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**PROMOTING HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES AMONG YOUTH IN
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA BY CHALLENGING GENDER
STEREOTYPES II – YOUNG MEN INITIATIVE PROJECT II (YMI II)**

ENDLINE EVALUATION REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

July 2020

Introduction

Young Men Initiative – Promoting Healthier Lifestyles among Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Challenging Gender Stereotypes II or Young Men Initiative II (YMI II) project builds upon CARE’s comprehensive and programmatic effort to fight interpersonal and gender-based violence (GBV) as well as to improve gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina and address preventative issues related to youth extremism and violence. The project’s overall goal was to increase the uptake of healthy, nonviolent and gender-equitable lifestyles among young men and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The endline survey is carried out to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the overall project progress focusing on changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors related to gender-based violence, gender equality, healthy lifestyles among young men and young women from Bosnia and Herzegovina who were participating in the ‘Program Y’ in target schools in the period from 2018-2020. It assessed whether there were differences in attitudes, knowledge and behavior of young men and women before and after the completion of the project activities in high schools. The endline survey examined the effects of project activities on the following spheres: views regarding gender relations; health of young men and women, including mental health and the use of psychoactive substances; knowledge about sexual and reproductive health; experience of youngsters with suffered and perpetrated violence.

The project is organized and supported by CARE International, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Oak Foundation. It was implemented with the cooperation of local youth and non-governmental organizations: Association “XY” (Sarajevo), Perpetuum mobile – Institute for Youth and Community Development (Banja Luka), NGO “Youth Power” (Mostar) and youth NGOs: Forum Theatre (East Sarajevo), New Vision, (Novi Travnik), Otaharin (Bijeljina), Zemlja djece u BiH (Tuzla), Proni (Brčko), Youth Club “Pod istim suncem” (Jablanica).

Method

Methods included self-administered quantitative surveys completed by respondents before and after the intervention program. The survey was conducted in several phases. In 2018, the first phase of the survey was conducted – baseline survey. Respondents were filling-in the questionnaires (pen-paper method). In the second phase, most of the young men and women took part in the educational (intervention) program - Program Y, which included group

experiential workshops and campaign activities organized by 'Be a Man Clubs'. In the third phase, in May 2020, final endline survey was conducted. The endline survey was conducted as an online survey due to the epidemiology crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey respondents were young men and young women, aged 15-18 years, from nine cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The cities were: Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar, Bijeljina, Brčko, East Sarajevo, Jablanica, Novi Travnik, and Tuzla. A total of 1816 respondents took part in the baseline survey (1005 young men and 811 young women). In the endline survey, 1216 participants (590 young men and 626 young women), from all project target schools where intervention was implemented, filled-in the survey. In the endline survey, the number of respondents was lower due to several reasons, but the main reason was the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the closure of schools which led to the decision that the endline survey would be implemented online. The closure of schools also resulted in teachers not having direct and personal contact with students and they were unable to influence students' participation in the endline survey. More so, some students in some cities did not have access to the internet at home. In addition, in the period between the two surveys, a number of students dropped out of school.

Results

Survey results show that in the area of gender relations progress has been achieved in all the cities. Generally, attitudes of young women are more gender-equal than those of young men. In the endline survey, respondents have a more tolerant attitude towards gender roles, gender norms and persons with a homosexual orientation. The progress mostly varies by up to 20%. The progress has been achieved but we can conclude that indices of gender equality are still low in all the cities (the range in the endline survey is 19-76%), so the work with young people on this issue should be continued.

In the health sphere we tested the use of psychoactive substances, mental health, and knowledge of sexual and reproductive health. Between 12 and 57% of young men and 5 and 28% of young women drink alcohol (several times a month or more). The highest percentages are in Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Brčko and East Sarajevo. In most of the cases, 20-30% of youngsters smoke cigarettes, and 2-15% of youngsters use marijuana. The endline survey results show that higher percent of young men and young women in all cities drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes and marijuana.

