

# **The Young Men Initiative**

— A Case Study 2012

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*Engaging young men in the Western Balkans in gender equality  
and violence prevention*

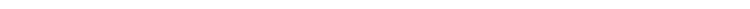
# The Young Men Initiative:

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ENGAGING YOUNG MEN IN THE WESTERN BALKANS IN GENDER  
EQUALITY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

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## A Case Study 2012



# Impressum

This case study is a reflection of the process, achievements and results developed out of the **Young Men Initiative**; a program by CARE International North West Balkans and its collaborative partners from 2007 – 2010. The program was focused on addressing gender inequalities, harmful health practices and interpersonal violence in everyday life with young men in schools and the community.

For additional information on the Young Men Initiative, contact CARE International.

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#### CARE International

Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Banja Luka 78000  
Aleja Svetog Save 7a  
T: +387 51 25 82 00  
E: spetkovic@carewb.org

Croatia  
Zagreb 10000  
Iblerov trg 9  
T: +385 1 45 73 287  
E: jcrownover@carewb.org

Serbia  
Belgrade 11030  
Scerbinova 6/20 – VII floor  
T: +381 11 35 72 341  
E: mstarcevic@care.rs

Website: [www.youngmeninitiative.org](http://www.youngmeninitiative.org) (pdf version available for download)

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**CARE International** is a leading relief and development non-governmental organization fighting global poverty and social injustice. Non-political and non-sectarian, we operate each year in more than 70 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, reaching almost 60 million people in poor communities. CARE in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia is focused on promoting gender equality, addressing discrimination and social and economic inclusion.

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# 1. Introduction

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The Young Men Initiative (YMI) is a promising, evidence-based strategy for engaging young men throughout the Western Balkans in the promotion of gender equality and the prevention of violence. Pilot activities took place from 2007 to 2010 and reached over 4,000 young men ages 14-18 through educational workshops and campaign activities. The design, implementation and evaluation of the pilot activities were a collaborative effort between local partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, and international partners from Brazil, Northern Ireland and the USA. As one of the first systematic efforts in the region to specifically address young men's behaviors and vulnerabilities from a gender perspective, YMI has led to positive, evaluated results at various levels and useful considerations for youth programming in the region and elsewhere.

## MASCULINITIES AND YOUTH IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

As in many other settings, patriarchal and rigid norms around gender and masculinities are still prevalent in the Western Balkans. These norms influence young men's attitudes, behaviors, and relationships with other young men, young women, families, and larger communities. From an early age, many young men are taught that being a "real man" means being a provider for and protector of one's family and community. Boys and young men are often raised to be aggressive and competitive, in preparation for these social roles. Many boys and young men are also often raised to be self-reliant, to not worry about their health and do not reach out for help when they may need it. Often, boys and young men who may act contrary to these social expectations – for example, who show interest in domestic tasks traditionally associated with women, such as cooking, cleaning, or caring for younger siblings, or who easily display their emotions - may be ridiculed by their families and peers as being "sissies", or not real men.

The attitudes and behaviors of the current generation of young men in the Western Balkans are also influenced by the fact that they were born during and immediately after the Yugoslav wars and have come of age in a time of tumultuous post-conflict recovery. In many settings in the region, militarized versions of masculinities are still very present, as are tensions around socio-cultural and political identities. This broader backdrop plays a fundamental role in shaping masculinities in the region, and young men's experiences around violence. Given the growing concern in the Balkans about rising levels of gendered and peer violence (including homophobic and xenophobic

o6 violence), it is imperative that civil society and governments understand more about how gender norms and other social influences shape young men's attitudes and behaviors, and how programs and policies can most effectively address these issues.

In the Western Balkans, as throughout the world, young men are the main perpetrators of violence, against other young men and against women. Young men are also often the primary victims of violence. For young men, peer violence – including bullying – is often the most pervasive violence in their daily lives. Indeed, many young men are often taught that aggression or violence toward others is an acceptable means of demonstrating strength and control or that to avoid being victims they must perpetrate violence towards others. The baseline survey for the YMI pilot activities in schools found that significant numbers of young men had engaged in bullying: 34–55% had threatened another young man at least once and 47–65% had punched or kicked another young man. The same survey also found that 75–90% of the young men believed that they needed to defend their “honor” if someone insulted them, even if it meant using violence. In addition, 25–33% of young men also reported having been involved in an act of violence as part of a gang. During interviews with young men, violence as gangs or groups was repeatedly raised, with several noting this phenomenon as both a trigger (that group behavior – often along with drinking – leads to ‘stupid behavior’ like violence) and as a support (having friends to join if attacked).

For young people across all cultures and settings, adolescence is a time of tremendous transition as they strive to define themselves and their place in the world; it is a time to test boundaries, try new things, interact with different people and solidify many of the ideas and ‘norms’ that will guide them throughout their lives. The YMI targets young men as they are at this phase in their lives – a time of formative social experiences, including first intimate relationships. From an education perspective, this phase represents a window of opportunity for promoting positive attitudes and behaviors about gender roles and relationships. For example, although this is an age when young men are only starting to enter into intimate relationships, it is a key moment for engaging them in reflections about gender-based violence. It is during this time in their lives that young men are forming their beliefs and attitudes about relationship dynamics, often looking to relationships they see at home and around them as models. For a significant number of young men, the models of relationships they see around them may be violent ones. A recent study with adult men in Croatia, for example, found that approximately 30% of the respondents had used violence against women at least once and about 30% experienced violence from a teacher at school, while nearly 70% were slapped or spanked by a parent growing.<sup>1</sup> These kinds of statistics emphasize the need to work with young men to help them deconstruct the messages and models of violence around them and to help them build skills for alternative and healthy behaviors.

1 · Bijelic, Natasa: Men and Gender Equality in Croatia: Center for Education, Counseling and Research, 2010.

## 2. Description of the Young Men Initiative

From its onset, the YMI has sought to ensure a sense of local ownership for all activities by empowering local youth-serving agencies (YSA) to be the lead implementers and advocates for all activities. The direct work with young men began with formative research to identify and explore the specific gender norms and expectations that influence and contribute to young men's non-equitable and violent behaviors. The research results, in turn, informed the development of the intervention itself, comprised of group education workshops and a social marketing campaign. Throughout the development and implementation of all aspects of the intervention, young men were at the center. Their experiences and opinions informed the content and packaging of the intervention in order to ensure that it was both relevant and attractive to young men. The pilot phase of the intervention focused on school settings. By working in schools, YMI was able to reach over 4,000 youth and establish a base for the institutionalization of activities. Ongoing advocacy throughout the pilot phase and beyond has also helped to build the momentum and partnerships necessary for scaling-up activities at national levels.

### CAPACITY-BUILDING OF LOCAL YOUTH-SERVING AGENCIES

One of the core priorities for YMI has been to build the capacity of local civil society to develop and carry out programming to engage young men. As the coordinating agency for YMI, CARE International has sought to ensure, from the beginning, that activities were organized and implemented in such a way that they would be locally owned and sustainable beyond CARE International's participation or support. To this end, the direct implementation of all research and intervention activities was carried out by local YSA. CARE's role has been to provide the necessary capacity-building and support for the local agencies to be most effective in their work.

