



No One Really Knows Me:

Young Men, the Manosphere and
the Future of Democracy and
Gender Equality.

***Equimundo Center for Masculinities
and Social Justice***



YOUNG MEN TODAY

- Men are going backwards
- Women and gender non-conforming people are pushing forward
- Weaponization of young men
- Backlash/Backsliding, Pushback... a concerted effort
- Unsure in the face of #MeToo
- Economic Precarity
- Why are we drifting apart?



MALE ECONOMIC PRECARITY AND BACKLASH

Across ethnic groups, men in US who perceive themselves as economically precarious are more likely to oppose feminism (*State of American Men, 2023*)

 u/Kasperr252 · 1 yr. ago

Hey other dudes. How are you dealing with the existential dread of not being able to afford things like our fathers and grandfathers were able to. And the uncertainty of the future because of it?

Too Real Fucking Question

↑ 10K ↓

💬 3.5K

🔗 Share

MENTAL HEALTH

With high rates of depression and suicidal thoughts, many men feel alone, that "nobody knows them well." They lack connection & validation and don't know where to find it.

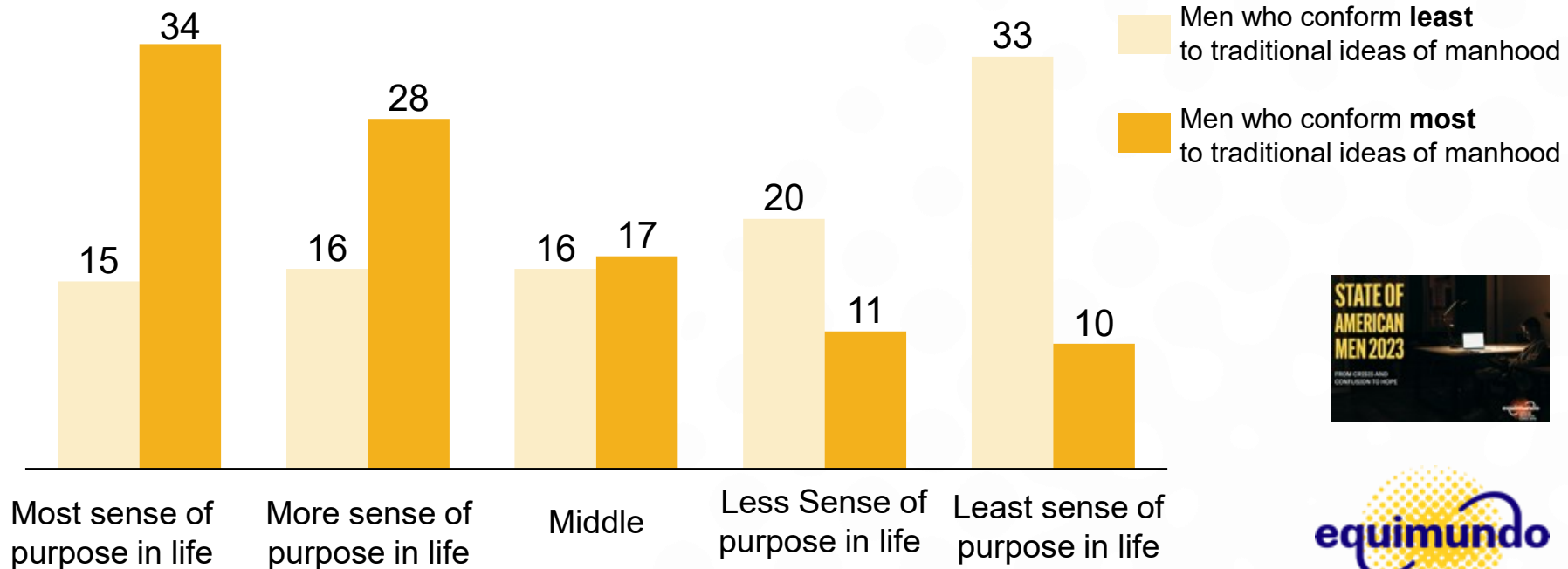
MANOSPHERE & ONLINE LIVES

Via harmful voices online, many men find connection & validation as a victim, embracing "aggrieved entitlement." Alternate, more supportive and prosocial communities are few and far between for many.

