



Tool Sheet

WORKSHOP

for the SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The diktats of masculinity

The APEF assists women from Bukavu in their socio-economic and political emancipation, through literacy and dressmaking courses in Swahili. The APEF also offers them entrepreneurial and emancipatory courses. It was following these emancipatory courses that the women learning approached the APEF to offer training courses to men: They felt that their fathers, husbands, brothers, etc. were not receptive to the feedback they were making on the training they were receiving, on topics such as gender and gender-based violence, the importance of civil marriage, inheritance, household income management... It was with this in mind that the APEF decided to set up single-sex talking circles for the husbands, fathers and guardians of APEF learners, to enable them to discuss these issues more freely and also to raise their awareness of them.

This sheet presents a reflection activity offered to the men as part of the first talking circle for men, which focuses on representations of masculinity. The other two talking circles focus on the effects of the participants' relationship with their fathers on their relationship, and on the distribution of tasks and workload according to gender.

Terms and conditions

- **Location:** *A place that is easily accessible and where it is convenient to organise a single-sex meeting, where men like to get together (the APEF is organising its talking-circles in a bar-café). A place where it is possible to sit in a circle.*
- **Participants :** *A group of men (15 at the APEF) and a facilitator.*
- **Duration of the activity :** *1h*
- **Aim of the talking circle :** *raise awareness of positive masculinities through a single-sex space open to free speech and listening, where men can talk about the problems they encounter in their daily lives, while being guided (by the facilitator) towards discussions related to gender and masculinities.*
- **Aim of the activity:** *Getting to know the practises and behaviours leading to the construction of masculinity at different stages of life.*

- General modality: It is a time for talking, sharing and listening. Despite the fact that the facilitator has planned a framework, a red thread to "follow" throughout the session, it is important that the men feel confident and free to talk about the subject that seems important to them. The facilitator's aim is to bounce ideas off the participants and to get them thinking about positive masculinity at the same time. The facilitator first invites the participants to discuss the general issues that affect them on a daily basis, and then leads them into the activity of reflection on masculinity.

Course of the activity

Faced with what can be said during an initial discussion (such as the role and posture of the man), the facilitator suggests an activity to reflect on: the behaviours that a boy/man should have at different stages of his life in order to assert/show his posture as a man.

First step : in a group

The facilitator distributes a sheet of flipchart paper and a felt-tip pen to each group, then asks the participants to draw three columns on the paper to fill in together :

- In the first column, they are asked to write : When you were a child, what did you do to prove that you were a man?
- In the second column, they are asked to write : When you were a teenager and a young man, what did you do to show that you were a man?
- In the third column, they are asked to write : What am I actually doing to show that I am a man?

When you were a child, what did you do to prove that you were a man?	When you were a teenager and a young man, what did you do to show that you were a man?	What am I actually doing to show that I am a man?

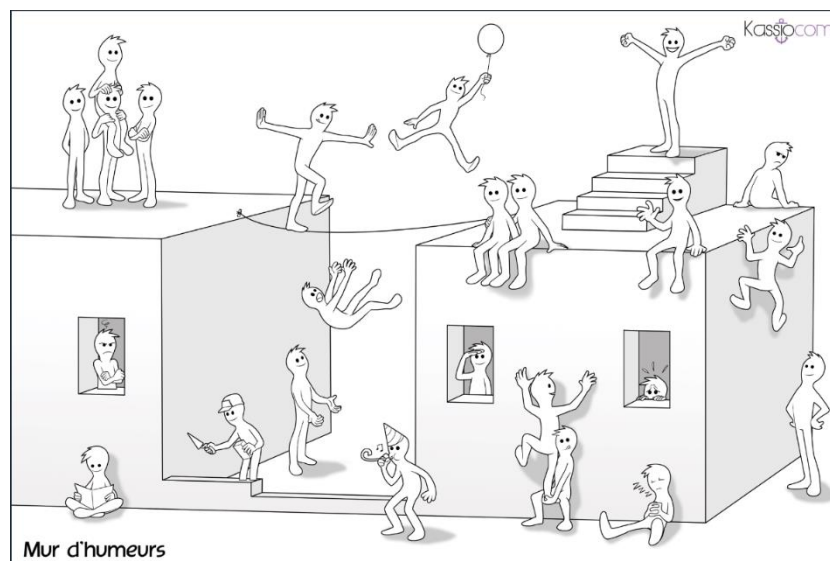
Second step : collective reflexion

In order to deepen the debate/reflection, the facilitator can address several areas with questions or comments:

What do you think of this table? What do you think it highlights? What happens if a boy doesn't fulfil these behaviours? How is he judged/seen by others? Do you know any men like this? If so, how do they live?

- At all stages of life, men have to perform acts that demonstrate their virility. These are linked to strength, tenacity, insensitivity, homophobia and misogyny. It is therefore common to associate masculine identity, in the different stages of life, with violence against women, against other "weaker" men, as well as violence against oneself, because many men sometimes go against their own will to conform to social norms.

The facilitator can conclude this activity by asking the men how they feel after this activity. He can hand out the "mood wall" to help them formulate: Each person chooses a man and then explains why h



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