At the onset of the pilot phase, CARE identified five local YSA with substantial experience in peer education and youth sexual and reproductive health promotion, including HIV prevention (see Box 1). Since none of the selected agencies had experience in gender transformative work, nor the specific links between gender and violence, CARE organized a series of three intensive trainings on gender and masculinities to prepare the YSA for their work with young men. The trainings were facilitated by regional and international gender experts and involved YMI focal points from each of the agencies. In addition to providing an important theoretical and practical foundation

o8 to gender as a lens for youth programming, the trainings also provided an important space for individuals to reflect on their own personal attitudes and values and how these attitudes and values influence their work with youth.

The YSA were able to further build their skills in working with young men during the formative research and field-testing of the educational curriculum (described below). These initial YMI activities provided the YSA with valuable hands-on experience before they rolled-out the pilot intervention in the schools. Throughout all of these activities, CARE offered ongoing technical support on various aspects of the work, from tips and tools on project monitoring and documentation to technical inputs on effectively engaging young men. With an eye toward the sustainability of YSA partners, CARE has also provided on-going support in institutional development, including fund-raising and networking. In 2009, the YMI focal points from each YSA also had the opportunity to participate in the Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Symposium was an opportunity for the focal points to network with individuals and organizations doing similar work in diverse settings and to hear firsthand about good practices in the work with men and boys.

#### BOX 1 – YMI IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

- Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Perpetuum Mobile: Centre for Youth and Community Development (Banja Luka)  
Association for Sexual and Reproductive Health XY (Sarajevo)
- Croatia  
Croatian Association for HIV (Zagreb)  
Status M (Zagreb)<sup>2</sup>
- Montenegro  
Youth Cultural Centre Juventas (Podgorica)  
Note: Due to difficulties in securing governmental support for the school-based implementation, only the YMI formative research and field-testing of the curriculum was carried out in Montenegro.
- Serbia<sup>3</sup>  
Centre for Healthy Lifestyles E8 (Belgrade)  
Initiatives (Prokuplje)

2 · During the pilot phase, the YMI focal point staff from the Croatian Association for HIV decided to start an organization specifically focused on youth and gender issues. This new organization, called Status M, formally took over the coordination of YMI activities in Croatia during the final period of the pilot phase.

3 · Centre for Healthy Lifestyles E8 joined the project during fall of 2008. Another Serbian agency had initially been a part of YMI, however, due to some concerns about their institutional commitment, they were replaced by Centre for Healthy Lifestyles E8.

#### BOX 2 – YOUNG MEN AND CONFLICT: BUILDING PRACTICE BETWEEN WESTERN BALKANS AND NORTHERN IRELAND

As part of the capacity building process for the local partner agencies, CARE organized a series of study trips in collaboration with YouthAction Northern Ireland and Youth Work Ireland. Both organizations have extensive experience in youth programming in the post-conflict setting of Northern Ireland. The trips provided opportunities for partners from Western Balkans and Northern Ireland to share and learn from each other's experiences in working with young men and to reflect on similarities and differences between masculinities and youth in the two post-conflict settings.

In addition to the study trips for staff from the respective partner organizations, more than 40 young men from Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia were brought together in leadership camps and organization visits. These interactions allowed the young men to reflect on conflict resolution processes from a broader perspective and to forge new, cross-cultural friendships.



## Western Balkan Gender-Based Violence Prevention Initiative

# Exploring Dimensions of Masculinity and Violence



Fieldwork conducted  
March - April 2007



## FORMATIVE RESEARCH

Due to the lack of research on young men and masculinities in the region, the first phase of the YMI was a formative study to explore young men's attitudes towards gender, masculinities, sexuality and violence.<sup>4</sup> The study employed a highly participatory methodology – called participatory learning and action (PLA) – and entailed five-day workshops with groups of young men in each of the pilot countries. Approximately 60 young men participated in the study. For many of the young men, it was the first time they had the opportunity to critically reflect on and discuss the many expectations and pressures they face as young men, and their experiences with violence. In spite of variations across and within the different settings, the young men identified several common defining features of masculinity. Many described an “ideal” man as one who is physically strong, sexually virile, brave, strong-willed, and who protects his honor and the honor of his family. They also described an ideal man as one who engages in “manly” activities like drinking and sports. Moreover, the young men emphasized that an ideal man does not show any weakness or act effeminate. The young men identified home and school as the spaces which most influenced young men's perceptions of masculinity, and peers in particular as the source from which they most learned about the “dos and don'ts” of being a man.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on study design and results, see Eckman et al. (2007) “Exploring Dimensions of Masculinity and Violence.” ICRW and CARE International



12 Many young men also reported that the general social expectation, especially among peers and fathers, is that young men should use violence to defend themselves. In all of the settings, young men reported a high incidence of violence among peers, mostly at school but also in the streets and other public places. Many of the young men saw this violence as unavoidable and as an important way by which young men show their strength and masculinity. Incidents of violence between men were largely associated with the need to protect one's pride or reputation. Being prepared to defend one's friends is also perceived as an important characteristic of masculinity and a means of demonstrating one's allegiance. Peers often approve of young men who fight, and disapprove of those who do not. When asked about the consequences of not using violence, many young men said they would expect to experience more violence as a consequence, especially among peers.

Young men in the study also reported that the 'vast majority' of their peers drink alcohol to 'exhibit their masculinity' and toughness. The baseline survey subsequently applied in the pilot schools found that 74–82% of young men reported drinking. Many of the young men who reported ever drinking alcohol also reported consuming more than five drinks on the occasions that they do drink alcohol. The same survey also found a significant association between alcohol consumption and violence among many of the young men.

In contrast to their beliefs about violence against other men, the young men in the PLA almost unanimously opposed the use of violence against women. Most believed that violence against women was almost never justified because women are weaker. They considered a man's physical violence against a woman as a fight where the man knows he can win with no contest - by extension, a man who beats up a woman would be considered unmanly or a coward. At the same time that young men theoretically condemned violence against women, they also believed that the use of violence against women could be justified in cases in which it is necessary to exercise discipline. For example, some young men explained that violence would be justified as a last resort when women have not responded to other efforts by men to exert authority or control. At the same time, there were significant disagreements and questioning among the young men about how to balance equality in relationships with women with belief that men should be the authority and last word in the family.

Across the settings, a significant number of young men expressed negative attitudes towards gays, ranging from discomfort to strong feelings of disgust and violence. The belief among some young men was that a "real" man cannot be gay. In some of the discussions about violence against gays and other sexual minorities, there was open blaming of the victim for having made a visible demonstration of his/her sexual orientation.

One of most significant findings of the PLA was the degree to which young men welcomed the chance to discuss topics related to gender and violence. At the conclusion of the PLA, many of the young men requested additional opportunities to engage in similar activities and discussions. Interestingly, while they were eager to talk about their behaviors and experiences with violence, many of the young men had difficulty in explicitly identifying

influences on their development and behaviors, especially related to expectations of masculinity. For example, in discussing the root causes of gender-based violence, young men did not at first connect the use of violence with expectations of masculinity (although they could with careful facilitation). This finding implied the need for approaches that facilitate young men's ability to recognize these links and to critically reflect on them. As discussed below, this need for guided reflection was the basis for the design of the educational component.