PURPOSE: ALLYSHIP OR RESTRICTIVE MASCULINITY

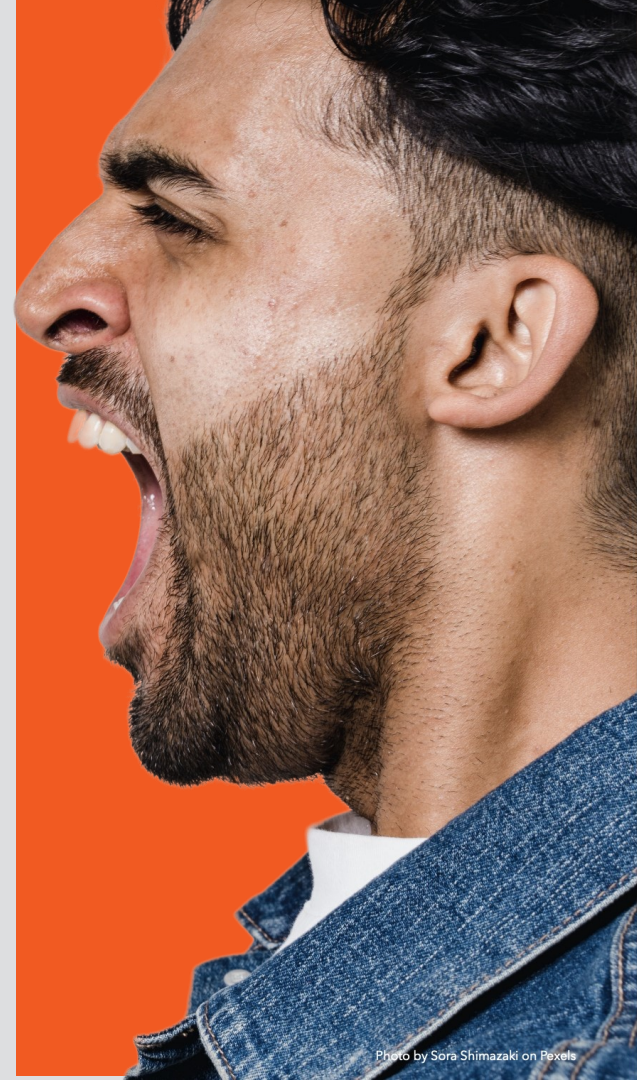
Men with restrictive gender views feel emboldened and find purpose in resisting women's rights, feminism, and progressive politics, but fall into deeper social isolation and the cycle continues. Men who embrace allyship can break the cycle but the loudest voices don't lead them there.

TRADITIONAL MANHOOD provides young men with a sense of purpose in moments of confusion



45%

**Trust a manosphere influencer more than
their political leaders**





2/3

“No one really knows me well”

30%

Haven't talked to anyone
outside of their household
in the last 2 weeks





+40%

Thought about suicide in the last 2 weeks



Photo by Eren Li on Pexels

Most of these men
place more value
on their online
lives than on their
“offline” ones



Photo by Eren Li on Pexels

<//:so how
are those
online
lives?>

UNDERSTANDING YOUNG MEN'S ONLINE LIVES:

