two evaluation models, the GEI has 48 statements and the GEM Scale includes 34. During the process of developing gender-equitable statements for PTLA, consultations were made with all six countries under the project, with field testing carried out in Egypt and Tanzania. GEM Scale statements were selected or adapted based on age and cultural appropriateness. Additional statements were included (hence the higher number of statements under PTLA) as well as a grouping of the statements under domains such

as 'work and leadership' or 'violence'. The following three statements were adopted from the GEM Scale without change:

- Changing nappies, giving the kids a bath, and feeding the kids are the mothers' responsibility.
- It is important to have a male friend that you can talk about your problems with.
- If a man sees another man beating a woman, he should stop it.

Statements were developed to monitor and evaluate boys' perceptions and opinions. The statements below in *italics* are considered to be equitable statements. That is, the statement reflects a condition in which boys and girls are treated the same. For example, all of the statements under the category of 'Work and Leadership' are equitable statements. Girls or women are compared to men similarly. In contrast, inequitable statements reinforce the superiority of boys to girls.

Provided below are examples of statements that were adopted by PTLA for the GEI from the GEM Scale but where the wording of the statement was changed:

- A man should have the final word about decisions in his home.
- The father is the final decision-maker in the family.
- There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.
- I think it is acceptable that a husband beats his wife if she disobeys him.
- It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant.
- If a girl gets pregnant by a male teacher, it is her fault.

Additional statements were developed to reflect PTLA's focus on girls' education and leadership:

Education

- Boys have more opportunities than girls to go to university.
- When the family cannot afford to educate all children, only boys should go to school.
- *Girls have the same right as boys to be educated.*
- A man should be better educated than his wife.
- Boys are more intelligent than girls.

Leisure and Social Networking

- *Boys should ask their parents for permission to go outside just like girls.*
- *There should be places where girls can practise social, cultural, and sports activities, just like there are places for boys.*
- Boys are better than girls in sports.

- *Girls have the right to select their female friends just as boys select their male friends.*
- *It is OK for girls to play sports like football.*

Work and Leadership

- *A woman could be a President or Prime Minister and be as good as a man.*
- *Women should have equal access to leadership positions at the village, district, and state government level.*
- *Women can be engineers or scientists like men.*
- *A woman has the same right as a man to work outside the village.*
- *Girls have the same right as boys to express their opinions.*

While PTLA drew heavily from the GEM Scale, the GEI is broad in scope socially and affects multiple social spheres (e.g. includes statements around education or work and leadership); and the GEI is about present and future interactions between boys and girls.

Provided below are some of the baseline findings from India and Egypt based on the GEI. In India, the statements were presented to boys in school and out of school, whereas in Egypt the GEI was only applied to boys in school.

Example of baseline findings from India:

- *Caring for her children and husband, and doing the household chores and cooking, are the most important roles in a woman's life. (in school boys 78.3 per cent/85.7 per cent out of school boys)*
- *Only girls should help with household chores. (21.7 per cent/71.4 per cent)*
- *Boys have more opportunities than girls to go to university. (68.9 per cent/78.6 per cent)*
- *Boys are more intelligent than girls. (54.7 per cent/85.7 per cent)*
- *Women should have equal access to leadership positions at the village, district, and state government level. (80.2 per cent/50 per cent)*
- *It is OK for girls to play sports like football. (45.3 per cent/64.3 per cent)*
- *If I see a man beating his wife, I should try to stop him. (99.1 per cent/100 per cent)*
- *I think it is acceptable that a husband beats his wife if she disobeys him. (58.5 per cent/71.4 per cent)*

The baseline findings from India reveal contradictions in gender perceptions among boys. While almost 100 per cent of boys in and out of school would stop a man from beating his wife, 58.5 per cent of boys in school and 71.4 per cent of boys out of school found it acceptable for a husband to beat his wife if she disobeys him, implying that violence against women is condoned in the household. It is also worth noting the number of boys who agreed that boys have more opportunities to attend university than girls but also agree that boys are more intelligent than girls.

Examples of baseline findings from Egypt:

- Caring for her children and husband and doing the household chores and cooking are the most important roles in a woman's life. (27 per cent)
- Only girls should help with household chores. (29 per cent)
- Boys have more opportunities than girls to go to university. (11 per cent)
- Girls have the same right as boys to be educated. (64 per cent)
- A man should be better educated than his wife. (45 per cent)
- Women should have equal access to leadership positions at the village, district, and state government level. (40 per cent)
- If I see a man beating his wife, I should try to stop him. (79 per cent)
- I think it is acceptable that a husband beats his wife if she disobeyed him. (50 per cent)

In Egypt, as in India, a higher percentage of boys agreed they would stop a man from beating his wife whereas half of the boys surveyed found it acceptable for a husband to beat his wife if she disobeys him. Another finding worth noting is the relatively low number of boys who think household work is primarily the role of a woman or that only girls should help with household chores and yet only 64 per cent believe girls have the same right as boys to be educated.

As previously discussed, the findings were supposed to be used in promoting gender equity as well as targeting issues that need to be addressed in social networks with boys through activities that explore definitions of gender, reversing gender roles, labelling or stereotyping, power relationships, relating to peers, gender roles in the family, household duties and gender stereotypes, and what is violence.

Findings from the PTLA's final project evaluation

Following three years of implementation (September 2008 to September 2011), a final evaluation of the project was conducted and data collection included focus groups, semi-structured interviews, activity observations, and the GEI and Girls' Leadership Index (GLI). The GLI is a monitoring tool developed under PTLA that not only gathers data about girls' perceptions of their leadership skills and behaviours but was also designed as a means of initiating reflection and self-awareness about leadership competencies among girls.

