

# 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

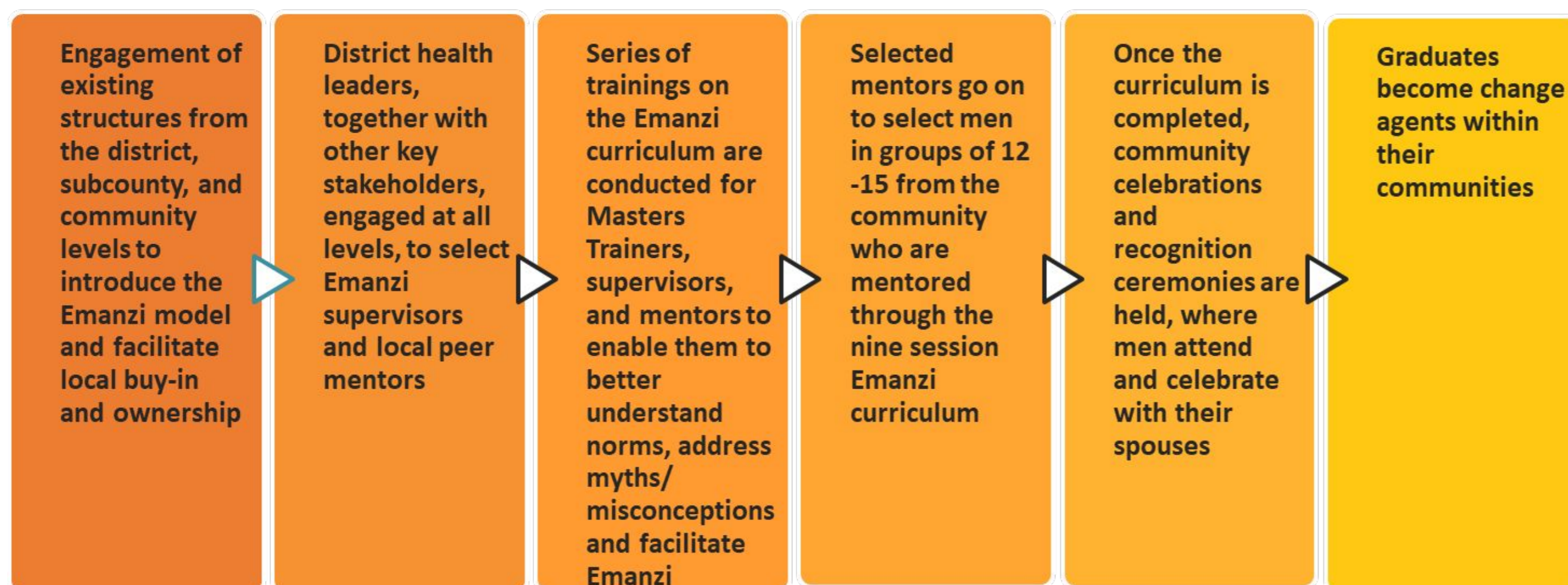
In Uganda, a country with one of the highest fertility rates in the world, the modern contraceptive prevalence rate remains low at approximately 38% and the unmet need for family planning relatively high at 22%. Community engagements and insights gathering conducted by FCDO/*Reducing high fertility rates 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.



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.