In person male spaces are miniscule compared to men's online gathering spaces

2 billion

monthly active users



52M
monthly active users



100M
monthly active users



75M
monthly active users



140M
monthly active users



30M
monthly active users

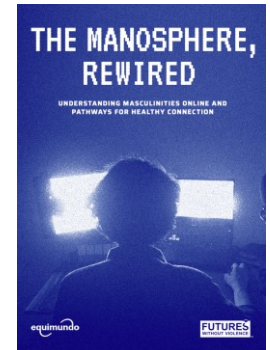


2M
Boy Scouts across different orgs

500k-2M
per Gym Chain

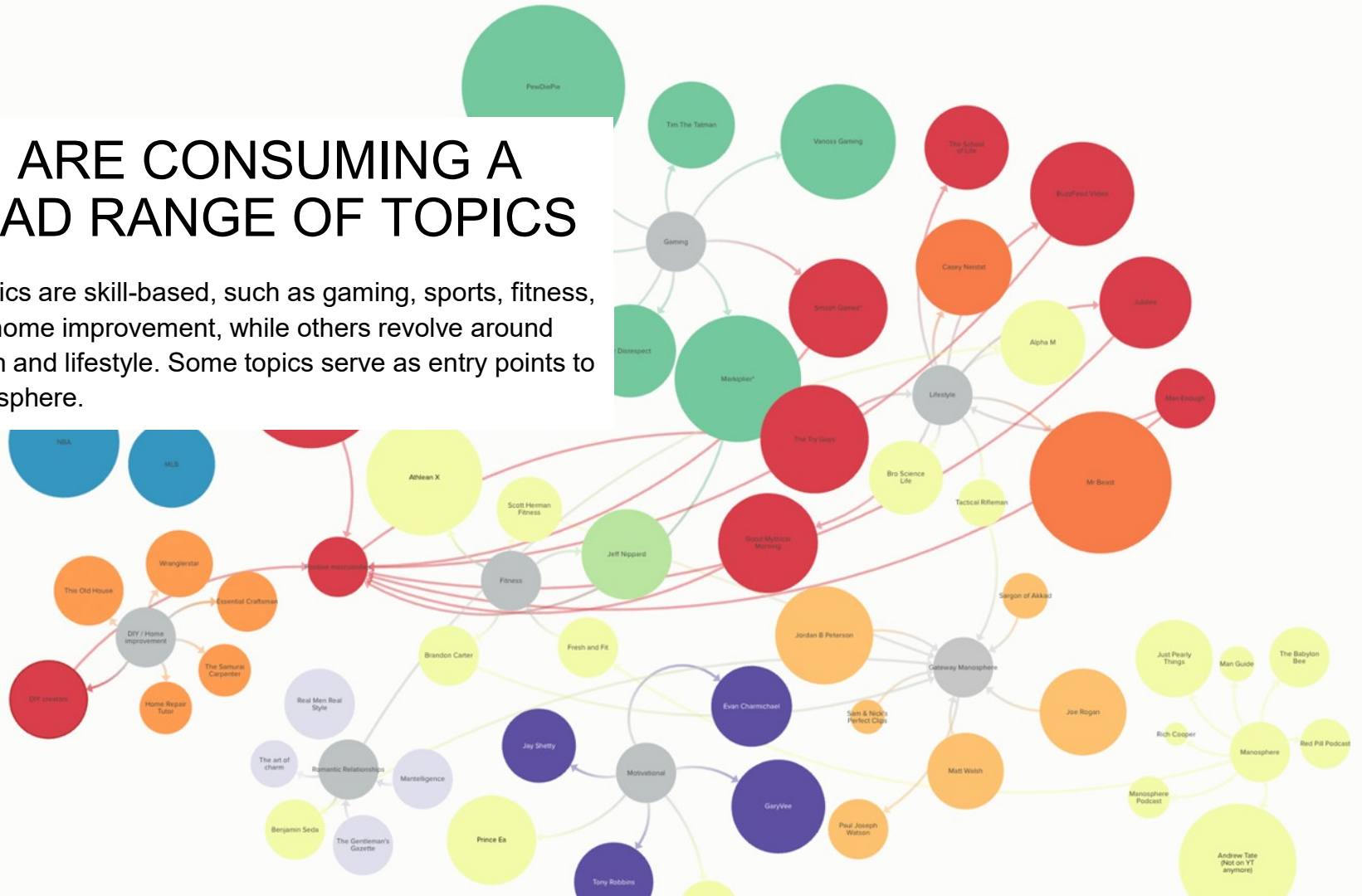
750k
in US College Fraternities

35k
in F3 Nation workout groups



MEN ARE CONSUMING A BROAD RANGE OF TOPICS

Some topics are skill-based, such as gaming, sports, fitness, and DIY/home improvement, while others revolve around motivation and lifestyle. Some topics serve as entry points to the Manosphere.



