

The logo for MenCare+ is located in the top right corner. It consists of the word "Men" in a dark grey font, followed by "Care" in a white font inside a purple rectangular box, and a plus sign "+" to the right of the box. The background of the entire image is a photograph of a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark blue t-shirt with a logo, smiling as he feeds a young child with a spoon. The child is wearing a purple shirt and is smiling broadly. In the background, other children are seated at a table with a green tablecloth, and there are shelves with orange containers. A white text box with a purple border is in the bottom right corner, containing text about the MenCare+ initiative in Brazil.

Men Care+

MenCare+
engaging men
in a 4-country
initiative.

Brazil



Brazil population (1)
202,000,000

GDP per capita
\$14,555

Life expectancy
74.5

Maternal mortality
(per 100k)
69

UN Human Development
Index
75

UN Gender Inequality
Index
0.457

The MenCare+ programme in Brazil encourages women and men to work together towards gender equality. The programme, known as +Pai in Portuguese, aims to help men to have more equitable gender relations, to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, to care for the health of their partners, their children, and themselves, and to be emotionally connected to their sons and daughters. The MenCare+ programme in Brazil has been successful in creating partnerships between civil society and government to promote the involvement of men in gender equality. Working together with the government in the areas of health and education, at national and local levels, has been key to the success of the programme.

INTERVENTIONS

CAMPAIGNS

The Shameless Campaign, launched in 2013, is a youth-developed, peer-driven campaign that uses creative messages to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, empowering adolescents to take control of their health and relationships. The campaign was implemented in public schools in Rio de Janeiro in partnership with the Health and Prevention in Schools (SPE) programme. The campaign trains high school students (aged 15-19) to become peer mobilizers on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender equality in their schools, who design the campaign activities with Promundo and the school management. The young participants identified shame as a key barrier to the promotion of SRHR. The stigma around speaking about and seeking reproductive health care affected their health, sexual life, and relationships on a daily basis. The Shameless Campaign has now been adapted in 12 schools in Rio de Janeiro, due to the strong interest of young people in the campaign and its themes of SRHR and equitable relationships. More than 1,200 male and female high school students have been reached directly through campaign activities, and many thousands more through peer mobilization.

The 'You are my Father' Campaign was relaunched in 2014 as part of the MenCare+ programme, adapted from a campaign originally launched in 2012. The adapted campaign was conducted with parents from the Stella Maris crèche in Vila Joaniza, a low-income community in Rio de Janeiro. Community residents and group participants were involved in creating the brochures and posters, which included images of local fathers, for the campaign. A video, "Fathers Like Us," was also created to complement a traveling photo exhibition of 20 fatherhood stories. The materials were distributed to health units to complement Promundo's work to promote involved fatherhood with health professionals in Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul. The traveling exhibition was displayed at hospitals, maternity wards, schools, health units and seminars that took place in Rio de Janeiro. The campaign was successful in prompting dialogue and reflection on involved fatherhood within the community and among the providers and clients of the health facilities.

GROUP EDUCATION

YOUNG MEN'S AND WOMEN'S GROUP EDUCATION ON GENDER AND SEXUALITY
More than 845 young men and women in Rio de Janeiro participated in gender-

(1) All data derived from the UN Human Development Reports 2015, Brazil country reporting.



Photo by Beto Pêgo for Instituto Promundo

Crianças com rosto
Tente fazer uma cara de

transformative SRHR group education and awareness-raising activities of the Shameless Campaign. Gender awareness workshops are conducted with young men and women in schools to promote open discussion of gender roles, sexuality, and healthy relationships. In each school, participating students develop awareness raising activities, such as skits, conversation circles and film debates, to engage their peers to talk about taboo subjects like sex and contraceptives. The activities of the campaign also promote support for condom use, by sharing accurate information on sexually transmitted infections (STIs), distributing condoms, and creating spaces for young people to share questions and experiences. The discussions also help young people to discuss how to negotiate condom use with a partner and the importance of open dialogue between partners. An evaluation of the workshops found an increase in condom use among participants, and a positive change in gender attitudes among young men and women.

In all of the schools, participating students joined forces to integrate the campaign activities into the official academic calendar, to be able to reach the entire student body. The Shameless Campaign activities, which began in 2013, have continued to be implemented independently by the students in one school, with the support of a committed teacher, reaching new students each year. The success of the activities, and their appeal to students, demonstrate the potential for sustainability and extended reach within the school system.

"I came in, started to participate, and the change came fast. I started to take care of him in a different way, I began to pay him more attention, spending more time with him. Before I didn't care for him, I thought it was just work, put food in the house, but no, he needed more. Today I am a new person, thank god. After I started to take care of him like this, I am seeing that my son has changed. Today he embraces me: 'Father, I love you.'

He's saying that he loves me all the time."

