

Narrative performances for the prevention of men's sexual violence against children

Executive summary

Prostasia Foundation proposes to address harmful masculinity norms, gender-based violence, and child abuse prevention within a supportive storytelling and dialogue setting.

What part of the programme strategy applies to this grant?

In the U.S. and around the world, social ideas about masculinity often contribute to challenges including men's violence against women and girls (as well as towards other men and boys), bullying, homophobia, transphobia, HIV/AIDS, men's reduced seeking of physical and mental health care, and gender inequality. We are partnering with a proven narrative project for men that was created to challenge the ideas of traditional masculinity in a public dialogue. It is rare that masculinity is discussed in a public setting – people often don't realize there's much to talk about, or that can be changed, as to how boys and men are socialized to be "men."

There will be different topics that will be explored in the series of workshops Prostasia will host with technical assistance from experts in narrative methodologies, but the center focus will be on men's experience as child sex abuse survivors. The goal will be to create a safe space for men to explore the impact of their childhood experiences, and break the cycle of sexual abuse.

Project Proposal

We propose a year-long project "Men's Stories: Preventing Abuse Against Women and Children" to develop a pilot online narrative production by and for men who have experience of child sexual abuse. Our mission for this project is to strengthen attitudes, behaviors, and social norms around the world that support healthy masculinities, violence prevention, and gender justice. This supports Prostasia Foundation's broader mission to ensure that the elimination of child sexual abuse is achieved consistently with the highest values of the society that we would like our children to grow up in.

Our partner in the execution of this project is a trainer and technical assistance provider that supports local teams to create, implement and evaluate their own gender-transformative storytelling productions. The independent teams hold facilitated, weekly group "playshops" over nine weeks with 10-15 selected men from their communities; each playshop is 2-3 hours in duration. During the playshops the presenters learn together about topics related to masculinity, hone their own personal narratives, and give each other feedback on their works in progress. After the presenters have developed their stories through the playshop process, live events are held where the presenters publicly share their stories with audiences of local community members, followed by an audience dialogue and resource fair. The events are filmed to create long-lasting and locally-relevant educational tools, in the form of social media film clips of each presenters' story, and full-length films of the live events plus accompanying discussion guides.

Prostasia Foundation will train and manage their teams of presenters for the productions, who will create and execute a pilot online production over the course of a year. The production will focus on harmful masculinity norms, gender-based violence, and child abuse prevention, with each topic having a dedicated two sessions. The responsibilities of presenters will include participating in training, recruiting participants from their communities, facilitating the playshops with the presenters and helping them create their stories, production activities such as multimedia development and publicity, evaluation, media dissemination, and stewarding next steps for their newly-formed groups, so they can continue learning and taking action together for preventing child sex abuse.