



## **Brief Description of Men's Resources International (MRI)**

The idea that men and boys could be change agents and partners with women for gender-based violence prevention, healthy families, peace-building and community development has been spreading throughout the world. Increasingly, women's organizations and programs serving women and girls are recognizing the need to engage men and boys as allies. More and more men, often inspired by women's activism, were learning about the privileges and damages of the masculinity they inherited, and exploring ways to take action to promote a new kind of "positive masculinity" that was healthy, compassionate and responsible.

Out of this growing interest in engaging, educating and organizing men, the vision for Men's Resources International (MRI) took shape—a global network of women and men working together for unity and peace in our families and communities. Incorporated in 2004 by a diverse group of men and women with many years of experience working in several men's resource centers and other community development initiatives throughout the United States, MRI's mission is to use training, consulting and organizing to mobilize networks of men, in alliance with women, to prevent violence and promote positive masculinity.

"Several of us had worked for many years at the Men's Resource Center of Western Massachusetts, but we didn't know if the strategies and skills that worked in communities in the U.S. would be effective in other cultural contexts," reflected Steven Botkin, one of MRI's founders. "MRI's popular education approach, the value we placed in indigenous wisdom and leadership, and our faith in the power of compassion and connection has, over the years, generated enthusiastic responses in communities around the world." James Arana, another MRI founder added, "By bringing men and women together to reflect on the consequences of dominant masculinity on our families and communities, we facilitate mutual understanding, building partnerships and promoting individual and collective action."

By working with initiatives in all stages of development, Men's Resources International has been helping individuals and organizations around the world develop strategies and skills for engaging men as allies with women to prevent violence and promote healthy, compassionate and responsible masculinity. MRI trainings of trainers, organizational and program development consultations and leadership mentoring have supported men and women from more than 40 countries to organize their own community initiatives, create national organizations, and become

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**Men's Resources International | Educating, consulting and organizing for positive masculinity.**

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trainers and leaders in their own communities. Formative MRI trainings have been conducted for grass-roots NGOs in Rwanda (Rwanda Men's Resource Centre), Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo Men's Network), Nigeria (Ebonyi Men's Resource Centre), Zambia (Zambia Men's Network), and the United States (Men of Color Health Awareness, Men's Resource Centers). Through partnerships with international NGOs like Concern Worldwide, CARE International, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the International Rescue Committee, the Women's Peacemakers Program and the United Nations, other MRI trainings have been conducted in the United States, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Zambia, the Philippines, Nepal, Niger, Ireland, Albania and the Netherlands.

MRI programs use participatory, experiential education to promote community-based leadership of women and men as partners. "We see our work as wide-ranging, said MRI founder and board chair, David Thompson, "from ending gender-based violence to promoting sexual and reproductive health; from training peace-builders and supporting women's empowerment to improving men's health, engaging men as role models, and ending and preventing extreme poverty."