Male participant in couples' reflective group

FATHERS/COUPLES' GROUP EDUCATION

Approximately 865 fathers and couples participated in MenCare+ programme activities in Brazil, including gender-transformative group education and awareness raising activities to promote men's involvement in maternal, newborn and child health and in the lives of their children. In addition to its extensive work with the public health system to promote men's involvement in prenatal care, Promundo works with young couples in Vila Joaniza, a low-income community north of Rio de Janeiro. Reflection groups, conducted at the local crèche (day care center), create safe spaces where mothers and fathers are able to reflect on and question the traditional gender norms related to newborn and childcare. Participants reported that the meetings increased their perception of the significant role and contribution of male partners during the prenatal and postpartum period, which can impact the health of mothers, children and fathers themselves. The discussions also enable men to challenge notions that men cannot show affection and participate in the daily care of their children.

The intervention promotes discussion on family planning, questioning of traditional gender norms, and encourages participants and the community at large to

demand local health units to involve fathers in prenatal services. An evaluation of the group education suggests that there was a positive trend toward changes in men's participation in family planning and changed views on contraceptive use.

WORK WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

TRAINING HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

A total of 1,660 health providers from national health units were educated on providing gender-sensitive and youth-friendly SRH services and on engaging men in maternal, newborn and child health. Over the three years of the project, 511 health professionals were trained (in-person) on issues related to fatherhood and care in the cities of Rio de Janeiro, Recife and Porto Alegre. In 2015, Promundo launched an online training course in partnership with the Brazilian government – reaching another 400 health professionals in its first few months. More than 120 health facilities benefited from these trainings, and the professionals themselves acted as multipliers, promoting the involvement of men in prenatal care and in the health of children, mothers and men themselves.

Interviews and focus group discussions with the trained health providers indicate that the workshops have had a strong impact on health providers' perceptions of the importance of engaging men in maternal, newborn and child health services and in the health system in general. In particular, there was a transformation in the perception of the male professionals, with greater understanding of the need to include more men in the health system, especially through prenatal consultations. Trained health providers report that the training has opened their eyes to the importance of involving men in prenatal care and in addressing men's own health.

"It's as though, when we left the training, we had taken off a blindfold and began to see the men who were there. Perhaps they were always there, but we only now perceive their presence."

Trained health provider

COUNSELLING MEN ON INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Promundo partners with Instituto Noos, an organization that works with men to address intimate partner and gender violence within the family, as part of the MenCare+ programme. Since 1998, Noos has been implementing a methodology of gender-reflective groups, to provide spaces for men to reflect on the values involved in the construction of male identity and the expression of these values in men's behavior. Through the partnership, the two organizations have worked to incorporate Promundo's experience working with men on fatherhood and caregiving, to strengthen the gender-reflective group curriculum. The methodology of these meetings involves the active participation of men, who, together with the facilitators, define the rules of group coexistence and the topics to address in each meeting. The men seek involvement with Instituto Noos either voluntarily or by court referral, under the Maria da Penha Law on Domestic and Family Violence, to participate in 13 two-hour meetings.

The MenCare+ programme is a 3-year, 4-country collaboration between Rutgers and Promundo-US, created to engage men aged 15–35 as caregiving partners in maternal and child health and sexual and reproductive health rights. The programme is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and is implemented in Brazil, Indonesia, Rwanda and South Africa (2013-2015).

MenCare+ Brazil is led by Promundo, in partnership with Instituto Noos and Instituto Papi. The MenCare+ programme included implementation of activities in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, as well as advocacy and training conducted at the national level.

In 2015, a partnership was signed with the Court of the State of Rio de Janeiro, which has enabled referral of a greater number of men to the reflective groups. An evaluation of the adapted curriculum found that male participants reported positive changes in their behavior and a greater ability to respond to conflict as a result of the intervention. In addition, Noos is training psychology and social services professionals, justice representatives linked to the courts of domestic and family violence, researchers and members of NGOs.

WORK WITH GOVERNMENT

In Brazil, strengthening engagement with key government institutions, such as the Ministries of Health and Education, is a central focus of the MenCare+ programme. These collaborations enable Promundo and its partners to implement group education and campaign activities in schools and health facilities, and create opportunities to advocate for policy changes to create a more enabling environment for gender equality and men's caregiving. Promundo also works with government agencies at the municipal, state, and national level, to promote the institutionalization of MenCare+ programme activities, by embedding them within the health and education system.

Advocacy, partnership and capacity-building efforts with government representatives and key stakeholders focused on promoting: changes to the paternity leave laws; men's presence at prenatal care and delivery; young peoples' access to and use of contraceptives; gender-reflective groups for men who have used violence; and strengthening of the MenEngage network. MenCare+ advocacy made sure to link to and strengthen existing civil society and other campaigns, including advocacy around the law of accompaniment, respectful maternity care, and debates around early childhood development. At the highest level, Promundo's advocacy contributed to the passing of policies extending leave for fathers from 5 to 20 days, and banning corporal punishment.

At an institutional level, substantial progress was made, particularly with regard to norms and practices related men's participation in maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH). Data on men's presence in prenatal care is being collected in partnership with the Ministry of Health, opportunities were created to officially register men as part of women's prenatal visits, and important committees and partnerships were created or strengthened, including the Comitê Vida, and the Fatherhood and Care group in the National Network for Early Childhood, which was instrumental in passing the leave legislation. In addition, the training of thousands of health and service providers, and the development of an online training course certified/hosted by the Ministry of Health will contribute to the scale up of these approaches going forward.