



Fiche Outil

## WORKSHOP

for the SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

### Me and my father

The APEF supports Bukavu women in their socio-economic and political emancipation through swahili literacy and sewing courses. The APEF also offers them business and empowering training. Following this empowering training, the learners asked the APEF to offer training to men. They felt like their fathers, husbands, brothers, etc. were not sensitive to their restitutions on the training they received, on themes such as gender and gender-based acts of violence, the importance of civil marriage, legacy, income management within the household... Thus, the APEF decided to arrange training targeting the learners' husbands, fathers and tutors in order to raise their awareness on these matters. As the prime format of thematic training did not work very well, the APEF experienced three all-male talking circles to allow participants to exchange more freely.

This sheet introduces the course of the second talking circle which focuses on a given man's behaviors which are similar to his father's. The first talking circle offered by the APEF regards representations of the masculinities, and the third circle regards task and workload division depending on the gender.

#### General terms

- **Place:** *A place that is easy to access and favorable to the organization of non-mixed meeting, where men like to meet up (the APEF organized these talking circles in cafés). A place where it is possible to sit in circle.*
- **Participants:** *A group of men (15 for the APEF's circles) and a facilitator.*
- **Length of the activity:** *1 hour.*
- **Objective of the talking group :** *raise awareness on positive masculinities through a space for dialogue and free listening, in non-mixity. Allows to talk about the problems they encounter in their daily life while conducting the activity (as far as it concerns the facilitator).*
- **Objective of the activity:** *Allows the man taking part to the activity to identify and understand how his relationship with his father is one of the main sources of learning for his own role as a father and boyfriend or husband.*
- **General terms:** *It is a time for talking, sharing and listening. While the facilitator designed a frame, a thread to follow during the session, it is important that the participants feel confident and free to express themselves on the topic that seems important to them. In parallel, the facilitator's goal is to*

*provide food for thought on positives masculinities. First, the facilitator offers the participants to exchange on the general topics that affect them in their daily lives before bringing them to think on masculinities.*

## Course of the activity

### 1<sup>st</sup> period: individual thinking

On a sheet of paper, each participant draws a line to create two columns. In the first column, they will be asked to write the similarities that they have with their fathers (attitudes, behaviors, ways to educate and bond with their kids, with their wives, with the rest of the family members, as well as the qualities and flaws of their fathers). In the second column, they must write all the differences between them and their fathers on the same matters.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> period: collective thinking

After a period dedicated to individual thinking, the participants are offered to share what they uncovered during the activity.

In order to relaunch discussions, the following questions can be asked:

- *How many and what are my father's characteristics which I imitate?*
- *What are my father's characteristics/attitudes/behaviors that I replicate with my daughters and sons, even when I did not agree with him on this aspect?*

After listening to the participants, the discussion is relaunched with a new question:

- *What can I do with the characteristics that I replicated even though I do not like them or even though they harm my children and/or my wife?*

### 3<sup>rd</sup> period: Conclusion by the facilitator

All the representations we have of the perfect man and of how we must behave have negative consequences on our wives, our kids as well as on our households. That is why it is important to deconstruct them, to talk about them and to find new practices together. Doing so does not mean that we will not feel like men.

When we were kids, a lot of the attitudes/behaviors our fathers had towards us may have hurt us; we ended up finding such attitudes/behaviors natural. We understood that being a man meant not being affectionate, being distant, strict, authoritarian, in order to be considered and respected as real men, even if this type of behavior can make the others and ourselves feel uncomfortable.

In many occasions, we are not conscious that when behaving of the sort, we do not contribute to educating full and autonomous human beings. We believe that as painful these practices might be, they will make our kids good people like we are, without acknowledging the damages this education had on ou

**Link to the article :** <http://atelier.fdh.org/en/take-action/our-tools/facilitate/article/me-and-my-father>

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