

# ROLE MODEL MEN & BOYS

OF UGANDA



CARE INTERNATIONAL IN UGANDA, 2019

BOOK COMPILED AND DESIGNED BY:  
BRANDI A. MURLEY/CARE

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# INTRODUCTION

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The Role Model Men and Boys (RMMB) approach mobilizes men and boys to go through personal reflections to explore constructions of masculinity in their contexts and how it affects their well-being and relationships. They reflect upon unequal power relations, gender roles, and rigid social norms that impact on the behavior of women, girls, men and boys. Selected men and boys are taken through a series of training modules, mentorship, coaching and dialogue sessions. During training, the men and boys enter into personal reflections to question stereotypical forms of masculinity and are prompted to develop positive forms of masculinity through a personal 'journey of transformation'.

The approach uses 3 main principles- Men as Clients, Men as Supportive Partners, and Men as Agents of Change. Once the trained Role Models have changed or start exhibiting positive personal behaviors, each is supported to reach out to other men and boys so as to inspire large scale behaviour change. Upon demonstrating behaviour change and adoption, participating men and boys often become Role Models themselves, creating a "snowball" effect that we hope will ultimately be a movement of male champions.

CARE international in Uganda has trained over 2,100 Role Model Men and Boys across the refugee settlements of West Nile region and Lamwo in Acholi sub region, Northern and Southwestern Uganda. To date, the Role Models have mentored and supported over 11,000 fellow men and boys.

Ronald Ogal  
Male Engagement Specialist  
CARE International in Uganda



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# APPROACHES

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## Men as clients

This considers men's needs and vulnerabilities and encourages them to use different services they need and would typically stay away from, including sexual and reproductive health services, counselling, and psychological support, mentoring, coaching for younger men and boys and other specialised services.

## Men as supportive household partners

This considers men as allies and resources in improving their own, as well as women's wellbeing, as a result of their engagement in variety of areas, including maternal health, family planning, neonatal care, food and nutrition, security, child care, etc.

## Men as agents of change

This is the most critical and difficult approach because it expects men to display more power sharing and caring attitudes outside the confined spaces of their own homes so they can influence other men and boys. This approach is also accompanied by an unsupportive environment with many uncertainties about the future.

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# THEMES IN THIS BOOK

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## **"CHANGING HOME, CHANGING COMMUNITY"**

This approach engages men and boys on three different levels: individual and personal level; household and intimate relations; and peer and community relations.

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## **"FATHERHOOD"**

The Role Model Men approach asks men to reflect on their roles and responsibilities as a father and what their children learn about masculinity and gender roles through observation.

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## **"HELPING REFUGEES"**

Role Model Men and Boys are chosen from both refugee and host communities and brought together as a whole. The men and boys learn from each other and organically become friends and allies.

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## **"SUPPORTIVE PARTNERS"**

Role Model Men and Boys are taken through various trainings to reflect on traditional masculinity and gender roles. After this, they reflect on ways they can be supportive to their partner's and family's wellbeing, in addition to their own wellbeing.

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## **"IMPROVING ACCESS AND UPTAKE OF SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE AND MATERNAL HEALTH SERVICES"**

The approach reviews the benefits of men accompanying their wives to pre and post-natal appointments, family planning, and other health services.

# CHANGING HOME, CHANGING COMMUNITY



TaraAgaba/CARE

"I am a transformed man; I want to be exemplary in my community-starting with my smile. I teach my son every day to support the women and girls in our lives because our family's success depends on it."

Francis Oweka is a Role Model Man living with his family in Omoro District Northern Uganda. He is committed to not only to be a Role Model, but a good husband, father and community member.



“I use to drink and chew Khat. I would fight with many people and I never helped my wife around the house.” During the training, Bosco said he realised the activities he was engaging in wasn’t good for his family or himself, so he decided to change. “I wanted us to start being a loving family, a family other families wanted to be like. I stopped drinking and chewing, I no longer fight and I help my wife around the house in many ways.”

Photo: Bosco, Refugee Role Model Man, and his wife outside their home in Omugo Extension, Rhino Camp.



RonaldOgal/CARE

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# FATHERHOOD

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## Richard's Story

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Richard and his wife started their journey to refuge in October 2017 around 6:00pm on a Sunday, due to the ongoing civil war and targeted killings in South Sudan. "Soldiers were killing people in our village without discrimination." Richard and his wife travelled about 1-mile into the bush to avoid the soldiers from the main road. One of the few items Richard travelled with was his bicycle, however it got spoiled and he had to abandon it. His wife, being very pregnant, was only able to carry some flour for cooking. At night, they reached a water point and decided to make some food. Richard says the water tasted bitter but they were so thirsty and hungry they had no choice but to use it. At around 2:00am they reached the foot of Nyangliba Mountain in South Sudan and decided to rest there for the night.

