



Empowering through Justice, Freedom and Sincerity

MWL Men

Gender equality is a major challenge for today's Albanian Society and one of the motivations behind the charism of Mary Ward Loreto Foundation. This project aims to strengthen the role of men in prevention and ending gender equality issues, abuse and violence, especially in the most marginalised and excluded regions of Albania, and thus progress towards the well-being of families and society as a whole. To do this, we will engage directly with the men's community, by addressing the role of gender in a manner that is relevant and understandable to men. This will bridge the gender gap by highlighting the men's attitudes within the context of men's interests, encouraging men to develop respectful and non-violent relationships as one of the most effective ways to prevent violence against women. This will promote attitudes and behaviours that support equality and respect. By combining these efforts with women's projects, we will have more impact on reducing inequality in Albania.

A major work has been done by many organizations in Albania regarding gender equality, abuse and violence, specifically focusing and working with women. Although working with women in joint forces approach has started to show positive results there is still much more to be done especially when taking into account men's needed involvement in the process. By focusing only on one side of the story, an impression exist within the society that gender equality, abuse and violence is a "women's problem". In order to further promote and improve the status of women in the society, as part of gender equality, it is necessary to directly involve men. Gender equality is not a 'women's concern' but is and should be the responsibility of all individuals and of the society as a whole and requires the active contribution and input from both women and men. This calls for a shift in the Albanian culture with man to be directly involved in gender equality, abuse and violence prevention. A substantial gap already exists between the involvement and work done with men in regards to these concerns. Mary Ward Loreto recognizes the opportunity of engagement directly with men in the community as a crucial step which needs to be strengthened to foster gender equality. Men have a critical role to play in the prevention of abuse and violence against women and this work also includes giving equal opportunity to men and women in the positions of social power and influence. This project is therefore designed to improve men's contribution to gender equality and changing social attitudes towards women in Albania.

This approach complements also with government strategies for gender equality. The current efforts consist in further empowerment and involvement of women in social and institutional life. In this front, the Albanian Government is focused on strengthening the legal and institutional protection mechanisms in order to protect gender equality. Mary Ward Loreto approach in direct involvement with men not only complements Government Strategies on Gender Equality but expands its influence on factors mitigation.

Mary Ward Loreto has implemented a wide range of development programs all over Albania in the past 3 years. Many of these were focused on personal development and a better quality of life for members of local communities, notably vulnerable populations. Mary Ward Loreto's unique effort on this front lies in its fundamentals of empowering through Justice, Freedom and Sincerity. Thus Mary Ward Loreto is nationally recognized as one of the main organizations in support of freedom, justice

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and hope in Albania. Speaking with numbers, only for 2014, around 1100 women have benefited from the human development activities, 162 women are working in agriculture and handicraft economic empowerment, 4 counselling and training center up and running year around.

Mary Ward Loreto's record, reputation, presence and strong network in Albania built the base for success in this new initiative. The project will also benefit from the ready-to-use capabilities of our staff with significant experience and expertise in violence against women.

The Men's Project arose in response and builds upon lessons learned from the work done from other projects of Mary Ward Loreto, especially the Women's Projects, URAT, Mary Ward Loreto Education and Mary Ward Loreto Youth. We began to look closely at men's position in society and why the form of patriarchy in Albania becomes particularly abusive in regions of poverty where men are mainly unemployed. Often violence in these regions, where Mary Ward Loreto works, is also used to regain power and dignity lost by the men through their own isolation from society through unemployment. In this sense, we saw an opportunity on the direct involvement of men to challenge stereotypical notions of masculinity, reject hyper-masculine ideologies and behaviours.

Our main goal: Improve the quality of life for families and communities through the decrease of gender inequality within the influence of men.

Our main goals:

- Improve knowledge and skills, within the targeted men's community, relating to conflict resolution, communication and gender equality – 8 education centers all over Albania giving access to a 1000+ men in 3 years on their personal development.
- Increased men's willingness to act and speak out in the context of gender equality – 1000 men directly engaged, 30 Change ambassadress recruited and activated
- 3. Empower men, through economic independence, to support the wellbeing of themselves, their family and their community –, more than 200 men coached towards employment in the labor market, 100 men with vocational education, 10 new businesses initiatives up and running

Our approach:

Year 1 – Preparing the ground for action with main focus on awareness and recognition of the issue

Year 2 - Enablement of change with main focus on shifting the resistance, creating models of change and strengthening communities

Year 3 - Transformation and Sustainability with main focus on building infrastructure that will lead to economic independence

Our approach is rooted in the experience of our previous development programs, giving prominence to project management and sustainability

Direct beneficiaries of the project are men from the most marginalized areas of Albania with inclination, being direct or indirect, to gender inequality or gender abuse. This extends also to their immediate families.

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Indirect beneficiaries of the project will be relatives of participants in the program and local communities. The success of this project is expected to help reduce the use of resources and to alleviate the load of social services dealing with this problem.

We are strong believers that involving men in the women's issue and in the fight against gender inequality will help more and have the fastest impact on mitigating gender balance in Albania.

