



**IMAGINE: Inspiring Married Adolescent Girls
to Imagine New and Empowered Futures**

Engaging Men and Couples

Project Basics

- **The Opportunity:** Despite the fact that 90% of adolescent pregnancies in the developing world occur among married girls, sexual and reproductive health and other development initiatives often fail to reach this key population
- **The Challenge:** To design and test interventions that hold promise facilitating the healthy timing of first birth and the pursuit of alternative futures among married adolescents in Niger and Bangladesh
- **Location:**
 - Zinder, Niger
 - Rangpur, Bangladesh
- **Male Engagement Approaches:**
 - In Niger -- Fada groups (male social groups)
 - In Bangladesh – couples' counseling
- **Donor and Collaborators:**
 - Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
 - In Niger: OASIS, CADEL, FRAZI



Formative Research Findings

- Husband's support and approval is critical to achieving a healthy timing of first birth and engaging in income generating activities
- His support
 - Facilitates access to health services (financial and physical)
 - Protects against sanctions / reproach from family and community
 - Reduces harm to the girl's reputation
 - Lends credibility to the decision
 - Frees up the time girls' need to engage in training / income generating activities
- Husbands / Men do see the potential benefit of delay but...

"If [she delays] the girl will be badly perceived...My parents can ask me to divorce her because she has not done what I want and she is not a good wife. But if they know that it was I who gave her permission [to delay] they can not do anything."

– husband of adolescent with children

For me, why is she going to take a product that will make her sick, which can make her sterile? Any product that will deprive you of pregnancy for three years will surely prevent her from being pregnant her whole life."

– husband of adolescent w/ children

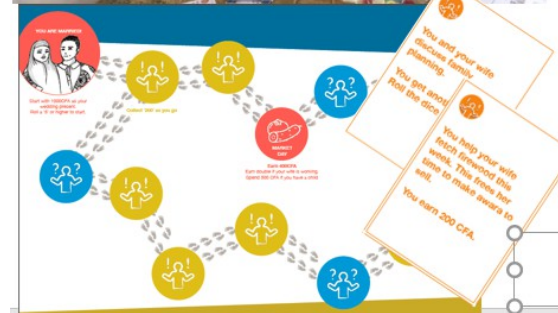
No there are not these kinds of people here [who encourage delaying birth]. Everyone wants to have their children. We see the importance [of delaying] but very little really. I know where you want to trap me. You see the house is expanding and there is no subsistence, so there is a problem. That's what you want me to say. That's why I say you're gonna get me."

– influential male

- have misconceptions about the safety and impact of contraceptive use

Niger: Fada Groups

- 50 Existing male social groups
- The goal
 - Engage men as allies
 - Transition to collective action
- What we learned in prototype?
 - Must be interactive to keep busy men engaged
 - Must build skills men want (ex: budgeting and savings)
 - Practical > theoretical
 - Fathers are often champions for delay
- Final design
 - 15 session curriculum
 - Delivered by male facilitators



Bangladesh: Couples Counseling

- 344 recently married couples receiving household visits
- The goal
 - Facilitate joint vision setting
 - Couples become a united front
- What we learned in prototype?
 - Couples are motivated to get to know each other and build stronger relationship
 - Men prefer discussing these topics privately instead of with peers
 - Men are comfortable with CHWs, even if female
 - Individual sessions allow better accommodation of their schedules
 - Strategic inclusion of mothers-in-law



Results and Learnings

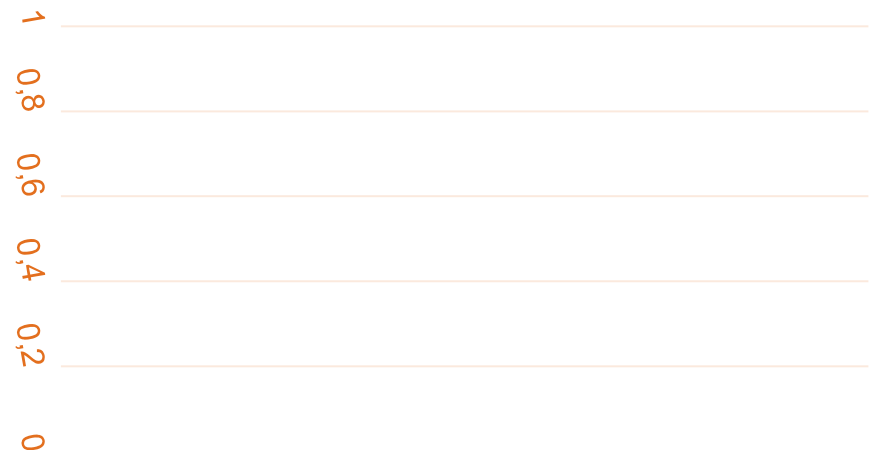
- It's possible to sustain male attendance and engagement over time if you:

- Design components that respond to their interests, schedules, and learning preferences
- Test what will work best in your context before implementing
- Include a 'hook' even if only tangentially related to objectives
- Anchor in existing structures
 - Social group in Niger
 - FLHWs in Bangladesh
- Carefully manage expectations about primary focus of the program from the start

Average Fada Group Participation per Session



% counseling visits where husband participated



Thank You