After a couple days of walking they reached the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) border. They entered a church for safety and rest but before they could sleep, DRC soldiers came to take them to a military barrack for safety. In the morning, the little luggage they had was searched to ensure they were not carrying anything dangerous. After the search, they were told to wait for transport to take them to the Ugandan border. However, when the soldiers left, rebels came and started firing bullets. They left the barrack at around 3:00pm and a vehicle transported them to a collection center in DRC. There they rested and were given food for 2-days.

"The journey was a nightmare for my wife", Richard says. He was able to carry a little money with him and was planning on hiring a boda-boda (motorcycle) to take them to the Ugandan border because he was afraid she would go into labor. He tried talking to boda-boda drivers but none were willing to help due to his wife's condition. Finally he convinced one to take them. For the next 24-hours they were stopped many times by different people, claiming they must pay to cross the road. "We were so desperate, we just went along and paid them."

Right before they reached the Ugandan border his wife went into labor. A Good Samaritan offered transportation for them to reach a hospital near the Ugandan border. The new parents did not have money to prepare for the arrival of their new baby, at the hospital they did not have a tarpaulin, water or gloves to be used in the delivery of their baby.

"Seeing how my wife was suffering and our current state, I started crying. I ran away and met some men moving to no specific place." Richard tells how this experience challenged his masculinity as he could not protect his wife and felt powerless. With a sad look, he shares how he contemplated committing suicide many times, though most particularly at that moment." At some point though, I said 'No, let me go back and suffer with my wife'. Shortly after that, my wife gave birth to our daughter. Regardless of their previous challenges, the new family persevered. I started crying again because we had nothing to wrap her in, but she was only smiling and happy. Her smile caused me to name her 'Devine' because I believe she will have a bright future." Richard and his new family were finally settled in Omugo Zone of Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in January 2018.

Richard says a turning point in his life was when CARE International in Uganda called for a community meeting. "They told us the community was to select two men to be trained as a Role Model Men in Gender Based Violence [GBV] prevention. Luck was on my side and I was chosen to attend the training!"

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## Richard's Story Continued...

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“It is not easy for Role Model Men at first”, says Richard when asked why Role Model Men remain determined and what the benefits of being a role model man are. “People at first don’t understand our new behavior, when we share responsibilities with our wives, sisters and mothers they say we are anomalies in the community. They tell things like ‘You are less than...!’, ‘You are not a man!’, ‘You are bewitched by your wife!’”

“During the training by CARE, I was empowered to start thinking about my attitude, how I feel about myself, and my role in the family. I stopped drinking and smoking and I use any extra money I have for my family. But, the power of love has grown in my home. My wife and I love and respect each other more than ever”, Richard said with a smile.

Richard also explains how he has become ‘brothers’ and friends with Ugandans. “The RMM&B training has strengthened our ties and trust with our host families from Uganda and other refugees here in Uganda. We all met during our Engaging Men and Boys training.” Richard’s new extended family is this group of men and their families. They support each other. When one of them has a funeral, they gather around him and lift him up. “I take 4 cups of beans from my food rations so we can cook food for the family of our host community friend that has had a loss and other mourners.” Richard shares. “We also celebrate together too. Some of our Ugandan brothers share their land with us to grow food. Being Role Model Men has brought us together. It does not matter if we are Ugandan, South Sudanese, from this tribe or that tribe.

We learnt that we are all men who need to support our families, wives, daughters, work together and resolve conflicts and problems peacefully.”

“We are breaking out of this box, the male box.” Richard is referring to the male box that is created and sustained by negative patriarchal culture. Richard was introduced to this male box in the Engaging Men and Boys (EMB) training sessions. Richard explains how he learnt that men are “prisoners” of that box. Society expects them to behave in certain, often violent, ways but, Richard shares that many men and boys do not want to behave like that but pressure forces them to. “One needs to be bold to step out of the box, and with support of such projects and CARE, we can resist the pressure.”

In addition to being a Role Model Man, Richard and his wife have saved enough money to start a small business selling various items. The profits are saved and used to support the family.

