

## Report Start-Meeting, 06.07.2021

At the MenEngage launch meeting, the project was presented by the two partner organizations PYCD and fepa. The project involves active men who are committed to the philosophy of MenEngage. An active contribution is made to the sustainable development goal number 5 (gender equality). In the engagement of fepa and PYCD, the concept of masculinity is critically reflected and a process should take place that enables the participants to transform their way of thinking about masculinity. The intercultural exchange is about working together regionally, nationally and internationally for change. There will be advocacy for change from ourselves and our masculine, often patriarchal environment.

Allan from PYCD and Niklas from fepa initiated the start meeting on 06.07.2021. A total of 12 participants from Zimbabwe and Switzerland took part. In the following report the topics of the start meeting are explained. The participants found it important to counteract the current gender inequality and injustice. There was consensus that critical reflection on one's own masculinity is important and that women need to be included in the dialogue. Critical attributes such as sexism and gender-based-violence need to be discussed and eliminated. Exchanges in groups can open up different perspectives. These serve to achieve sustainable development goal number 5 in a diverse way and with different perspectives.

In order to achieve gender equality, it will be important to deal with and possibly discard old traditions and norms. On the Zimbabwean side, there was a feeling that norms and traditions are still more strongly adhered to and that it is important to involve the old generation in the transformation process. On the other hand, a Swiss participant emphasized that it is important to break away from old traditions and norms. Men should be able to release their feelings and emotions. During the meeting there was talk about toxic masculinity. Among other things, toxic masculinity is described in terms of not acting out emotions, control over women, aggressive dominant behavior, women are seen as objects, etc.

The topic of sexual and reproductive health and rights was addressed in the meeting. Sexuality education is to be carried out among young people, addressing, for example, how to deal with HIV prevention and treatment. The principles of equal rights and equal opportunities are not only to be shown to boys, but girls are also to be addressed with principles on equal rights and equal opportunities.

The LGBTQIA\* movement is to be included in the exchanges. Because it is not only about men and women, but also about nonbinary gender equality. At the meeting, specifically through the testimony of one participant, the process of self-reflection was stimulated among the other participants. This happened because a personal example was told of how the person was shaped. It is interesting when one's own reflection process is stimulated by examples. Thus, by analyzing the development at a young age, it becomes possible to justify the imprinting of a man, to critically question it and to initiate a transformation process. It was emphasized how important it is to cross different role models. It was noted that there is a potential for social development and that it is possible to draw inspiration from successful women.

In order to follow up on the inspiration from the start meeting, further activities are being planned. For example, the exchange in groups at the partner organizations PYCD and fepa on site and at virtual meetings. Jointly developed information will be shared on social media. Information sharing and dissemination is about standing up for gender equality and countering gender inequality and injustice. Teenagers of advanced age and men are to be involved in specific topics. For example, they will be asked about sexism and unfair opportunities on the labor market. Furthermore, it is about founding a MenEngage-Club and organizing an event with

the participants according to the participatory approach, which promotes the message "gender equality". In preparation for this event, workshops will be organized to sensitize the MenEngage club to MenEngage and gender equality.