#### PILOT INTERVENTION

The pilot phase of the intervention – comprised of educational workshops and a campaign - took place in five secondary technical schools in five locations in three countries: Banja Luka and Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Zagreb in Croatia and; Belgrade and Prokuplje in Serbia. The activities were carried out over approximately one year (straddling two academic years). In all of the pilot schools, the student populations were predominantly young men from lower socio-economic classes. These schools were selected for the pilot phase because these young men are often the most at risk for being perpetrators and victims of violence, a fact confirmed by the baseline survey that showed that close to 50% of the young men sampled had been involved in some type of violent act, either as perpetrator or victim.

The objectives and design of the YMI intervention activities are grounded in "gender conscious practice" – they seek to engage young men in critical reflections about the ways in which society influences their attitudes and behaviors and to help them develop the necessary skills to overcome harmful or restrictive social expectations and to act in more equitable and non-violent ways. This approach entails working with young men to understand the historical and continued disadvantages faced by girls and women and to also explore how rigid gender norms limit young men's choices and lives. In accordance with the principles of gender conscious practice, the YMI is also strongly focused on mobilizing young men to take positive action for change (see Box 3 for more details on gender conscious practice).

To evaluate the impact of the pilot activities on young men's attitudes and behaviors, CARE and the local YSA collaborated with the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) to collect and analyze data on a cross-section of approximately 2,500 young men in intervention schools and control schools prior to and at the conclusion of activities. Data was collected via self-administered surveys and in-depth qualitative interviews with over 100 young men, as well as staff at schools and the partner agencies.

### BOX 3 – GENDER CONSCIOUS PRACTICE<sup>5</sup>

Gender conscious practice seeks to engage young men and young women through processes that support them to proactively address societal issues such as inequality and oppression and challenge restrictions they may encounter in their lives as a result of gender. Interventions may include providing space for young people to explore and learn about their gender socialisation and related perceptions and attitudes; educating young people about historical and current impacts of feminism and patriarchy and; addressing the reality of young women's and young men's lives in preparing them emotionally and practically for a changing world in terms of female and male roles.

Gender-conscious practice involves more than simply an exploration of one's own gender, but consciously moves into the realm of exploring the 'other'. The intention is to challenge the misconceptions of the 'other' that can lead to sexist or discriminatory attitudes and behavior. It is particularly effective where there are different identities, whereby there is either explicit or implicit rejection by one group of the 'other'. The approach works on separating myth from reality, encouraging understanding of difference and acknowledging common features of both.

Specific issues which arise from gender structural inequalities are addressed using a three-pronged approach: 1) raising youth awareness of the inequality; 2) providing youth with skills to overcome potential barriers arising from the inequality and; 3) motivating youth, as individuals and as a group, to take action in addressing similar inequalities in their own lives.

### THE EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT

The core of the YMI intervention is a series of group educational workshops that promote a critical and personal reflection on gender, masculinities and health, with a strong focus on violence prevention. The workshops are highly participatory and draw largely from the adaptation of the Program H manual, a curriculum originally developed in Latin America and the Caribbean. Previously also adapted for use in diverse settings such as India, Tanzania and Vietnam, the Program H activities have been shown in rigorous studies to lead to positive changes in young men's gender attitudes and behaviors related to violence and HIV prevention.<sup>6</sup>

5 · For more information on gender conscious practice, see: Harland, Ken and Morgan, Susan (2009) The 'Lens Model': A practical tool for developing and understanding gender conscious practice. *Youth & Policy*, 101 (Spring). pp. 67-8; YouthAction Northern Ireland (2006) Gender Conscious Practice with young people.

6 · For more information about Program H, visit Promundo's website at <http://www.promundo.org.br/en/activities/activities-posts/program-h/>

# DESCRIPTION

The adaptation of Program H for the Western Balkans context began with a workshop where the local YSA reviewed a selection of activities and made initial changes based on their experiences working with young men. Several activities from other curricula for young men were also included. The adapted activities were then field tested with 120 young men in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. Many of the young men involved in the PLA were also invited to participate in the field-testing. For many of the other participants, the field-testing was the first time they had a chance to talk about issues related to masculinities, relationships and violence in a supportive environment. The curriculum was finalized based on inputs from the young men and facilitators and named the M Manual (M stands for "mladići" which means "young man" in the local languages). The complete M Manual contains over 40 activities which address health and relationships issues from a gender lens, including sexual and reproductive health, communication and negotiation, drug and alcohol use, anger management, and violence prevention.

For the pilot implementation in the five schools, the YMI team identified 20 activities from the M Manual that were carried out either in 20 sessions of approximately 1-2 hours or 10 sessions of approximately 2-4 hours. The workshops occurred mainly during after-school or weekend hours although in some cases the school ceded time during the school day for the workshops. The workshops were facilitated by trained male youth workers from the local YSA who modeled gender-equitable behaviors and served as trusted figures young men could approach about issues directly relevant to the workshops as well as others.

The local YSA organized four cycles of workshops during the course of the pilot implementation in each school, with each cycle of workshops reaching approximately 6-20 young men. Most of the young men participants volunteered to be in the workshops, however, in some cases, the teachers or school nominated young men who were seen as "problematic" to participate in the workshops. A total of 411 young men across all of the settings participated in the workshops during the pilot phase.

### BOX 4 – THE YOUNG MEN'S FORUM

In each of the five pilot sites, the partner YSA organized advisory boards of up to 10 young men to provide input and guidance for the implementation of activities. Several of the young men who were recruited for the advisory boards had also been PLA participants. A regional advisory board – The Young Men's Forum – was also formed by bringing together two young men from each of the local advisory boards. The Young Men's Forum played a core role in the development of the campaign, described below. In addition to their advisory roles, the young men who participate in the local advisory boards and/or the Forum also participate regularly in leadership training activities. Several of the young men from the local advisory boards have also subsequently joined the local YSA as volunteers or staff.



## THE CAMPAIGN

The other component of the YMI intervention is a social marketing campaign called Budi Muško” or “Be a man.” Budi Muško has two main objectives: to promote the image of the educational workshops as something “cool” for young men to do and to reinforce and spread the key messages from the workshops. The development of the campaign was a youth-inspired, youth-led process that brought together the local YSA partners and young men from all of the pilot sites (see Box 4: Young Men’s Forum). SMART Kolektiv, non-profit organization specialized in the field of social marketing, based in Belgrade, was the lead facilitator for the campaign development process. They organized a series of workshops on media and marketing, coached the young men as they created the slogan, visuals and messages for the campaign, provided on-going technical support throughout the pilot implementation of the campaign.

The overall theme of the Budi Muško campaign is to challenge rigid norms of masculinity. Sub themes include the prevention of violence against women, the prevention of peer violence (or bullying) and the promotion of sexual health and healthy relationships, many of the same topics addressed in the workshops. The campaign tone is provocative, but not preachy. It uses an attractive visual identity (see Box 5) to get young men thinking about the benefits and “coolness” of engaging in more equitable and non-violent behaviors and lifestyles.

The initial phase of the campaign’s pilot implementation employed what is called “guerilla marketing.” The local YSA staff and volunteers distributed posters around the schools with only the slogan “Be a man.” The aim of this phase was to generate curiosity about the campaign, about its messages and what was to come. Since all of the pilot school populations were predominantly male, the YSA invited young women volunteers to help with the distribution as a way of attracting even greater attention to the posters. A few days after the initial distribution, the YSA staff and volunteers returned and attached new, more detailed, slogans to the posters, such as “Be a man, train your brain” and “Be a man, don’t be a bully.” These slogans helped to give the student body a better sense of the campaign’s overall themes.