Story Compiled and Written By: Tara Agaba, CARE Uganda Country Office, and  
Geoffrey Odongo, Male Engagement Officer, West Nile Uganda Office

# HELPING REFUGEES



TaraAgaba/CARE

**"My brothers and best friends are Ugandans. Role Model Men training has strengthened our ties and trust with our Ugandan hosts. When one of us has a funeral, we gather and lift him up. We share what little we have to support each other."**

Richard (second, right) Role Model Man  
South Sudanese Refugee, Omugo Extension Rhino Camp  
with CARE staff and fellow Role Model Men and Boys

"My wife and I decided to offer six acres of land to six refugee households for personal use to farm and supplement their diets. I also encourage my fellow host community members to support the refugees with farmland to grow food and reduce child malnutrition.

Through this, I am happy to say eight other families have offered farmland to refugees at no cost. This has helped in our relationships with the refugees and our interacting has increased, became positive, and starting new relationships."

Moses, Host Community  
of Rhino Camp, Role  
Model Man

# SUPPORTIVE PARTNERS



RonaldOgal/CARE

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## "I THOUGHT MY SON NEVER KNEW"

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"When I first reached Uganda, life was difficult and I resorted to over drinking alcohol and taking drugs like mairungi and opium as a way of coping with life at the refugee settlement. This instead made me to become violent and aggressive to my family and friends. I would come home late, after 12:30am, very drunk and never cared whether the family had eaten or not. I would beat my wife whenever she tried to plead with me to come home early. Several times I came home when I had urinated and defecated on myself. Whenever my wife asked me about it, I would just beat her. My wife tried several times to advise me to change but instead I would beat her and chase her to either sleep outside or at the neighbors.

Whenever my wife asked me to give her money to buy a piece of soap, I would tell her that there is no money while she would wonder where I got money to buy alcohol. At one point she regretted why she even came with me to Uganda, "I wish I knew that you were going to behave like this I would have remained in South Sudan. If you had started this when we were still in South Sudan, I would have gone back to our home rather than come here to suffer."

One day my mum sat me down and tried to advise me about my excessive drinking alcohol but I replied to her with slaps; "How can you tell me to leave alcohol, my best friend, mum, brother and my other friends that I drink together with?" This forced my mother to relocate to Bidibidi Refugee Settlement in Yumbe District because she could not tolerate me anymore. My brother also got annoyed and left home. He went to Imvepi Refugee Settlement. Besides beating my wife and my mum, I also engaged in fights with other people in the trading center, coupled with stealing food rations whenever my wife was away.

One day I was requested to go for a community meeting organized by CARE in our village and I went. During the meeting, we were told that they came to select people to be trained as Role Model Men. I didn't like the idea at all but the community identified me to be among the people to be trained. I attended the training, which took place in November 2017 and it was about engaging men. I was really uncomfortable during the training and I was completely lost and kept asking myself many questions. I asked myself, 'This person training us does not stay in my village, he is not my relative and not even my friend, how come he talks as if he knows everything about me?' 'This is the first time I am meeting this trainer but how come he talks as if he knows me?' I later said to myself that if this is what God wants, so be it.

After the training, I came home and laid down, lost in thoughts. I asked myself, 'When I go to church they preach against my deeds. My family and relatives are always talking about me and all the bad things I am doing. Again this person from CARE who conducted the Role Model Men training was also talking like he has been in my life and family.' I kept reflecting on the training and after a while, I started coming home early when sober.

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## "I THOUGHT MY SON NEVER KNEW" CONT...

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One day I got the shock of my life when I was playing with my son who is in nursery middle class. He asked me 'Daddy what happened to you? How come these days you come home early and you no longer beat or quarrel with mum? How come these days you don't urinate and defecate on yourself? Daddy what happened?' I had no answer to him at that moment but inside I kept asking myself for how long had my son quietly watched me but never said anything. I felt so embarrassed because I thought my son never knew what I was doing because I would usually find him sleeping when I came home. From there on I decided to stop what I was doing. I started sharing work with my wife at home, started providing for my family by driving a boda-boda (motorcycle taxi), started spending time with children at home (something that I was not doing at all) and started taking my child to school.

At first my wife could not believe these changes and kept telling me that she is giving me one month to see if am not pretending. But to her surprise, I got even closer to her and continued doing many things that I never did before. One day she asked me, "Peter what happened to you and why have you changed like this?" I responded to her that this is a result of the training I attended and support I am receiving. I realized that the whole world was against me, in church, at home and with some friends apart from the ones we drink with, they never liked what I was doing. "I am really thankful to CARE for bringing these big changes to my family. My eyes are now seeing what I was not seeing and my ears are now hearing what my husband never said before." She added, "I wish CARE could continue with such trainings because I know someone somewhere is suffering in her own home like I was and I know CARE can turn that suffering and torture to total happiness. I cannot stop thanking CARE."

