

# WHY MEN ARE NOT ENGAGED AS EQUAL PARTNERS ?



Family planning is still perceived as a women's issue



The health system engages with women and children on SRH\* issues

\* Sexual and Reproductive Health



Notions and constructs of masculinity prevent men from reaching out



Disproportionate focus on terminal FP methods for women

Important to engage men in reproductive healthcare to facilitate joint spousal decision-making for better health outcomes

As per the National Family Health Survey - 4 (2015-16), (aged 15-49 years)

34%

men take decisions for their own healthcare

54%

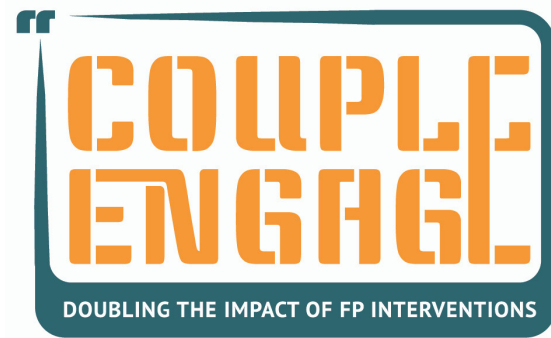
men take health decisions together with their partners

11%

men reported their partners take health decisions for them



As per NFHS - 4 (2015-16), 31% men (aged 15-19 years) and 37.3% men (aged 20-24 years) reported that contraception was 'women's business'



As family planning is generally perceived as a women's concern and most family planning programs target women, they are often not able to engage men as equal partners. This has an unintended effect of isolating men, thereby reducing the effectiveness of interventions as men continue to be key decision-makers in patriarchal family structures.

## Couple Engage – Doubling the Impact of Family Planning

Interventions is a project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, led by the International Center for Research on Women in partnership with Vihara Innovation Network. The project seeks to identify, develop and test approaches for engaging men and couples in joint spousal decision-making in family planning, particularly birth spacing.

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

<b>A.1</b>	<b>Evidence Review and Hypothesis Building:</b> An extensive evidence synthesis of strategies, ways and mediums to engage men and couples in FP decision-making.
<b>A.2</b>	<b>Qualitative Study, Design Research and Co-Design:</b> Informing, fine-tuning and sharpening hypothesis through a process of ethnography, design research and co-design in the local context.
<b>A.3</b>	<b>Development, Testing and Validation:</b> Situating strategies in existing programs or in select small geographical areas to strengthen prototypes.
<b>A.4</b>	<b>Consolidating Learnings and Strategic Recommendations:</b> Collaborative review of learnings from different stages to jointly develop strategic recommendations for current and future programs.

## OUTCOMES

<b>O.1</b>	Synthesis of learning on best approaches to engage young men in family planning by conducting evidence review.
<b>O.2</b>	Identification of up to six approaches for engagement of men in gender-equitable family planning decision-making.
<b>O.3</b>	Development and testing of up to four contextualized approaches and to identify promising approaches that can be replicated and scaled-up.

## Approach

The project approach is rooted in and informed by evidence and an iterative and collaborative reflective process using human-centered design.

## Focus

The project focuses on young married couples with 0 to 1 parity and men aged 18-25 years. The iterative process will be carried out and situated within existing interventions in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The primary focus would be on identifying men as supportive partners, while the benefits of this may spill over to men as clients of family planning and men as agents of change or influencers.

Through this process of co-creation, the vision is to come up with tested and viable approaches of engaging men in family planning decision-making and to propose solutions that can be sustained beyond the life of this project.