Given that the baseline data collection in most countries was not structured to track respondents, as a result, it was difficult to assess individual change among girls and boys, and determine which activity was more effective at building leadership skills or promoting more gender equitable relations. However, the final evaluation was able to draw a varied range of conclusions about the impact of the project, which included many very positive and encouraging findings. These included the following:

- All countries achieved or were at least close to achieving the 70 per cent target of possessing leadership skills and competencies.
- Girls throughout the six countries, with the exception of Honduras, met the 70 per cent target of taking leadership action.
- While the 70 per cent targets for leadership skills and competencies and for leadership action in homes, schools, or communities were not met, at least 50 per cent improved in these areas as well.

Sports, theatre and art groups, debate clubs, scouting, and civic action opportunities were the most popular among project participants. It is worth noting that girls identified community attitudes and norms as the most common barrier for participation in PTLA activities. Focus group discussions revealed that the majority of girls felt they were leaders or were developing as leaders with boys sharing a similar perception about their own leadership development. Overall, with the exception of Malawi, all countries showed a statistically significant difference in leadership skills development between the active participant group and the comparison group.

Results from the GEI led the project evaluators to conclude that girls and boys from PTLA sites 'had stronger perceptions of equality or rights and understanding of gendered social norms than girls and boys from comparison sites; and the difference between groups is notable' (Miske Witt & Associates Inc. 2011, 40). The evaluators commented:

some girls in Malawi and Tanzania noted increased opportunities to interact with boys and the girls said they felt free to talk to boys whereas before they were not allowed to even sit next to them. In Yemen, the girls noted that attitudes appeared to be changing as the boys began treating them with more respect. In India, a community leader stated boys and girls appeared to be more comfortable with each other ... Following a year of project implementation, staff observed boys' changed attitudes and were interested in learning how to stitch, roll chapattis, and help with household chores, activities that are generally considered 'female'. (Miske Witt & Associates Inc. 2011, 40, 52)

Relationships between boys and girls appeared to have improved. The evaluation noted that supportive relationships could be discerned among participants in the project:

friendly relationships between girls and boys appeared to be present to a greater extent in active sites than comparison sites. For example, in Honduras boys and girls were observed interacting with one another in various activities. In India, both boys and girls commented on improved relationships with each other. This was also evident in Malawi and Tanzania. Egypt and Yemen have fewer examples of interactions between boys and girls, likely due to the cultural norms around male and female interactions in Muslim countries. (Miske Witt & Associates Inc. 2011, 32)

However, data from focus groups also revealed the discrepancies that exist between attitudes and behaviour. While the majority of boys in focus groups agreed that girls have the same right as boys to express opinions and the right to be educated,

statements from girls did not always align with boys' responses. In Malawi, girls observed that boys who participated in the *gule wamkulu* ritual (a traditional dance usually performed by boys) became rude because they felt superior to girls in their male-only role. Another example was girls in Honduras, who said boys did not support them in playing football (Miske Witt & Associates Inc. 2011).

Conclusion

PTLA was an innovative and ambitious intervention which may be unique, in working with young adolescent boys to challenge gender norms and attitudes in support of girls' education and leadership development. Given that young adolescence (ages 10–14) is the period when puberty brings about physical changes and gender roles become more defined, it presents an opportune time to promote gender-equitable norms and behaviours.

While PTLA presented promising results in engaging peer boys, including changes in attitude that were sustained and documented following the end of the project, a key lesson that emerged is that three years is not enough time to support changes in behaviour on the part of the adolescent boys who participated, especially when it comes to gender norms that are so deeply entrenched in a society. In addition to the short timeframe, the project points to the need for stronger social messaging and trained mentors to work with boys to facilitate a structured process for surfacing and unpacking prevailing gender social norms that lead to gender discrimination.

The findings of PTLA, including the activities piloted, and the GEI as a tool for understanding and critically reflecting on gender perceptions, can potentially be used as a basis for designing future programmes for girls' education and leadership development in working with younger adolescent boys whose gender norms and attitudes are still being developed and where there is an opportunity to affect positive change.

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Notes

- 1 Studies have been conducted by the World Bank (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 2004) and UNICEF (2005).
- 2 Program H helps young men to reflect upon and question the traditional norms of what defines 'manhood' through two elements: a curriculum that includes manuals and educational video for promoting attitude and behaviour change among young men; and a lifestyle social marketing campaign for promoting changes in community or

social norms related to what it means to be a man (Nascimento 2006). Program H also includes an evaluation model, the Gender Equitable Attitudes in Men Scale (GEM Scale), for measuring changes in attitudes and social norms around manhood to measure outcomes of the initiative (*ibid.*). The Program H Initiative promotes gender-equitable norms and behaviours, as defined by four principles. First, it promotes the idea that intimate relationships should be based on respect, equality, and intimacy rather than sexual conquest; second, it offers men a perspective on fatherhood which stresses that men should take financial and caregiving responsibility; third, it supports men to assume some responsibility for their own and their partners' reproductive health and disease prevention issues; and finally, supports men to oppose violence towards their female partners (*ibid.*). Program H seeks to 'positively influence safer sexual behaviours (including increased condom use in those sexually active, reducing gender based violence), fewer unplanned pregnancies, improved partner negotiation skills, and increased utilization of health services' (*ibid.*, 1). For more information, visit <http://www.promundo.org.br/en/about-us/introduction/>.

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