What are they doing online?

- ❤️ 🩹 Romantic relationships
- 💪 Looksmaxxing
- 🤪 Success and skills building
- ☐ Mental health
- 😡 #@! Venting
- 👤 🍼 Fatherhood
- 🍆 Sexuality (Sizes, nofap)

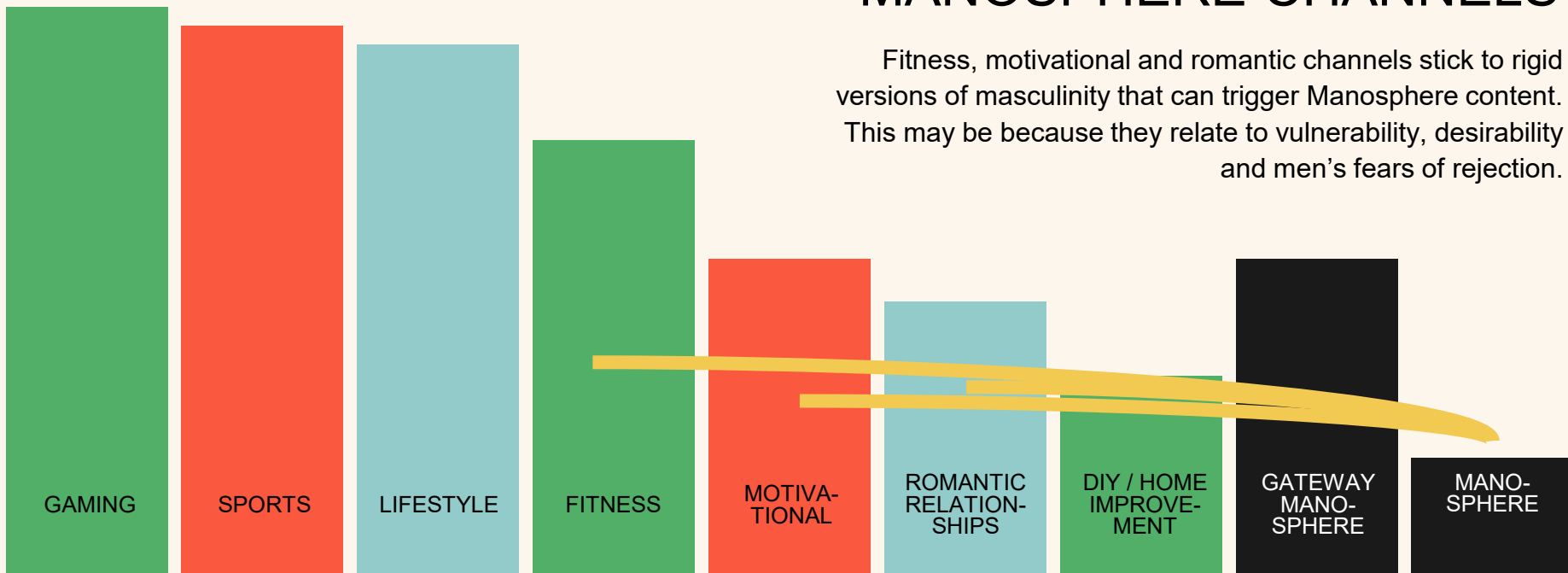
INSIGHTS: FINDINGS

ENGAGEMENT-DRIVEN CONTENT BLENDS HEALTHY AND HARMFUL



...AND SOME ACT AS ENTRY POINTS TO GATEWAY MANOSPHERE AND MANOSPHERE CHANNELS

Fitness, motivational and romantic channels stick to rigid versions of masculinity that can trigger Manosphere content. This may be because they relate to vulnerability, desirability and men's fears of rejection.



