2023 CLA CASE COMPETITION

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Case Title:

Fostering men's engagement to support gender equality

Name:

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Organization:

USAID Engendering Industries (Tetra Tech)

Summary:

USAID Engendering Industries (EI) is a global program that supports organizations in male-dominated industries to increase economic opportunities for women and improve gender equality in the workplace. It has prioritized CLA and focused on developing a technical evidence base to identify the most effective approaches for enhancing gender equality across the employee life cycle.

Through iterative consultations with the program's global partners, EI identified men's engagement as a critical component for advancing gender equality and then partnered with Equimundo: Center for Masculinities and Social Justice to design tools and methodologies to foster men's allyship and active engagement on gender equality. This program component deepened and complemented Engendering Industries' existing training programs in which partner companies develop and implement corporate gender equality action plans. The EI and Equimundo team drew on formative research, input from partners, and evidence-based approaches to develop a training manual, which was tested and refined in a five-day training-of-trainers (ToT) to engage men for gender equality in the workplace.

After each training, a Lessons Learned session as facilitated. During these sessions, assessment data was reviewed, and lessons learned were applied to future iterations of the training methodology and manual. The program theory of change was updated to fully integrate men's engagement based on reflections made possible by continuously gathering feedback from stakeholders at each touchpoint.

As a result of applying a CLA approach, fostering men's engagement to support gender equality throughout the employee life cycle framework is now a core pillar of the USAID Engendering Industries' multi-faceted, proven approach for enhancing gender equality in the workplace.

1. **WHAT: What is the general context in which the case takes place? What organizational or development challenge(s) or opportunities prompted you to collaborate, learn, and/or adapt?**

In male-dominated sectors globally women face structural barriers to equal participation in the labor force, including underrepresentation and exclusion, especially in technical and leadership roles. USAID's Engendering Industries theory of change (ToC) outlines how adopting gender-equity policies and practices across the employee life cycle, while enhancing capacity of leaders to develop and implement these measures, leads to tangible advances in gender equality. Increased gender equality also improves business performance, helping companies meet their bottom-line by enhancing employee satisfaction, reducing turnover, driving productivity and innovation, and enhancing resilience.

Regular consultations with partner companies revealed a lack of male change agents was a common barrier to fostering an enabling environment for change. In 2022 the program piloted a training to foster men's engagement at three companies in Nigeria, the Dominican Republic, and India. The hypothesis was that if men engage more actively in gender equality initiatives and understand how they benefit from a more gender-balanced workforce, a more inclusive and collaborative culture is activated which accelerates outcomes.

Lessons Learned sessions were facilitated to explore challenges and successes and reflect on key assumptions in relation to the work plan and ToC. Through this process the team identified that when coupled with tailored change management coaching, men's engagement has the potential to amplify impact and sustainability of the Engendering Industries approach. The development challenge faced was then then integrate this innovative model of engaging men into the overall technical approach and adjust the ToC.

2. **What two CLA Sub-Components are most clearly reflected in your case?**

Pause & Reflect

Continuous Learning & Improvement

3. **HOW: What steps did you take to apply CLA approaches to address the challenge or opportunity described above?**

EI developed the men's engagement training manual in collaboration with Equimundo. The development of the manual was broadly informed by Equimundo's previous research and programming on engaging men for gender equality as well as the emerging body of research and promising practices on how men can contribute to and benefit from gender equitable workplaces. The EI and Equimundo team gathered feedback from various program partners who had begun making a conscious effort to engage men in gender equality discussions and interventions to inform the development of the approach. That base of knowledge was reinforced through formative research including interviews with key informants from the broader EI program and the three pilot companies. In addition, surveys and questionnaires were sent to all 41 partner companies as part of an introductory webinar and knowledge gleaned from their participation in additional aspects of the program.

From the design phase and throughout the execution of the training, Engendering Industries instilled a culture of continuous learning and improvement and instituted intentional time to pause and reflect during the training implementation cycle. These approaches allowed Engendering Industries to build a training approach that is agile and adaptable, as well as more impactful. Program leadership emphasizes the importance of adaptive management and encourages frequent communication and check ins with partner companies to co-create tailored project activities. The program team has created a culture that welcomes change, and staff are empowered to contribute ideas to solve for challenges faced in training implementation.

