

Cantera

(Based in Nicaragua but works in other Central American countries including Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala)

Target population

Men and women in rural areas

Intervention Description

The Center for Popular Education and Communications (Cantera) is based in Managua and was established in 1988 with the purpose of providing popular education and began its work with men on the issues of masculinity and gender in 1994. Through its workshops, CANTERA seeks to facilitate internal transformative processes by examining social attitudes, values, behaviors, and the social construction of masculinity using men's own life stories as a starting point rather than theoretical frameworks. The ultimate goal is that through introspection and the recognition of the contradictions and injustices related to gender roles, men will generate their own proposals for specific change and to take responsibility for making these changes.

Cantera's "Masculinity and Popular Education" course is implemented over the period of a year and consists of four 3 ½ day workshops centered on four main themes:

1. male identities
2. gender, power, and violence
3. unlearning machismo
4. forging just relationships

The first three workshops are attended only by men, but the last workshop brings men together with the women who take part in a parallel course. The priority in these workshops is to promote change in the familial and personal spheres of the participants.

Evaluation

To evaluate its accomplishments, Cantera carried out a survey with 112 of the original 250 men who participated in any of its workshops between September 1994 and September 1997. The men's questionnaire consisted of 312 questions divided into seven sections. Program evaluators overcame the lack of baseline data by creating a "subjective approximation" and a "subjective appreciation" (i.e., a surmised quantification and estimated trend) of the men's perceived internal changes. They accomplished this by separating the questions related to the men's pre- and post-participation behaviors into sections. They also collected information through surveys with the women who knew the male participants.

In terms of results, both men and women surveyed tended to agree that the men had changed in the following ways: they reflected less "macho" perceptions of masculinity, they participated more in domestic chores, their relationships in the workplace had improved, they had reduced their discriminatory practices, and they had demonstrated greater solidarity with women. Although the results are encouraging, it is important to note that the evaluation methodology was limited by its lack of baseline data.

Additionally, researchers noted that participants were not representative of the broader population; they were more educated, more likely to be employed and more likely to be interested in health education than the broader population.

Resources

Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo. 2001. *Violencia doméstica: intervenciones para su prevención y tratamiento*, EDUCACIÓN POPULAR SOBRE MASCULINIDAD EN NICARAGUA <http://www.iadb.org/sds/doc/vd9edumascni.pdf>

Sources

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White V et al, 2003, *Men and Reproductive Health Programs: Influencing gender norms*. USAID, Washington, DC, USA

Welsh, Patrick. 2001. Men aren't from Mars: Unlearning machismo in Nicaragua. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations.

Welsh, Patrick et al., 1998. *Hacia una masculinidad sin Violencia en las relaciones de pareja: Una experiencia entre hombres desde la educación popular*. Unpublished report

<http://www.canteranicaragua.org/>

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