**Based on Youtube analysis*

<//:how do I find
love?>

<//:it sucks that you
are lonely>

<//:women suck!>

<//:you shouldn't have
to beg, you are
entitled to it, you
deserve it>

<//:you are right, I should
go out there and do
something about it>



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What are they doing online?

❤️ Incels

💪 Mewing, jaw breaking

💰 Scams

☐ Short term advice

🗨️ Hate speech

🍆 Unhealthy advice

THE PLAYBOOK

Build Community Around the Victim Narrative

Construct compelling narrative framing social changes as threats.

Create platforms for followers to gather, reinforcing the narrative.



STEP 1

Find the "Boys in Crisis" Audience

Identify receptive demographics: Disaffected young men facing societal challenges.

Craft targeted outreach materials to lead them towards extreme content.



STEP 2

Deeper Interaction and Indoctrination

Host interactive experiences to deepen engagement.

Moderate platforms to reinforce ideology and remove dissenting voices.



STEP 3

Political and Social Influence

Leverage platform to shape public opinion and mobilize followers.

Align with like-minded politicians for mutual influence and legitimacy.

Influencers transition from content creators to significant players in the political and social arena, impacting broader landscapes while profiting greatly.



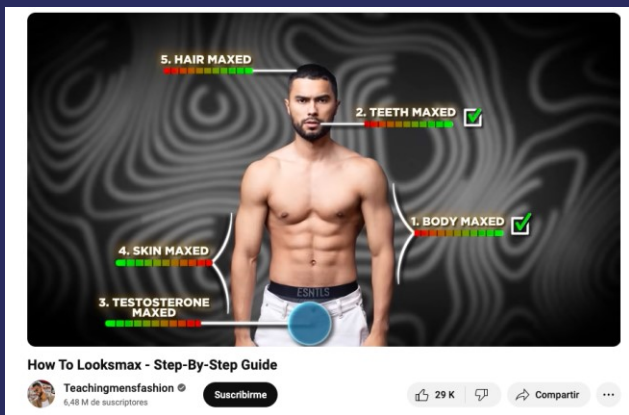
STEP 5

STEP 4

Monetization and Expansion

Introduce subscription models, sell branded merchandise, solicit donations.

Organize paid events and seminars, secure book deals and speaking engagements.



YOUNG MEN TODAY

- So....
- men are lonely
- Striving for connections
- Feeling economic precarity
- Listening to those who “seem to care”
- Unsure of their stake in gender equality
- And scare