In the statement on mental health, state of happiness (64-82% of young men and 63-86% of young women) dominates in the last month. Nervousness was the least present (11-33% of young men and 16-37% of young women). Significant differences between baseline and endline survey were not seen.

Knowledge of sexual and reproductive health in all cities (except Novi Travnik) varies from 21 to 71%. Knowledge in the endline survey is better than in the baseline survey. Results are usually better by 5-15%. These results undoubtedly indicate the positive impact and value of the implemented program. Among youngsters who had intercourse, the greater percentage was of those who used contraceptives (21-52% among young men; 4-20% among young women). Despite the improvement, it is still necessary to implement educational campaigns on the importance of contraception in the future.

A positive thing is that in the majority of cases perception of violence and forms of violence in the endline survey are more mature and deeper than in the baseline survey. In the endline survey, 16-38% of young men and 9-21% of young women participated in perpetrating verbal and psychological violence in the last three months. It is most evident with young men from Brčko and Tuzla. When we compare the baseline and endline survey, consistent differences were not seen.

In the endline survey physical violence was confirmed by 15-29% of young men and by 5-14% of young women. In terms of young men, the lowest level of physical violence was seen in Novi Travnik (15.6%), and among young women in Jablanica (5.3%). The highest level is among young men in Tuzla and Sarajevo, and young women in Banja Luka. The physical violence in most of the cities is less expressed in the endline survey. Progress, in comparison to the baseline survey, is 8-25% of young men, and 5-20% of young women. Results show that other types of violence (group violence, cyber violence, gender-based violence, violence toward gay people, etc.) are also less present in the endline survey than in the baseline. The progress, in comparison to the baseline survey, in most of the cases, is 5-15%. Another positive thing is that in the endline survey greater percentage of youth would try to prevent violence that is happening in their surroundings and would not be passive.

When it comes to violence in a relationship, psychological violence is present among 5-19% of young men and young women, while physical violence is differently represented. It varies between 4 and 9% among young men, and 3-17% among young women (except Novi Travnik where it is higher). If we compare results between baseline and endline survey, a positive

thing is that in the majority of cases experience with psychological and physical violence in an intimate relationship is less present in the endline survey. Physical violence is particularly lower, usually lower by about 10%.

In the endline survey, the majority of young men and young women (52-91%) feel capable and ready to prevent possible violent behavior in an intimate relationship. In the endline survey, participants declared themselves more ready and empowered. On average, that percentage is higher by 5-15%.

In general, the majority of participants (40-60%) are satisfied with different aspects of the project. Respondents in almost all the cities highly valued communication and socializing, followed by the work of trainers, as well as methods used during the work. The majority of participants highly valued and showed satisfaction with the project as a whole. The greatest level of satisfaction was recorded in Tuzla, Bijeljina and Banja Luka.

Conclusion

In nine BiH cities baseline and endline survey have been conducted, through which we tried to test the effects of intervention program that aimed at developing healthy lifestyles among young men and young women.

In all the cities, the most significant progress has been achieved in the area of gender relations and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health. In the endline survey, perpetrated physical violence, group violence and gender-based violence decreased in most of the cities. Likewise, the majority of participants in all the cities aim to constructively act and resolve conflict if it appears. We have not found progress or consistent changes in the field of mental health. The only weaker result is related to the use of different psychoactive substances (alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana) which correlates to peer norms accompanying that period of growing up, as well as to some traditional and cultural norms in our area.

In general, the majority of participants are satisfied with different aspects of project activities. Participants in almost all the cities highly valued the work of the trainers and peer educators, communication and socializing, as well as methods used during the work.

We can conclude that the obtained evaluation results point out to the purposefulness of this program. Young men and young women in BiH express numerous personal and social problems, but it is obvious that the majority of those problems could be solved through

adequate, interactive and youth-friendly work with youngsters. We hope that the program will encourage competent state educational institutions and schools to work more actively on the establishment of regular school curricula that would lead to improvement in the lifestyle of young people.