When my mum heard about the good news, she came to visit us and could not believe the life I am living. She accepted to come back and stay with us and I have built a house for her. Even my brother who left home because I was mistreating him has come back.

I am talking to other men and male youth in my area but it is not easy. Some men don't want to hear what we tell them. This is because in South Sudan you marry a woman to cook and work for you. However I am seeing my friends who I was drinking with start to change and I am always talking to them. The boda-boda stage is different now as people no longer fight and excessively drink alcohol; If my friend was here right now, he would have testified to you about this.

I want to thank CARE for bringing Role Model Men training to us. I want to thank members of my community for selecting me to be trained as a Role Model Man. I am so proud that my family is considered by many to be a model family in Ariwa [Rhino Camp]."

Story Compiled and Written By: Ronald Ogal,  
Male Engagement Specialist

I WILL BE BOLD AND  
CHAMPION WOMEN'S  
EDUCATION.

# BeBoldForChange

"The Role Model Man training really opened my mind because it had been locked given my religious and cultural background. I have also realized that most of the misunderstandings in the households are caused by men because they don't want to discuss any development with their wives. After the first week of this training, I realised the importance of engaging in household chores and helping my wife. Just yesterday I washed the dishes at home because my wife was exhausted. I have now made it a routine to help in domestic work, I even peel bananas. I never considered how much work women are doing and how little they are benefiting. I am sharing my training with fellow men at the mosque and I am hopeful they will also see the benefits of this. I never "

Abdu, Farmer and Role Model Man, Kyegewa, Uganda  
She Feeds the World Project

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# IMPROVING ACCESS AND UPTAKE OF SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE AND MATERNAL HEALTH SERVICES

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"I grew up in an IDP (Internally Displaced Person) camp in Northern Uganda. Due to the confinement, limited movement and little opportunities to engage in economic activities, I resorted to drinking alcohol with other young men. I started my family when I was very young. I used to think sending children to school was a waste of resources and never saw it as a benefit. I didn't want to hear anything about family planning. Whenever my wife would talk about it I would be very cruel to her and tell her I never wanted to hear about family planning again if she wants to stay my wife.

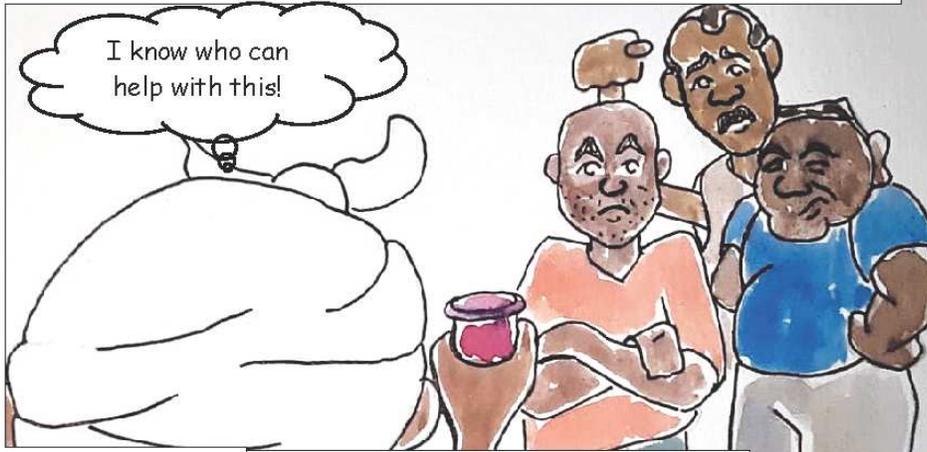
When I got married I believed everything and everyone belonged to me. My wife belonged to me and she should do everything for me. I had all the power. After harvesting crops I would sell them without telling her and spend all the money on alcohol and other women I was dating outside my marriage.

With support from a Role Model Man in my community, I decided to stop drinking. This was the hardest thing! It took me time to start reducing the amount of alcohol. It was not easy to tell my friends either, and many times I found myself returning to them. But, with the efforts of a Role Model Man, Oloya Ben, I slowly left the group and the other women I was dating. I also started going to the health centre with my wife to receive family planning. We agreed together when to have our next child and right now all my children are in school and up to date on their immunisation schedules. My wife has become happier and has time to engage in community activities with other women. Right now I am able to pay school fees for my children, provide them with food, clothing, and health care."