Project Principles:

- Address the role of gender in a manner that is relevant and understandable by men.
- Tailored approach to groups or individuals discouraging attitudes and behaviors that leads to violence against women.
- The project will be implemented in safe and non-judgmental contexts
- The project is framed by a commitment to human rights and social justice and will comply with all Mary Ward Loreto code of conducts

Main activities:

- Awareness and Recognition of the Issues within the Men's community
- Understand the issues: Gender analysis program delivered in the most "noisy" locations in Albania which are recognized as having a high level of gender issues, abuse and violence. Mainly it will consist on qualitative and quantitate research by using 1-2-1 interview based techniques. It is necessary to also gather group thoughts, views and opinions. To realise this the project will organize different workshops which, combined with research reports, will define the key themes for the men's project intervention.
- Understand men's interests: In order to ensure that there is a full interest on the part of the men, for the behaviour change to happen, we will use a "give and get" approach that provides a clear understanding of men's needs. The second step on this will be to build the platform on how we are going to address those needs through our program. All of it will be done through a co-building concept.
- Improving Men's contribution to gender equality
- Create the model of change: Foster the development of gender equality based activities with the whole of the organisation and with community based levels activities. Create a model that will facilitate attitudinal change, skills development and behavioural change within the men's communities. We plan to support the intervention through creation of a practice framework for multiple levels of intervention.
- Shift resistance: Create an environment in all of our intervention centres which encourages change by integrating men's project into a wider prevention context. Furthermore, use men as peer educators and influencers as an effective way to change men's behaviour and to smooth the resistance within the communities. Promote positive messages highlighting men as part of the solution rather than the source of the problem



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- Focusing on community strengthening: Encouragement of community groups activities through men's groups, (aligned also with women's groups) with discussion on gender equality issues and seek to identify community-based solutions
- Transformation for change: Training and development program for all stages of the project including team building, communication, conflict resolution, coaching for employment, small business start up, vocational education, etc.
- Economic independence
- Tailored programs linked with specific needs and skills of the men community.

In all the regions at the first stages of the project there is a risk of the hesitation within the targeted community for commitment and engagement, mainly due to mentality and sensitivity of the issue. Therefore the program should have an attention-grabbing start, catalyzing effective activities and ensure that targeted group is being invited to bring forward their own interest for the project. The project is aimed at facilitating this process through interactive engagement and sharing.

Strong focus by all development programs on women empowerment creates the risk of "being" alone in this matter with our new initiative. To mitigate this and also to join forces, the project will strengthen links between all actors and influencers of the ongoing projects and partnerships.

Nonetheless, Mary Ward Loreto is aware that engaging men in violence prevention and gender equality will be challenging tasks that requires extra efforts, good strategies and planning, but on the other hand Mary Ward Loreto is determined to be the first to take steps in this direction and promote change.

Monitoring and result measurement will be a core task within this project. To this end, monitoring and evaluation at Mary Ward Loreto is comprised of management processes, elements and tools aligned to our standards. To establish and maintain a strict result-orientation, MWL Project Team will develop and manage a comprehensive monitoring and reporting system against pre-set objectives. The overall aim of this process is to continuously feedback information on achievements and changes in order to allow the project to:

- steer its interventions i.e. always keep the project aim in mind and apply a result oriented approach along the whole project cycle i.e. the design, planning, implementation and evaluation phases,
- support a continuous process of learning and finally
- ensure accountability towards the targeted beneficiaries enabling MWL to prove the results and quality of its work.

The monitoring and reporting on the project intervention will be based on results logic. In general, indicators with regard to the target group will be classified into:

- - access to an center and services, i.e. counselling, personal development; group work,
- - usage or application of a new practices, behaviors;
- - benefit in terms of income or employment.

Under the supervision of the MWL board of directors, Project Manager, in close coordination with the project team, will be responsible for monitoring and measuring the results. The monitoring and evaluation will be around 2 elements:

Process evaluation: There will be regular in field monitoring of project operations. Peer to peer learning and sharing of experiences.

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Reporting: Follow up of the achievement of the project through a regular and systematic documentation of the results relative to the goals and objectives.

All the project milestones will be documented with regular reporting to conclude with final Project reporting at the end.

In regards to budget monitoring there will be internal control and monitoring processes, as well as completely independent yearly auditing reviews.

The project aims to create important intangible asset in all of our operating centers by creating role models or as we call them 'Men's Change Ambassador'. 'Men's Change Ambassadors' are people from communities who recognize and also promote the importance of men playing a leadership role in preventing men's violence and abuse against women. This will ensure continuity and social mobilization even after project closing. To ensure sustainability MWL will have it in the focus from the creation stage of all the actions for the project. Direct involvement, participatory level and capacity building for the target group will create a strong base for instilling and further expand of the change.

Men's transformation for change project will strengthen strategically by first focusing on replicability of the intervention. Proven to work facts from monitoring and evaluation in one region will give the project the green light to export its framework to other regions. Thus, replicating process will ensure better efficiency and effectivity and most importantly speed. This will lead to creation of "change centers" which will eventually lead to scalability of this project. The change centers will be able to accommodate and respond to increased demand towards our intervention benefits.

With this project MWL joins forces with other civil organizations, NGOs and government to reduce gender equality. In order to create a better and more sustainable impact, and for the Foundation to stand strong and instilling its values of Justice, Freedom and Sincerity, the project will approach the issue from another angle by directly involving men in women's issues. This intervention will address the issue of gender balance from both perspectives of women and men, thus establishing a new front to mitigate it in Albania. This will not only result on reducing gender inequality but furthermore, provide a prophetic and indispensable future, full of hope to families and communities of the targeted group.

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