The cornerstone of the campaign activities are the *Be a Man Clubs* (BMC). The BMC in each of the five pilot schools has approximately 20–50 members who serve as the “ambassadors” of the campaign messages. The members include young men who participated in the educational workshops as well as other who demonstrated interest in being a part of the campaign. The BMC function as a school-based implementation team for the campaign and are responsible for creating and organizing various activities to reach students with the campaign messages. As an additional motivation for the BMC ambassadors, the local YSA also organize regular leisure activities for them to do as a group. Many of the ambassadors also have opportunities to travel around the region to meet other ambassadors and to participate in youth leadership camps (see Box 6).

# DESCRIPTION



One of the main activities of the BMC is to organize “fun” workshops. These workshops provide participants with the opportunity to learn about and develop skills in different media that could be used to communicate messages to peers, including film, photography, comic design, graffiti, and street dance. The participants apply their new skills to develop films, photos, and other pieces to further promote the campaign messages. During the pilot phase, the fun workshops reached approximately 100 participants across the different sites, including young men from the educational workshops as well as others.

In addition to the fun workshops, the BMC also organizes school-wide activities to promote the campaign messages to the larger student body. The BMC are often able to recruit local celebrities such as actors, singers, journalists and athletes to participate in these activities, thereby attracting significant numbers of students. During the pilot phase, the BMC carried out more than 40 different activities across the sites, reaching over 3,500 students. Another school-wide initiative is the social network website ([www.budimusko.org](http://www.budimusko.org)). The website is managed by the BMC members which includes photos and information on the various campaign and which allows visitors (only students from pilot schools) to develop profiles and interact with youth at other schools in the region.

While the overall campaign slogan and identity were the same across all of the pilot settings, it is important to highlight that each YSA partner was given the creative freedom to tailor the various campaign strategies and materials to the local contexts and interests. For example, there was a core set of materials that was created for the campaign, including posters, tee shirts and brochures, yet each YSA was able to elaborate or add images or messages to these materials as they thought relevant for the school context in which they were working. The YSA also developed their own spinoff activities including Valentine’s Day activities and an “Oscar Night” to showcase the final products from the film workshop. This space for creative additions and adaptations helped to increase the sense of local ownership for the campaign, and allowed for lots of creative and new ideas to surface.

#### BOX 5 — BE A MAN CAMPAIGN

##### Be a man...

- change the rules
- don’t be a bully
- build your brain
- without shame buy a condom

The Serbian Society of Public Relations awarded the Budi Muško campaign first prize for best nonprofit campaign of 2009-2010.



#### BOX 6 – YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMPS

CARE and the YSA organized three summer leadership camps during the summers of 2009 and 2010. The one week camps brought together a total of 89 of the most active participants from the educational workshops and BMC in each of the pilot sites. In addition to leadership and teambuilding exercises, the camps also provided a space for young men of different nationalities and religions to reflect together on common issues facing them as young men.



#### ADVOCACY AND MEDIA: PROMOTING GENDERED APPROACHES TO WORK WITH YOUNG MEN

In December 2009, CARE and the YSA organized three national conferences in Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade to launch a public discussion about the need to integrate masculinities and work with men into violence prevention efforts through the region. The conferences brought together more than 300 participants, including representatives from government, schools and civil society and the local BMC members. Among the high level representatives were the Deputy Prime Minister from Croatia, the Minister for Justice from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Deputy Minister for Education from Serbia. During the conferences, CARE and the YSA shared information about the YMI project and presented the baseline findings from the pilot schools. The conferences generated significant media attention to YMI and the importance of working with young men. In each of the countries, leading TV and radio stations, newspapers, internet blogs were full of information about YMI, including interviews with CARE and YSA staff. The local YSA are now widely recognized as pioneers in work with young men, receiving regular invitations to participate in and contribute to local, national and regional discussions on youth and violence.

## 3. Results

### NETWORK OF YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS RECOGNIZED AS LEADERS IN WORKING WITH YOUNG MEN

The local YSA gained substantial experience in program design and implementation during the pilot phase and are now considered references in their respective countries and in the region for work with young men. All five organizations have demonstrated themselves capable of leading the YMI activities on their own, and engaging in the necessary advocacy to scale it up. As discussed earlier, YMI is the first systematic effort in the region to work with young men from a gender perspective, and as the lead implementers, the local YSA now comprise a network of organizations that are able to provide technical support to schools and other NGOs interested in engaging young men.

### CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE-BASE ON YOUNG MEN IN THE BALKANS

Through the formative research and the impact evaluation data collection, the YMI has contributed significantly to the body of knowledge on young men's attitudes and behaviors. The core findings, highlighted in Box 7, have also reinforced the importance of the specific issues which YMI addresses through its workshops and the Budi Muško campaign, including safe sex and the prevention of violence between young men and against girls and women.



# RESULTS

### BOX 7 — FINDINGS ON YOUNG MEN'S ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS ON GENDER, SEXUALITY AND VIOLENCE

- Young men are sexually active within this age range, but have limited understanding of sexual and reproductive health;
- While condom use at first sex is relatively high (compared with young men in other countries), there is a need to increase consistent use of condoms;
- The majority of young men are engaged in multiple risky behaviors, including smoking, drinking alcohol excessively and, to a lesser extent, using drugs (mostly marijuana). In addition to carrying their own risks, such behaviors can be a factor in risky sexual and violent outcomes and often part of a peer culture. More specifically, there is a strong association between alcohol use and violent behaviors and such behaviors are in turn related to a specific culture of masculinity and part of peer cultures;
- Peer violence is a concern for young men, both as individuals and as members of gangs. Young men clearly turn to their peers for support, including for support in fights and in turn are willing to fight for their peers, and encouraged to fight by their peers. The mandate to use violence if needed in protecting one's own honor, or that of his family or friends, emerged strongly. This finding suggests the challenges and need to intervene at the level of peer culture (and the wider societal views that fuel peer culture), rather than focusing only on young men as individuals;
- Strong negative attitudes towards homosexuality are prevalent among young men and;
- Violence against women is low, but may increase as young men become more sexually experienced and enter into different types of relationships, particularly more stable relationships. Given the high rates of violence by men against women found among adult men in the IMAGES study carried out in Croatia, also with support from CARE, there is clearly a need to intervene early before such violence happens. Furthermore, support for violence against women is relatively high, particularly when women's behavior is seen as effecting men's honor. Again, this suggests the prevalence and challenge of changing those norms around male honor.



### INCREASE IN YOUNG MEN'S GENDER AWARENESS AND EQUITABLE ATTITUDES

For most of the young men who participated in the pilot phase, the workshops and campaign were the first time they were encouraged to think critically about masculinities and violence. Both the anecdotal and empirical evidence point to the positive impact of these opportunities to question expectations of how young men should behave and to reflect on the consequences of certain behaviors and the possibilities for change. As presented in Box 8, there are numerous testimonials by young men who changed their attitudes and behaviors as a result of participation in YMI activities. The impact evaluation study also found that young men who participated in activities generally showed more gender equitable attitudes over time (see Box 9). Of particular note is fact that exposure to or participation in the campaign was significantly associated with more gender equitable attitudes and decreased use of violence over time. This finding reinforces the importance of activities, such as the Budi Muško campaign, that seek to shift social norms in a specific context, and make it socially more acceptable to think and act in certain ways.

