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Engaging and Mobilizing Men to Promote Women's Human Rights

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Going Against the Grain

University of Dayton Human Rights Center
Social Practice of Human Rights Conference, Oct. 1-4, 2019

Engaging and Mobilizing Men to Promote Women's Human Rights

Presented by:

Rus Ervin Funk, *Global MenEngage Alliance*

Session: Transforming Gendered Spaces

Abstract:

Over the past twenty years, there have been increasing of and progressively more effective efforts to engage, mobilize and organize men in support of advancing women's human rights. The Declaration from the UN conference on Women in Beijing, the Declaration from the UN Report on, and the UNHCR Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women all make powerful statements as to the need to engage men and boys in efforts to promote and enhance gender equality and women's human rights. Most recently, the UN HCR agreed upon Declaration 35/10 (2017) outlined in very concrete and specific ways that male engagement is an essential of efforts to achieve gender equality and advance women's human rights.

The reasons for engaging men are quite clear. All human beings have a gender and as such, all need to be engaged in efforts to achieve gender equality. In addition, however, men hold disproportionate positions of power, dominance and authority that impact on the ability to achieve gender equality. If efforts to achieve gender equality continue to solely focus on women and girls, then men will continue to be left out of the conversations, planning and engagement. Some of these men hold positions of power and authority in the very institutions that are needed to create the structural and instrumental changes needed to achieve gender equality. In addition, the available evidence clearly indicates that to the degree that countries, states and locales are successful in moving towards gender equality, men benefit as well (although perhaps not to the degree for women and girls). In places in which substantive strides have been made towards gender equality, men report higher rates of life satisfaction, higher rates of happiness and fulfillment, increase indicators on a variety of measures related to improved health and wellness, improved job/career satisfaction, and more.

Achieving gender equality appears to be a win-win phenomenon. While there is clear consensus that men need to be actively and substantively involved if we are to achieve gender equality and women's human rights, less attention (until very recently) has been paid to how to do so effectively. This short paper outlines some of the key lessons that have been learned that point to strategies and methods that appear to be most effective in engaging men and boys to achieve gender equality.

Presenter information:

Rus Ervin Funk is a longtime activist and organizer for preventing gender-based violence and promoting gender equality. He is the co-founder of numerous grass-roots organizations, including the North American MenEngage Network. Rus is currently a consultant based in Louisville, KY, and serves on the Board of the Global MenEngage Alliance, is co-chair for Male Engagement for World Without Exploitation and is secretary of the Board of the National Center on Sexual and Domestic violence.

Rus articles and publications include:

Reaching and Responding to Men who are Resistant or Hostile to Gender Equality (2019)

The Continuum of Male Engagement: An Overview of a Conceptual Model (2018)

What's Wrong with this Picture: the Impact of Viewing Pornography (2018)

What's Wrong with this Picture: An Overview of the Impact of Viewing Pornography (2018)

"The Role of adult pornography in intimate partner sexual violence perpetrators' offending" (with Walter S. DeKeseredy) in Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Sexual Violence: A Multidisciplinary approach to prevention, recognition and intervention (2017). Ed by Louise McOrmond-Plummer et al. Routledge Press

"Addressing and combating intimate partner sexual violence" (with Lundy Bancroft) in Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Sexual Violence: A Multidisciplinary approach to prevention, recognition and intervention (2017) Ed by Louise McOrmond-Plummer et al. Routledge Press