

# Designing and Implementing a Gender Transformative Adaptation of the Husband's Schools in Niger

## Situation

The Husband's Schools intervention was first piloted in Niger in 2007, engaging men as model husbands to promote and support women's use of reproductive health services and foster behavior change in individuals and couples. Despite its success in improving health outcomes and scale-up in and beyond Niger, there is little evidence that Husband's Schools have successfully challenged deeply entrenched gender norms and power dynamics. What's more, there is increasing concern the intervention has inadvertently *increased* men's dominance in domains related to health and nutrition. Therefore, there is a growing need for approaches that transform underlying gender inequities and promote agency in health and beyond.

## What We're Doing

USAID's Agency for All Project will design, implement, and evaluate a gender transformative adaptation of the Husband's Schools in Zinder, Niger.

## Approach

- We will conduct formative research to explore contextual realities specific to social norms, gender equity, and agency.
- Building on the strengths and successes of the existing Husband's Schools in Niger, we will bring principles of inclusion and local leadership into program design.
- We will implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the adapted Husband's Schools model and assess its feasibility and potential for scale.

## What We're Learning

- Formative research underscored the need to foster critical discussions to promote healthier forms of masculinity and skills for more power-balanced relationships among married couples.
- Participants expressed support for women's involvement in Husband's Schools activities but preferred gender-segregated learning spaces. They also reflected that engaging mothers-in-law and community leaders is vital for endorsing change and mitigating any resistance.

## Impact

In addition to offering important insights as to how gender norms and roles influence agentic and health behaviors, evidence from this study will inform future decision-making and resource mobilization for program sustainment and scale-up.

## Snapshot

**Location:** Niger: Departments of Magaria and Damagaran Takaya, Zinder region

**Duration:** 2022–2027

**Consortium Partners:** Center on Gender Equity and Health, UC San Diego; Equimundo; EVIHDAF; Matchboxology; Save the Children

**Affiliate Partners:** GRADE Africa, Women, Action and Development (FAD)

**Funder:** USAID

This research overview and the Agency for All Project are made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement No. 7200AA22CA00003.



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