#### BOX 8 — VOICES OF CHANGE

*“I was fighting a lot before. Most of my opponents finished up in the ER. Sometimes I was heavily beaten. I do not do that anymore. That is connected with the education that I received about non-violence” — Emir, 16, Sarajevo*

*“The workshops had great influence on me. I have different attitude towards life, people, women, sex. I have changed significantly. I learnt a lot about myself and how aggressive I was before. I am not fighting anymore” — Dominik, 17, Zagreb*

# RESULTS

*“Me and some other boys have changed a lot. Sometimes I cannot recognize myself. I do not fight with my girlfriend, and I am cool in problematic situations” — Aleksandar, 17, Prokuplje*

*“I can easily remember and like topics about sex, violence, gender equality. I liked all the topics. I realized that drugs, alcohol and violence are stupid and bad. That is not sign of masculinity. This program also influenced the reduce of violence in school and I found out that most of my friend are drinking less than before” — Mihajlo, 17, Belgrade*

*“It was very interesting for me to become friends with people from other countries that we were in war with. Those are good guys and my friends now” — Nebojsa, 16, Banja Luka*

*“Be a real man does not mean that your word is final and that you do not have to drink in order to be popular” — Nenad, 17, Belgrade*

*“I started talking with professors, I opened my mind, and when I am sad I speak about my emotions” — Filip, 17, Zagreb*

*“Before I did not think before I do something, I just do it. Now I am using my brain, especially with girls” — Ivan, 17, Prokuplje*



### BOX 8 — UNDERSTANDING THE POSITIVE EFFECT OF YMI ON YOUNG MEN

Despite mixed evaluation results emerging from YMI (in some cases we also saw change in the control group), there is evidence to suggest that YMI interventions were meaningful for the young men who participated in the project. From the impact evaluation data, young men who were exposed to the campaign generally showed more gender equitable attitudes and positive changes related to sexual violence and decreased use of violence [against women or against peers or both?]. Even with a possible self-selection bias, the consistency of the “exposed” group’s results suggests that YMI activities may have helped to solidify their attitudes and behaviors in a positive, gender-equitable and non-violent direction.

#### Some Key Results

- In comparing results from all of the pilot control and intervention sites, young men in general showed more gender equitable attitudes after participating in YMI activities, with significant change noted in four out of the total nine sites.
- In looking specifically at results by exposure to the Budi Muško campaign, there is a consistent pattern across all intervention sites. Young men who were exposed to the campaign demonstrated significantly more equitable attitudes than those who were not exposed.
- Reported violence against male peers generally decreased across all sites, with significant positive change in Sarajevo.



### STRENGTHENED SENSE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG YOUNG MEN

One of the unexpected results of the YMI intervention was the increased sense of civic engagement among many of the young men. In addition to actively participating in the workshops and campaign activities, several of the young men also began to volunteer with the local YSA partners and to support their other youth-focused efforts. In a region where NGOs have a relatively short history (generally only since the end of the wars) it is a notable achievement to have contributed to mobilizing the younger generation to be engaged in their community, particularly since the target group of the pilot activities, young men from lower socio-economic backgrounds, generally have lower civic participation levels.

### BRIDGING DIVIDES AMONG A POST-CONFLICT GENERATION

Despite the number of years that have passed since the wars, the Western Balkans region is still divided in many ways by nationalistic politics. The Young Men’s Forum and Youth Leadership Camps brought together young men from different countries and cities within the region, most of whom had never met individuals from other settings. The opportunity to reflect together on and collaborate around a common cause helped to dispel the prejudices many of the young men held toward young men from other countries, thus contributing to peace-building among the younger generation.

### GOVERNMENT INTEREST IN AND COMMITMENT TO SCALING-UP ACTIVITIES

The combination of on-going advocacy efforts, including the national conferences, and the widespread media attention to YMI activities, particularly the campaign, has helped to mobilize governments’ attention to the need to work with young men from a gender perspective.

The fact that the timing of the initiative and its visibility coincided with an increase in media attention to the issue of youth violence has helped to further highlight the necessity of working with young men and the relevance of approaches such as YMI. CARE and its partners are now recognized as pioneers in engaging men and boys in violence prevention and national and local governments have recognized YMI as a successful methodology and exemplar model of civil society-government collaboration.

## 4. Challenges

### BUILDING INITIAL MOMENTUM FOR EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

At the onset of the workshops, many young men are hesitant or skeptical about participating. They find the prospect of sitting around talking about gender and health with other young men uninteresting, strange, or “unmanly.” Moreover, the fact that the workshops are often offered as extracurricular activities, requiring additional time, can further discourage some young men from participating. Experiences from the pilot implementation indicate that after the first cycle of workshops and the commencement of the campaign, there starts to be a momentum around the activities. As the young men gain a clearer understanding of the activities, their objectives and benefits, and as an initial cohort of young men participate and began to share their opinions and experiences, there is a surge in interest among other young men. The



low rates of participation during the early stages, however, can be frustrating for the implementers and require patience and perseverance. A certain level of flexibility can also be valuable – as demonstrated in some of the pilot settings where the local YSA switched the original order of the workshop topics, starting with STIs rather than gender. Since STIs were a topic of more immediate interest for the young men, the facilitators were able to more easily engage them in the workshops from the onset.

### ADDRESSING SEXUAL DIVERSITY AND HOMOPHOBIA

As evidenced by the PLA findings as well as the pilot workshops, there are high levels of homophobia among young men in the region. Young men’s prejudices toward homosexuality are often deeply rooted in rigid ideas about masculinity and sexuality, such that being gay is often seen as “not being a real man.” While the YMI curriculum includes specific activities to address constructions of masculinity and homophobia, the pilot implementation demonstrated that the current activities were not sufficient to shift young men’s attitudes toward homosexuality.

### DOCUMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

The pilot activities were carried out in a highly participatory and decentralized manner. Each YSA and BMC was responsible for its own activities, often incorporating adaptations or additions along the way. While the minimum of the activities was documented, many details were not well documented, most often because staff was too busy with implementation. Those missing details often entailed important insights into the implementation and impact of the activities that subsequently could have proven valuable for the local YSA as well as the YSA in other contexts. One of the challenges for the scale-up of the activities will be to motivate the local YSA to improve the range and depth of their documentation in ways that are not cumbersome yet ensure that all relevant information is captured.

### EFFECTING CHANGE FROM SHORT-TERM, SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTIONS

Changing gender norms and attitudes (and related behaviors) is extremely challenging and is not a short-term process. While the one year of pilot activities clearly led to significant changes in gender awareness and also changes in some young men’s attitudes and behaviors, these results should also be interpreted with caution. Young men are in a very dynamic moment of their lives and it is difficult to know if and how observed changes will be sustained over their lifetimes. Moreover, the school is only one environment of many that influence young men’s attitudes and behaviors. The impact of a school-based intervention may be limited by the fact that messages young men receive via workshops and campaign activities may be contradicted or undermined by messages they receive at home, in the media, or in other spheres of their lives.