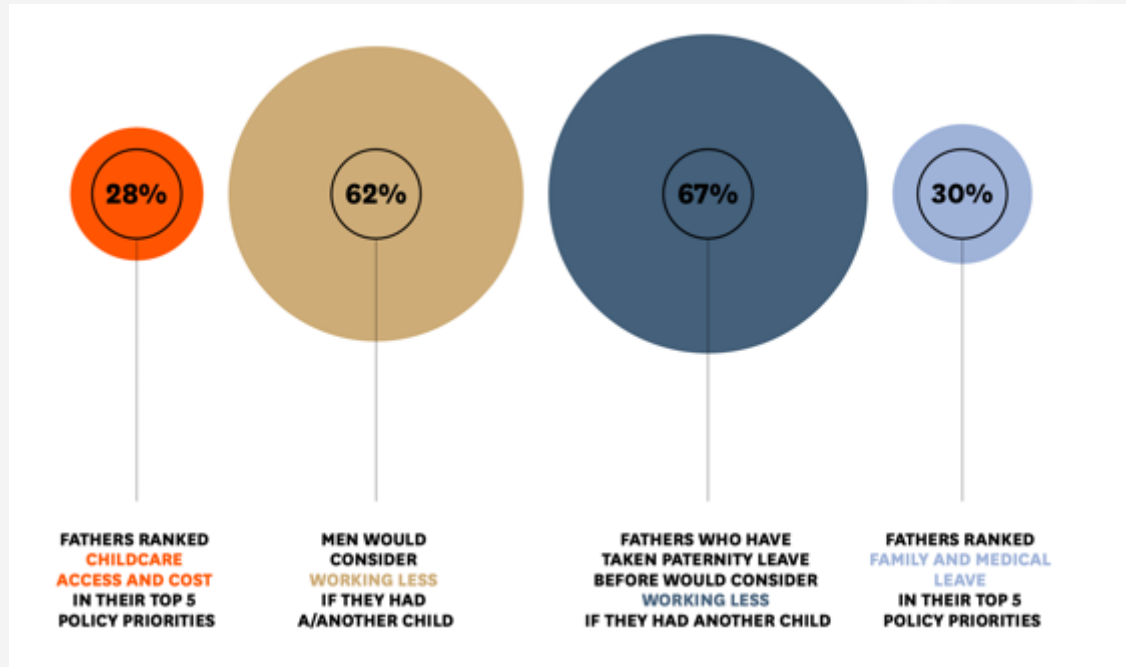


**THEN WHAT
DO WE DO
ABOUT
THIS?**



TAP INTO THE POSITIVE

Men want to care ... and they rank care policies as highly as women do. Care offers purpose



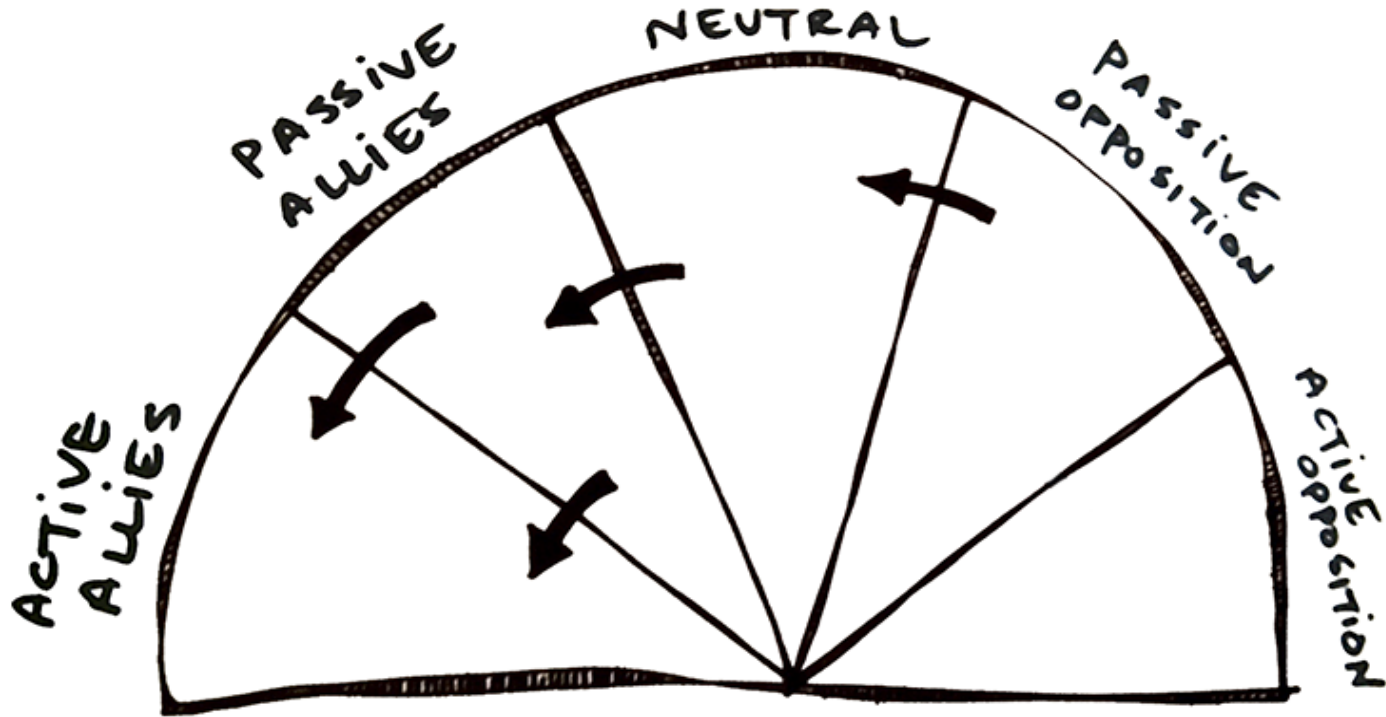
ALLYSHIP? MEN'S STAKE IN GENDER EQUALITY? BOTH!