The training program has intentionally sought feedback using a variety of tools to understand how to best adapt the training to suit the needs of partner companies and different cultural and workplace contexts. In 2022, Engendering Industries piloted the training manual and approach with three partner organizations in different geographies to validate and iterate on the content and training model before it was finalized and scaled up to an additional five-day advanced training. New modalities were also developed based on evolving partner needs, including a regional adaptation, an Advanced ToT, and a Master Trainer program. Before and after each training session, Engendering Industries conducted a pre-and post-training assessment to measure shifts in knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as a post-training evaluation to provide insight into any needed adjustments to future training content or structure. In addition, during the training, participants completed a daily feedback form so the facilitators and program manager could monitor and quickly respond to feedback from the participants about the facilitation delivery and content.

Learning questions were developed to better understand the added value the training provides in achieving development outcomes. After each training, the training team led a Lessons Learned session to capture what worked well and what didn't, and to document and integrate improvements into the training manual and subsequent deliveries of the program. These involved reflecting on the learning questions and honing the training agenda and activity design as well as protocols for logistical arrangements and communication with the training partner. As this is the first training of its kind, these lessons learned will be valuable to stress-testing, iterating, and adapting the training manual, which will soon be made publicly available, to ensure effectiveness across various workplace contexts. This iterative and adaptive process allows the program to continually improve the approach to design the most impactful evidence-based model while drawing on valuable local context.

4. RESULTS: Choose one of the following questions to answer.

We know you may have answers in mind for both questions; However please choose one to highlight as part of this case story

A. DEVELOPM ENT RESULTS

Through the consistent application of Lessons Learned sessions, EI refined its theory of change and understanding of critical assumptions of a successful men's engagement intervention – which led to more impactful trainings. Continuous improvement of MEL processes allowed the team to have a better collect valuable participants feedback and assess how the training was shifting attitudes and increasing skills. One lesson learned was that the training is more effective when done in a residential setting (off site from the participants workplace). This allows participants more focused time for group work, teach backs, and development of gender actions plans which are presented on the last day of training. Another important lesson was that when training content was more focused on family life and cultural norms and less so on workplace culture, there were rich discussions; however, without the focus on workplace culture, course content is less actionable and more difficult for participants to understand training objectives and their role in becoming change agents within their company.

Preliminary evidence points to the importance of men's engagement interventions as a critical component of successful gender equality programming. As a result of the men's engagement training, participants demonstrate increased knowledge and skills gained for applying men's engagement strategies in their workplaces and shifts in gender-related attitudes. Post-survey results from three pilot sessions demonstrated a shift in participant agreement with the concept that engaging men is important for gender equality efforts, from 77 percent in the pre-survey to 98 percent in the post-survey. Preliminary evidence also shows a correlation between a company's participation in men's engagement interventions and increased representation of women and higher rates of promotion for women. Companies that have undergone men's engagement interventions also report increased involvement of men in the development of gender-related policies (e.g., paternity leave, sexual harassment and gender-based violence policies); increased involvement in mentorship programs, and increased number of male champions who challenge regressive masculinity norms and are transforming organizational culture, which is often the most challenging aspect of organizational change.

5. **ENABLING CONDITIONS: How have enabling conditions - resources (time/money/staff), organizational culture, or business/work processes - influenced your results? How would you advise others to navigate any challenges you may have faced?**

Above all else, a leadership team that genuinely embraces CLA creates an environment that fosters motivation for learning and a commitment to excellence by encouraging openness and embracing change based on evidence and lessons learned.

Gathering routine feedback and sharing lessons learned from all stakeholders (training participants, facilitators, company leadership, implementing staff and USAID) has enabled continuous improvement of both the content and delivery of the training. Additionally, the strong relationships established with companies already engaged with other components of the program has enabled successful co-creation of the training to ensure content and structure is appropriately tailored to the organizational and country culture.

There have also been several obstacles the team faced. For example, during design webinars to develop the pilot approach, it became evident that virtual settings are much less conducive to holding vulnerable and sensitive discussions. Although in-person trainings came at a higher cost, the value-add was evident. Additionally, pivoting the training to be done in residential setting was more costly and logistically challenging, but with the proven success of that model the investment was justified. The residential model also created barriers for some women who may not have been able participate in a five day long off-site training as they were not able to leave their family responsibilities. In one example this was addressed by offering a hybrid model so women participating could have the option to return home in the evenings.