## 5. Lessons learned

### ALLOW ADEQUATE TIME FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING OF IMPLEMENTERS

The key to the success of YMI has been the initial and on-going investment in the technical capacity of the implementing organizations, particularly in terms of the preparation for the facilitation of the workshops. A good facilitator's manual is not sufficient – to guarantee the quality and effectiveness of the workshops; it is necessary to have well-prepared facilitators. The facilitators should have a basic grounding in the core concepts and have also undergone a process of self-reflection regarding their own experiences and struggles around gender, masculinities and violence. They must be capable of discussing these topics in a relaxed and open manner with young men and must also have the necessary skills to promote respect amongst the participants, and to manage possible conflicts that may arise.



### INCORPORATE SOCIAL MARKETING STRATEGIES INTO THE PROMOTION OF ACTIVITIES

Another element that was essential to the success of the YMI was the social marketing approach of the campaign. One of the main objectives of the campaign was to promote the workshops and campaign activities as part of a cool “brand,” one with which young men would be proud to be associated. This branding strategy helped to ensure a positive and enabling environment within the school which helped the young men to feel empowered to participate in activities and to change some of their attitudes and behaviors.

### ALLOW FOR FLEXIBILITY WITHIN A STANDARDIZED METHODOLOGY

Although the core elements of the intervention were the same across the settings, the local YSA had a certain degree of space to make adaptations as they deemed useful and interesting. For example, as mentioned earlier, the facilitators in some settings altered the order of topics in the curriculum in order to commence with topics that were more immediately engaging for the young men. With the campaign, while the overall slogan and structure were the same in all settings, the local partners also had the flexibility to tailor and add messages and activities that they thought would be more relevant and interesting for the local context.

### BUILDING ON THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS

Rather than “reinvent the wheel”, the YMI partners sought to build on existing resources and experiences related to work with young men. For example, the educational curriculum was adapted from existing manuals that had been shown to be effective in other settings. The partners also sought to keep abreast of new materials and insights from the field of work with young men through actively participating in networks and exchanges with other organizations doing similar work elsewhere.



## 6. Moving forward

Building on established relationships with key government ministries for education and youth, the YMI partners are now engaged in the scale-up of the YMI methodology throughout the region. The scale-up involves two main strategies: 1) collaborating with Ministries of Education to integrate YMI's gender transformative and youth development approach into school curricula to be delivered by teachers and; 2) collaborating with Ministries of Youth and Sport (or ministries that include youth, differently named in each country) to implement non formal educational interventions that take into consideration the role of social norms around masculinity in the attitudes and behaviors of boys and young men. In addition to helping to reach significantly larger numbers of youth, embedding the YMI approach within national policies and structures will also contribute to long term sustainability.

The scale-up phase also includes improving the flexibility and reach of the YMI educational curriculum. In order to reach more young men, the pilot model of 20 sessions will be adapted into various modules of different length in order to better engage young men according to their interests and commitment. The YMI will also pilot a curriculum to engage young women, who are often the victims of violence (and some research show them increasingly acting as perpetrators) and support some of the rigid versions of masculinity that promotes harmful behaviors on the part of young men. The adaptation and pilot of this methodology will be done in one to two sites and later expanded to include other sites and locations. The goal is to eventually expand YMI to mixed gender schools (with a close to 50/50 ratio of male and female pupils) and to work in a more integrated fashion with both young men and young women on issues related to gender and violence. Part of the educational program will entail working in sex specific groups and another part will involve working with the young men and young women together. The campaign will also be expanded to include messages and activities that speak to both young men and young women.

In tandem with the scale-up into additional locations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia, the initiative will also expand into Kosovo, in collaboration with partners in Prishtina and Northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica. The first stage of the expansion will focus on building the capacities of the local partners and carrying out a PLA with young men and young women in order to understand the local contexts and priorities and specificities for the adaptation of the intervention. The PLA findings will also serve as an important basis for advocacy efforts to engage schools, government, and civil society stakeholders in Kosovo.



The YMI partners will also continue to carry out research in the other countries to help impact policies related to gender, youth, and violence prevention. In Bosnia, for example, CARE and the local YSA partners will work with government authorities and local research-oriented NGOs to carry out a national representative study<sup>7</sup> with men and women on the themes of men and gender equality focused on issues of violence, conflict, gender norms, health and fatherhood.

As the foundation to all of the scale-up activities, CARE will continue to provide capacity-building for the YSA partners. The focus of the capacity-building during this phase is to support the YSA partners to establish themselves as national resource centers for addressing issues of violence and conflict with young men. CARE will also mentor the YSA partners in how to develop and build partnerships with multiple stakeholders throughout their countries and how to identify and secure diverse funding sources to carry the work forward.

<sup>7</sup> The national representative study will be based on the International Men and Gender Equality Survey which has also been carried out in Croatia and several other countries around the world. For more information, visit [www.icrw.org](http://www.icrw.org) and [www.promundo.org.br](http://www.promundo.org.br)

## PROGRAM M – YOUNG MEN’S EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

<p>Starting Workshop: Talking Stick – Developing the Group Objective: To encourage dialogue based on respect and to establish ground rules for the group sessions.</p>	
<p><b>Gender</b></p>	<p><b>1. What is this thing called gender</b> Objective: To understand the differences between sex and gender and reflect on the ways that men and women are expected to act.</p> <p><b>2. Expressing My Emotions</b> Objective: To recognize the difficulties young men face in expressing certain emotions and the consequences for themselves and their relationships.</p> <p><b>3. Power and Relationships</b> Objective: To increase awareness about the existence of power in relationships and reflect on how we communicate about and demonstrate power in relationships.</p> <p><b>4. Labeling</b> Objective: To recognize how labeling people can limit individual potential and affect relationships.</p>
<p><b>Sexual and Reproductive Health</b></p>	<p><b>1. Young Men’s Health</b> Objective: To discuss how gender norms influence the most common health problems of young men and review basic hygiene practices.</p> <p><b>2. Men and Contraception</b> Objective: To provide information on contraceptive methods and discuss male involvement in contraceptive use.</p> <p><b>3. Health, STIs, and HIV and AIDS</b> Objective: To increase knowledge about STIs and HIV/AIDS and the importance of diagnosis and treatment.</p> <p><b>4. Want...Don’t Want, Want...Don’t Want</b> Objective: To discuss the challenges in negotiating abstinence or sex in intimate relationships.</p>

<p><b>Violence Prevention</b></p>	<p><b>1. Can a man like another man?</b> Objective: To discuss homosexuality, homophobia, and the need for greater acceptance of sexual diversity.</p> <p><b>2. Negotiating Skills</b> Objective: To discuss and practice skills for conflict resolution and negotiation.</p> <p><b>3. What is Violence?</b> Objective: To identify different types of violence that may occur in intimate relationships, families and communities.</p> <p><b>4. Understanding the Cycle of Violence</b> Objective: to discuss the relationship between the violence that young men suffer and the violence that they use against others.</p> <p><b>5. What is Sexual Violence?</b> Objective: To discuss sexual violence and the different situations in which it can occur.</p> <p><b>6. A Live Fool or a Dead Hero: Male Honor</b> Objective: To discuss how “male honor” is associated with violence and think of alternatives to violence that young men can use when they feel insulted</p> <p><b>7. What Do I do when I am Angry?</b> Objective: To help the participants to think about how to identify when they are angry and how to express their anger in constructive, non-violent, ways.</p> <p><b>8. From Violence to Respect in Intimate Relationships</b> Objective: To discuss the use of violence in intimate relationships and how to construct intimate relationships based on respect.</p>
<p><b>Alcohol and Drugs</b></p>	<p><b>1. What are Drugs?</b> Objective: To discuss the different types of drugs that exist and how they are viewed and used by society, particularly young people.</p> <p><b>2. Decision-Making and Substance Use</b> Objective: To reflect on peer pressure and decision-making related to substance use and to understand the concept of dependency</p> <p><b>3. Drugs in our lives and communities</b> Objective: To discuss various situations in which men and women might use drugs and the consequences of this use in their lives and relationships.</p>
<p>Ending Workshop: Community action: Making changes in our lives and in our communities Objective: To provide the opportunity for participants to reflect on what they have learned throughout the workshops and how it can help them to make changes in their lives and in their communities.</p>	

### LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING OF PARTNER YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

In order to strengthen the knowledge and skills of its partners, CARE International was holding a set of three capacity building trainings for partners that are implementing the YMI project. In the beginning, staff needed to go through a process of self reflection in order to challenge their own attitudes and behaviors as it relates to gender norms, sexuality and violence. This work was ongoing during the first year of the project and sufficient time should be allowed before work with young people begins. A safe and positive environment needs to be created where staff of local partners feels safe to share some of their key development milestones that effected the shaping of their own attitudes and behaviors. One should be prepared for sensitive discussions and ensure that a supported environment exists.

The training program in the beginning was focused on understanding gender oppressive practices and how gender shapes are lives. Most partners did not have experience on these topics. Male or female trainers were used throughout the program though in the beginning we engaged mostly male trainers as we felt it was important to confront the stereotype that only women talk or value these subjects.

#### Level I – Gender, Masculinities and Violence (Beginning) – 4 days

Overall aim: To develop the competence of participants in the social deconstruction of the concepts of “hegemonic masculinity”, gender-based violence, peer violence and violence against women, in order to enable them to be key facilitators within their organisations around issues of gender, sexuality and violence affecting young people.

Training program consisted of educational sessions which were theoretical (covering key concepts), participatory with interactive exercises and utilized films to highlight key issues.

Topics that were covered on the training were: Gender socialization, factors that influence to socialization of gender norms, attitudes, values, behavior, similarities and differences between men and women, sex, gender and sex-gender system, relationship between gender and power, types of power and alternatives, a look at our own attitudes, values and prejudices, linking gender discrimination with other types of discrimination, circle of discrimination, types of violence, causes and consequences for women and for men.

#### Level II – Gender, Masculinities and Sexuality (Advance) – 4 days

Overall aim: To further develop the competence of participants in the social deconstruction of the concept of “hegemonic masculinity” focussing specifically on men’s sexualities (concepts and practises) and the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and men.

This training was covering topics of masculinities and violence, sexuality, expression of sexuality, gender and sexual mandates, sexual diversity, sexual identities, sexual violence, men’s complicity, homophobia, misogyny, Hegemonic masculinity and sexual and reproductive health, popular education methodology and work with men on gender and masculinities and proposals for personal and institutional change regarding gender and sexuality.

#### Level III – Work with young men (youth work and gender conscious practice) – 4 days

Overall aim: To strengthen youth workers in gender transformative practice and in youth work with young men within the Balkans context.

This training covered topics on youth and adolescent development; youth work practice using a gender lens, dealing with challenging group behaviors, gender and masculinities from the Balkans context and understanding the program M methodology. The training included presentations, group exercises, films and self-reflection on traits of a successful youth worker.

## Young Men Initiative – Participating Partners

### PERPETUUM MOBILE

Perpetuum mobile-Center for youth and community development (PM) based in Banja Luka represents a group of educated, dedicated and experienced people in field of youth sector and and civil society which is active for over a decade, but formally registered in August 2007 as local nongovernmental organisation in Republika Srpska/Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since then, Perpetuum mobile has been actively involved in promotion, strengthening and networking of civil initiatives both locally and regionally in South Eastern Europe.

**Our vision:** A world where all youth are respected, thrive and have opportunities to develop their full potential.

**Our mission:** NGO „PERPETUUM MOBILE – Center for youth and community development“ is an independent, non-profit organization that implement programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and trough research, education, strategy creation and intersectoral partnership, promote the best practice in youth work and develop youth and community.

Members of this organization are high educated individuals what make this organization capable for development and improvement of civil society organizations, especially in youth area.

For more information: [www.pm.rs.ba](http://www.pm.rs.ba)

### ASSOCIATION XY

Association XY is a nongovernmental, non-profit, non-political organization based in Sarajevo with a branch office in Banja Luka. It was established with the assistance of IPPF EN in 2001 by joining of a group of citizens interested in solving the existing and threatening problems related to sexual and reproductive health. At the time it was the only organization in BiH dealing exclusively with sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In 2004. the Association XY became an Associate Member, and in November 2006 it was admitted to the full membership of IPPF (International Planned

Parenthood Federation) which is the most widespread organization in the world in the field of sexual and reproductive health. IPPF has its members in over 170 countries worldwide through which it operates as the leading proponent in the field of sexual and reproductive health for all.

The primary target group of the Association XY is young people in general, especially those from marginalized and hard-to-reach groups.

### PROGRAM TOPICS

Association XY conceives and implements its programs in accordance with 5 (five) program themes which are based on program activities of IPPF. These themes are: ACCESS, ADOLESCENTS, ABORTION, AIDS and ADVOCACY.

For more information: [www.xy.com.ba](http://www.xy.com.ba)

### CENTRE E8

Centre E8 is a youth non-governmental organization established in 2004 in Serbia. It operates on national level based on three programmes: gender equality, health and participation. Methodologies used in the organisation's work are: non-formal education, use of drama in peer education, music, film, social and media campaigning, social marketing and lobby work.

The specificity of the “Gender equality” programme is that it is based primarily on working with young men. The overall aim is prevention and reduction of gender based violence amongst young men and educating boys and young men by changing their attitudes and behaviour about gender based and peer violence, healthy lifestyles and masculinity. Several projects are conducted within this programme based on the same methodology of working with young men and promoting gender equality and non-violence through campaigns and public actions. In addition to that, the methodology for working with young women on the same issues in parallel, as well as in mix gender groups has been developed. Moreover, Centre E8 established the “Real men Forum” comprised of celebrity men in Serbia who hold attitudes and demonstrate behaviour of non-violence and thus serve as role models to boys and young men in Serbia.

Promoting healthy lifestyles, fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS and working on the issue of access to sexual and reproductive health care are the core topics of the “Health” programme. A set of different methodologies is used, such as the use of drama in education and educating people through dance and music. Within this programme special attention is given to working with Roma and uprooted people. Active youth participation plays a big role in all of Centre E8 activities. Within this particular programme special attention is given to youth policy and professional youth work focusing on the promotion of these topics in the media.

For more information: [www.e8.org.rs](http://www.e8.org.rs)

## Young Men Initiative – Participating Partners

### SMART KOLEKTIV

The tools of business, such as marketing, can be used for the general good of society. If such a powerful means of persuasion, need creation and attitude formation can be a key element of increasing sales and forming trends, then Smart believes that merging socially constructive goals with these communication tools can stimulate social change, promote the values of a united and conscious society, as well as stimulating positive civic action wherever it's required.