- Some issues require some men to give up power and privilege -- e.g. political participation, seats on exec boards
- Equity goals that require men to give up some privileges should have clear indicators, time-frames and be transparent (how long, how many, how to measure)
- Other issues are win-win: e.g. caregiving, mental health, gender equitable education
- Men are ready to join gender equality when we make clear their self-interest and stake in the outcomes

Bringing in win-win topics together with equity goals is both necessary, and increases the chance men will want to be allies for equity and see ourselves in the picture

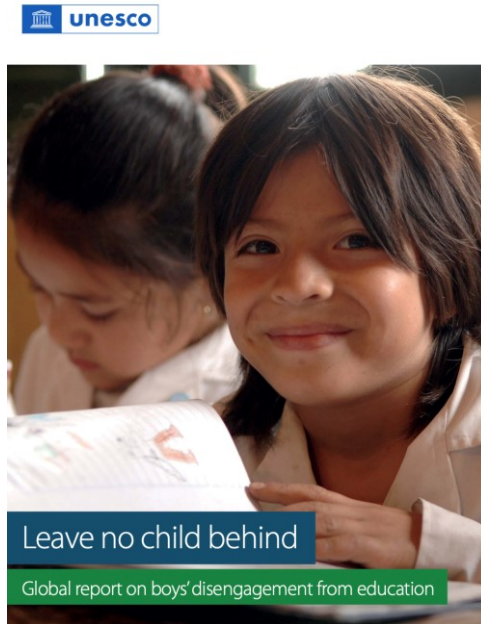


NOT EVERYONE STARTS FROM THE SAME PLACE

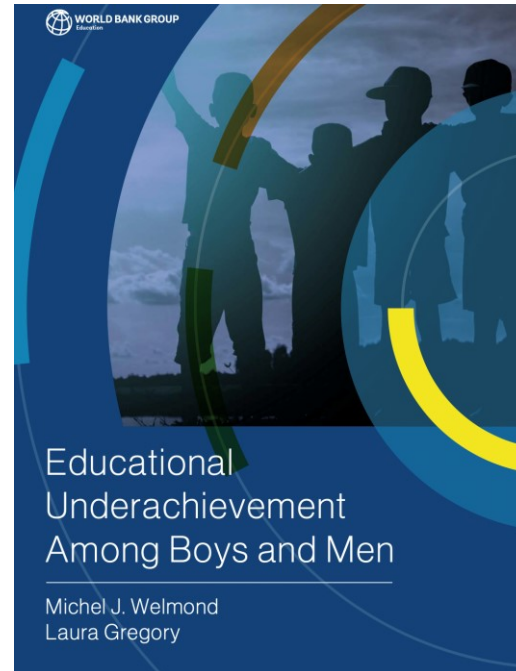


MIND THE NEW EDUCATION GAP

In about 100 countries, boys are falling behind girls in school for multiple reasons – AND we're not sure what it means or what to do

