Meaningfully engaging men leads to sustainable shifts in social and gender norms that improve maternal and child health outcomes

What a Man, What a Mighty Good Man: Engaging men as users, partners, and supporters of family planning using the Emanzi Male Engagement Model

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INTRO AND OBJECTIVE

In Uganda, a country with one of the highest fertility rates in the world, the modern contraceptive prevalence rate remains low at approximately 38% and the unmet need for family planning relatively high at 22%. Community engagements and insights gathering conducted by FCDO/Reducing high fertility rates and Improving Sexual Reproductive health outcomes (RISE) identified key issues affecting family planning uptake within couples and communities, including harmful gender norms and roles, social norms promoting large family size, unequal power dynamics, and the threat of gender-based violence. To address these barriers and create an enabling environment for family planning use, RISE adapted FHI 360's Emanzi Male Engagement Model to engage men as users, partners, and supporters of family planning and community change agents.



METHODS

Emanzi is a locally-developed, evidence-based male engagement model that seeks to:

- Improve relationship quality.
- Increase communication on sexual and reproductive health between men and women.
- Promote shared decision-making within couples.
- Foster positive norms to reduce gender-based violence.

Working together with existing district, subcounty, and community structures, RISE trained selected men from the community to mentor groups of men using the interactive and participatory Emanzi model.

Engagement of existing structures from the district, subcounty, and community levels to introduce the Emanzi model and facilitate local buy-in and ownership

District health leaders, together with other key stakeholders, engaged at all levels, to select Emanzi supervisors and local peer mentors

Series of trainings on the Emanzi curriculum are conducted for Masters Trainers, supervisors, and mentors to enable them to better understand norms, address myths/ misconceptions

and facilitate

Emanzi

Selected
mentors go on
to select men
in groups of 12
-15 from the
community
who are
mentored
through the
nine session
Emanzi
curriculum

Once the curriculum is completed, community celebrations and recognition ceremonies are held, where men attend and celebrate with their spouses

Graduates
become change
agents within
their
communities



Through the nine-session curriculum, men were engaged to challenge social and gender norms and use collective problem-solving to identify local solutions to household and community challenges related to family planning use. Emanzi culminated in a graduation ceremony and community celebration for Emanzi men and their families.

RESULTS

After graduation, many Emanzi men have become family planning champions within their communities.

Outcome harvesting conducted six-months after implementation found:

- Transformative changes in attitudes towards smaller family size.
- Marked shifts towards gender equality and collective responsibility in family planning and domestic roles.
- Reduced cases of gender-based violence.
- Better maternal and child health outcomes through planned families, child spacing, and increased modern contraceptive use.

A year later, these changes are still visible and Emanzi men have also established successful savings groups in their community to better support their families.

CONCLUSIONS

- Meaningfully engaging men can lead to sustainable shifts in social and gender norms that increase family planning use and improve maternal and child health outcomes.
- The Emanzi Male Engagement Model can be adapted to shift norms and engage men around other health and development areas, including HIV, maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH), nutrition, gender-based violence, among others.

