All of SMart Kolektiv's activities are interlinked and complementary, realized through three key programmes: socially responsible business, social entrepreneurship and social marketing.

SMart Kolektiv seeks to connect and improve relations between business and society on several levels: by mobilizing the multiple potential of business and directing them towards reducing and resolving social and environmental problems; by applying the philosophy, logic and experience of business, through enterprising models, and applying them to social development processes; by using business tools – primarily those of the communication field – to stimulate positive social change.

For more information: [www.smartkolektiv.org](http://www.smartkolektiv.org)

### YOUTH ORGANIZATION STATUS:M

As a youth organization we gather young people of various professional backgrounds (medicine, social work, computer science, psychology, etc.) who are dedicated to improving the situation of youth in Croatia. The same team has been working with young people since 2006 through the “Young Men Initiative – Promotion of Gender Equality, Healthy Lifestyles and Non-violent Behavior of Young Men” program and “Be a Man, Change the Rules Campaign”.

Our vision is to develop effective ways of dealing with risks of growing up, focusing on strengths of young people and giving young people much needed support in the transition from adolescence to adulthood. We try to strengthen

positive development of youth by building mentoring relationships and providing them with necessary life skills so they can manage their own life.

#### Main goals of our organization are:

- To develop and implement an approach based on strengthening of youth in dealing with disadvantages and risks and to construct defensive and protective factors to fight unhealthy lifestyles and choices made by youth.
- To promote healthy lifestyles, specially positive sexual and reproductive health among youth in Croatia, through working on development of regulations that ensure availability of information and services that are based on scientific knowledge and to develop peer education methodology that builds a network of active peer educators across Croatia.
- To support young men as a specific target group, through development of approach focused on men dealing with harmful habits and codes that came out of proving masculinity manifested in anti-social and destructive behaviors.
- To promote the approach of working with youth, families and communities based on respect for human rights and fight gender inequality, violence, stigma, racism and homophobia.

For more information: [www.status-m.hr](http://www.status-m.hr)

### CARE INTERNATIONAL IN THE BALKANS

CARE in the Balkans today consists of Program Offices with headquarters in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), in Belgrade, Serbia and Pristine, Kosovo. The region is managed by CARE Germany-Luxemburg with a regional director based in Bonn, There is a total of 30 staff members working for CARE in the Balkans, all being local employees, implementing initiatives in five countries of the region: BiH, Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo and Montenegro.

Today CARE's aim in the Balkans is to ensure social, economic and political rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups are recognized and fulfilled, contributing to sustainable peace in the region. CARE works in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Croatia and Montenegro, with vulnerable and marginalized communities and has a special focus on minorities, young people, women and girls.

CARE Balkans Gender Equality Programme seeks to promote the values and practices of gender equality, diversity and non-violence by strengthening the capacities of local, national and regional human rights and social justice actors and by creating opportunities for innovation, participation, learning, cooperation and advocacy.

For more information: [www.carenwb.org](http://www.carenwb.org)

## Young Men Initiative – Participating Partners

### PROMUNDO

Promundo is a Brazilian organization with an office in the US that has worked locally, nationally and internationally since 1999 to promote gender equality and reduce violence against women, children and youth. Promundo develops and evaluates program and policy approaches and carries out research and advocacy to achieve gender equality and reduce violence. Promundo was co-founder of the global network to engage men in gender equality, MenEngage, for which it continues to serve as co-chair. Promundo's educational materials, in particular its violence prevention and gender equality materials (the Program H/M/D series) have been widely used and translated and recognized by the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO/PAHO and UN Women as best practices in achieving gender equality and reducing violence. Promundo has provided technical assistance and worked with the Brazilian government in promoting children development, achieving gender equality and reducing violence as well as with numerous UN agencies and the World Bank. Promundo's work has also been globally recognized for its emphasis on rigorous impact evaluation.

Promundo's work is supported by numerous international foundations (Nike, Ford, MacArthur, Oak and others), bilateral donors (DFID, Norad, SIDA and others), and the UN (UNFPA and UN Women, among others). Promundo devotes considerable attention to coalition-building and consistently works in partnerships to amplify its results and to achieve sustainable policy and social change. Together with the International Center for Research on Women, Promundo is co-coordinator and co-author of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), one of the largest multi-country surveys of its kind on men and gender equality.

For more information: [www.promundo.org.br](http://www.promundo.org.br)

### INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN (ICRW)

Founded in 1976, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) is a private, nonprofit organization with a mission to empower women, advance gender equality and fight poverty in the developing world. To accomplish this, ICRW works with partners worldwide to conduct empirical research, provide technical services, build capacity and advocate for evidence-based, practical ways to improve policies and programs. Headquartered in Washington, DC, ICRW has regional offices located in New Delhi, India and Nairobi, Kenya. To date, ICRW has managed over 450 projects spanning more than 65 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

Over the past 30 years, ICRW has developed an international reputation as a leading research organization working to combat violence against women (VAW) by documenting its causes, measuring its costs to society, and implementing strategies to end it. In particular, ICRW has extensive experience in the design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks that combine research rigor with community-based approaches in order to build local capacity for high quality documentation and M&E research. A central element of ICRW's approach is to provide strategic advice and technical support to help partners define their own goals and develop M&E tools and indicators to improve both the measurement of results and the impact of their projects.

For more information see: [www.icrw.org](http://www.icrw.org)

44 This case study is a reflection of the process, achievements and results developed out of the Young Men Initiative; a program by CARE International NW Balkans and its collaborative partners from 2007 – 2010. The program was focused on addressing gender inequalities, harmful health practices and interpersonal violence in everyday life with young men in schools and the community.

For additional information on the Young Men Initiative, contact CARE International.

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#### **CARE International**

Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Serbia
Banja Luka 78000	Zagreb 10000	Belgrade 11030
Aleja Svetog Save 7a	Iblerov trg 9	Scerbinova 6/20 – VII floor
T: +387 51 25 82 00	T: +385 1 45 73 287	T: +381 11 35 72 341
E: spetkovic@carenw.org	E: jcrowover@carenw.org	E: mstarcevic@care.rs

Website: [www.youngmeninitiative.org](http://www.youngmeninitiative.org) (pdf version available for download)

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#### **M Centers**

Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Serbia
71000 Sarajevo	Zagreb 10000	Belgrade 11000
Danijela Ozme 12	Petrova 114	Sarajevska 81
T: +38733260615	T: +385 12300447	T: +381113626302
E: bhfpa.xy@bih.net.ba	E: status-m@status-m.hr	E: centar@e8.org.rs

Petra Kočića 3  
78000 Banja Luka  
T: +38751303310  
E: perpetuum-mobile@blic.net

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**CARE International** is a leading relief and development non-governmental organization fighting global poverty and social injustice. Non-political and non-sectarian, we operate each year in more than 70 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, reaching almost 60 million people in poor communities. CARE in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia is focused on promoting gender equality, addressing discrimination and social and economic inclusion.

**M Centers** – are national resource centers managed by a local partner in each country of the young men initiative. These centers promote the development of youth work, the implementation of programs focused on boys and young men and the strengthening of partnerships by different stakeholders in improving outcomes from young people through incorporating a gendered approach.

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Young Men Initiative



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