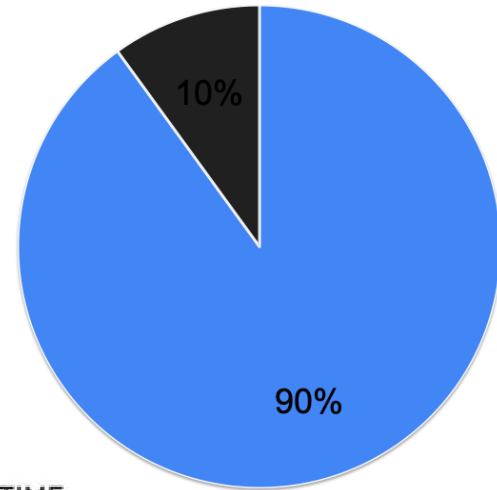
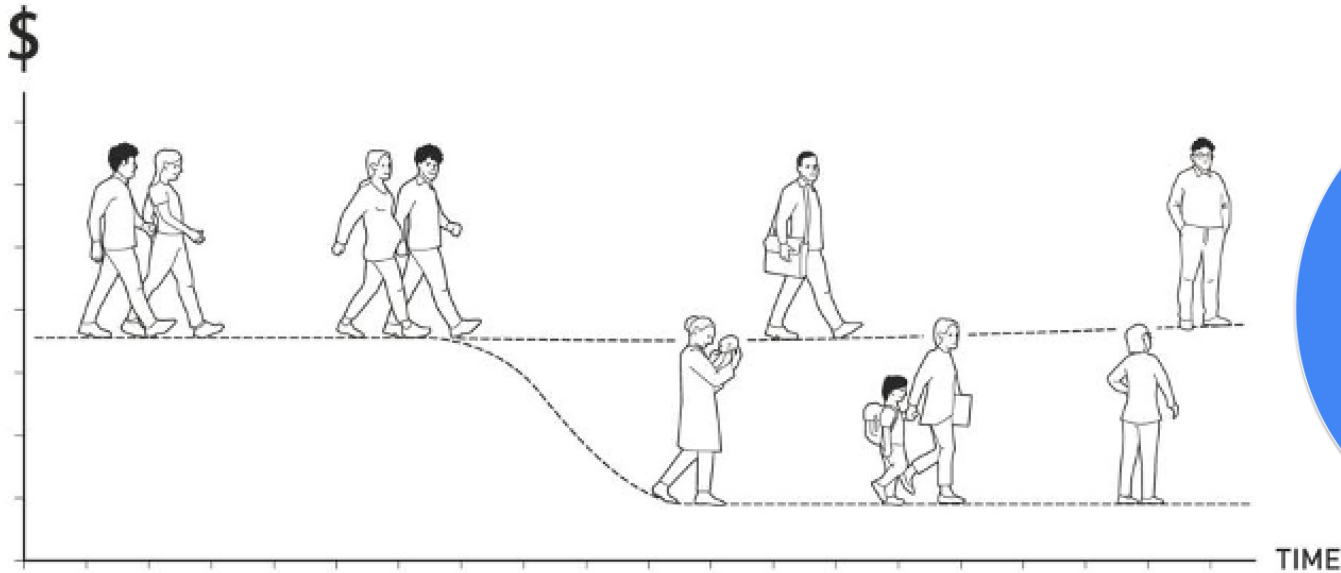


Education
2030



equimundo
CENTER FOR
MASCULINITIES
& SOCIAL JUSTICE

FROM THE PIE TO THE BUFFET



©Johan Jarnestad/The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences



NEW SOLUTIONS

- There are win-win spaces: employee's wellbeing, care policies
- Some other spaces might be more pie like (Boards of Directors)
- Those policies that require relinquishing privileges should have clear indicator regarding time, progress measurement, etc.
- Win-Win actions makes it so that employees are more likely to react positively to some of these changes