Mark Ojok  
Supported by RMM  
Gulu District

# MALISH THE MAGNIFICENT

**VIOLA THE VALIANT** is a hero. She is bringing the **RUBY CUP** to her community through bravery, role model behavior, and communication. But one of the most important things that makes **VIOLA** a hero is that she knows how to work as a team!



Somewhere close by....

**MALISH** and other members of the **COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTION GROUP (CSAG)** are on patrol, keeping watch over risky areas in their communities.



2 years earlier....

**MALISH THE MAGNIFICENT** left South Sudan after war broke out in his hometown. He traveled, with his **WIFE** and **BABIES**, through the Democratic Republic of Congo to seek refuge in Uganda. The journey was long and arduous. They battled intense heat with little food or water. In 2017, the family finally arrived in Imvepi, still bearing the scars of the journey.



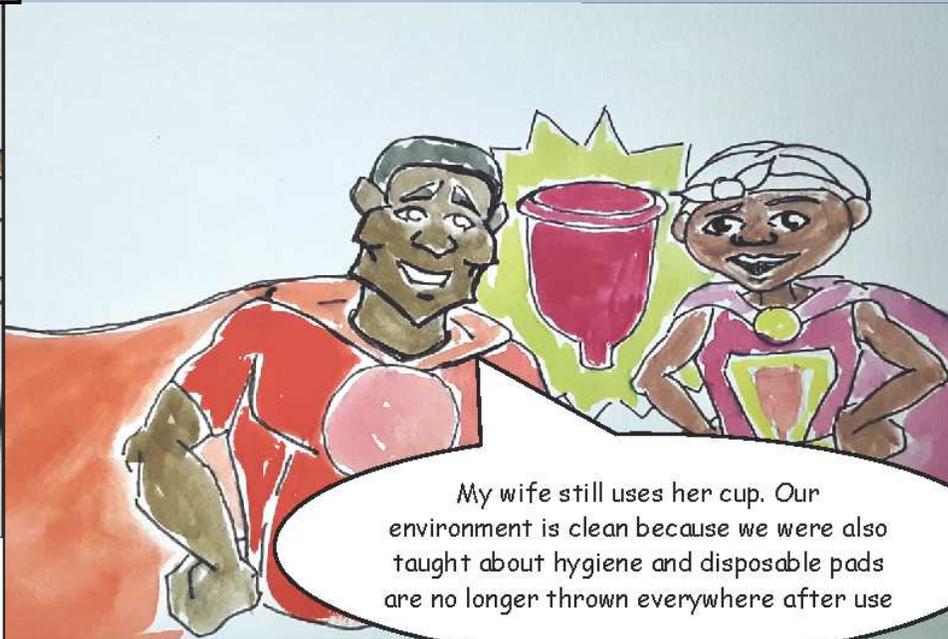
My friends, women and girls have a period every month, it is natural, but other methods of menstrual hygiene are not adequate for us here. The Ruby Cup is a great innovation! As men, we must support what is best for the women, because it is best for us as well.



## Back in the present...



**MALISH** supports the women and girls who received the **CUP** by talking with community members, especially other men, boys and elders, who were skeptical about it. His role defies gender norms, but he never backs down from a challenge. Through this and his work with the **CSAG**, **MALISH** demonstrates his commitment to justice, no matter the personal cost.



My wife still uses her cup. Our environment is clean because we were also taught about hygiene and disposable pads are no longer thrown everywhere after use

Life can be demoralizing, and terrifying, but underneath it all there is hope. There are real life superheroes who remember that the world still needs them.

Malish says he is now viewed as a leader in his community and his family is respected. He also received a job from another organization as a girls' trainer in schools. *"I didn't know anything about GBV or women and girl's issues. After my training from CARE I can talk about these topics and become an advocate for women and reproductive health."*

\*The Ruby Cup is a healthier, more sustainable, cost-effective and eco friendly alternative to pads and tampons. Made from 100% medical grade silicone, the Ruby Cup can last up to ten years, saving vulnerable women and girls expenses related to menstrual health management.

Cartoon Designed and Created By TaraAgaba/CARE

CARE works with poor communities in developing countries to end extreme poverty and injustice.

In Uganda, we focus on women and girls and addressing the root causes of Gender Based Violence through access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services, including GBV services, economic empowerment and leadership of women and girls as well as policy advocacy. As evidenced by this compendium of stories, we also work within and boys to change them into allies of gender equality but also "as clients" to support them to address their own needs.

We work across the continuum of aid and deliver both long term development as well as humanitarian interventions. We have 70 years' experience in successfully fighting poverty and gender inequality, and have changed the lives of over 65 million people around the world.

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