

# The Road to the Modern Man Challenge: Human-Centered Design and Programmatic Testing

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# The Growth Process

## Finding the Modern Man Challenge

- In 2016, the Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Initiative along with Airbel began to identify and test “new” strategies to reduce IPV in low-income contexts.
- This project took place in Monrovia, Liberia.
- A human-centered design combined with an evidence-based approach was adopted.



# Modern Man Challenge

- The **Modern Man Challenge** was one of the project emerging from the “ideation phase”. It was chose to explore:
  - Low-cost methods at IPV prevention
  - Engaging men
- **Goal:** Using interactive, “gamified” SMS, the MMC uses nudges and information in an effort to improve men’s behavior in relationships.
- Message content included:
  - being a “helpful” partner
  - sexual consent and discussing sexual pleasure and expectations
  - emotional regulation
  - joint-financial planning
- Expectations of MMC were mixed



# 0<sup>th</sup> Programmatic Test

Is this idea worth exploring?

- In early 2017, relationship-strengthening message modules were developed by Behavioral Insights Team.
- Feedback sessions with 16 men ages 18-45.
- Enough positive feedback to explore this SMS intervention



# Refining and Testing the Modern Man Challenge

Spring 2017

## **Rapid Fire Testing – Phase 1**

MMC partners are identified and technical platform is build. Test for engagement of men and ask for feedback.

N=47

# Rapid Fire – First Programmatic Test

Is this intervention feasible for uptake and engagement?

- June 2017, 47 men recruited from in Old Road, Monrovia.
- 3 weeks of content
- Everything had to be scalable.
  - Scoping recruitment opportunities
  - Simple scripts and registration process
  - Prepping mass-messaging system (Telerivet and Twilio)
- Post-test focus group discussions with 22 participants.
  - Men liked the MMC – some were upset or had self-reproaching reactions to the emotional regulation messages
  - “Complex” messages were ignored
  - MMC viewed as a training or teaching program



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N=47

Fall 2017

**Rapid Fire Testing – Phase 2**  
MMC is refined using respondent input, program is expanded. Test for improved engagement and respondent self-reported changes/reactions.

N=116

# Rapid Fire – Second Programmatic Test

Is there potential impact?

- September 2017, recruited 116 men in Chicken Soup Factory and Duport Road, Monrovia.
- 5 weeks of content.
  - Compared “intrinsic encouragement”, to points, to points + phone credit.
- Unique response rates were 41%.
- Qualitative interviews were conducted with 27 respondents and 3 focus group discussions were held with 23 participants.
  - Audio interaction was too complicated, should be dropped
  - More content AND more simplification
  - Points by themselves elicit just as much response as points + phone credit
  - Men self-reporting positive change



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MMC is refined using respondent input, program is expanded. Test for improved engagement and respondent self-reported changes/reactions.

N=116

2018-2019

## Impact Evaluation

MMC is further refined and rolled out as an RCT in 16 communities. Test for IPV rates and other relationship quality indicators.

N=1,400



We are here

# Before & After: MMC Messages

## Example of "Partner Financial Inclusion" nudge

Talking to your partner about important family decisions can make her feel more involved and make it easier for you. What do you want to talk to her about next time?

Time for money talk. Mr. Businessman works with his partner to take care of money business.

Many men want to be Mr. Businessman. How do you make smart decisions - even with small money - to grow the home? Mr. Businessman says both you and your woman make plan to put your money in what you and her care about.

Talk with your woman about what you and her want to save for. Have a plan that you both want. Mr. Businessman often plans with his woman to save for just-in-case or emergencies, to build a house, to buy goods for business, to pay school fees, and to visit your family and your woman's family.

To complete this step, TEXT us what you and your woman want to save for.



# Key (programmatic) findings

So far...

- SMS interventions struggle with engagement – 3% to 40% interactions are often discussed.
- **Our intent-to-treat is 50% engagement.**
- **54% of men who received a complete Challenge, completed at least 1 Challenge.**
- Trends we “capitalized” on:
  - Value of an “educative” program
  - Becoming a better/stronger man through self-control
  - Points for challenges
  - Using common language
- Other findings are forthcoming... but programmatically we see continued improvement.



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## Scale and Diversity

If the MMC correlates with reduce IPV and/or other relationship quality indicators, the next step will be to scale the intervention and test it in other settings.

N=>10,000



We are here

# Policy Relevance

What do think is relevant so far for others?

- It is feasible to engage men about their relationships, including sensitive and critical subjects about their behavior in their relationships.
- SMS interventions can be managed in low-literacy and low-income contexts, but they must be heavily tailored to the target respondents.
- Human-centered design is time consuming, but can leapfrog uptake issues that plague many interventions.



# More digestible information?

Our Blog Posts in Tandem with Airbel Team

*'Modern Men' — Harnessing the Telecommunication Boom to Reduce Intimate Partner Violence*

<https://medium.com/airbel/harnessing-the-telecommunication-boom-to-reduce-partner-violence-bb5343c50964>

*Part 1: The road to testing innovations in behavior change and gender norms*

<https://medium.com/airbel/the-road-to-testing-innovations-in-behavior-change-and-gender-norms-7e5f1cf9b19f>

*Part 2: The road to testing innovations in behavior change and gender norms*

<https://medium.com/airbel/part-2-the-road-to-testing-innovations-in-behavior-change-and-gender-norms-ea7462f2489d>



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