

MEN, FAITH AND MASCULINITIES: RWANDA

*A baseline assessment on the social attitudes, relations,
and practices of men in relation to gender, and sexual and
gender-based violence in Rwanda*

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Executive Summary

We live in times, where the violence against women and girls cannot be tolerated or ignored any longer – their outcries for justice and for a better life are deafening. The statistics are staggering. It is estimated that one in every three women or girls will experience some form of violence in their lifetime.¹ Tearfund and its partners are desperate to end sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and girls, and the leaders of the world are finally paying attention. This is a wake-up call for the world, and more importantly for churches, to not only respond decisively, but work towards lasting change.

The role of men and boys in the issue of women’s rights and gender equality has become a crucial study in the last few years. Men and boys are increasingly engaged in interventions with the focus of ending SGBV. This has also led to the development of programmes that look at men’s own experiences of violence, trauma and abuse and, within the broader study of masculinities, the link to their perpetration of violence. This topic is generally referred to within the development sector as “engaging men and boys.”

The baseline study for Rwanda on men’s gender attitudes, relations and practices was commissioned by Tearfund’s SV and HIV Unit, as part of its ongoing pilot project addressing SGBV in the Great Lakes region of Africa. The primary objective of this study was to understand the existing attitudes, knowledge and practices of both men and women in relation to masculinities. And this will serve as a baseline for engaging men in interventions.

The baseline consisted of both a qualitative and quantitative approach. A total of 391 people were interviewed through 10 group surveys and 15 focus-group discussions (FGDs) in selected parishes of the Anglican Diocese of Kigali, Rwanda. This included 189 males and 202 females who affiliated themselves to the Christian faith.

Gendered roles and identities

The findings of the survey and the outcomes of the discussions highlighted an existing inequality in gendered roles and identities. This was mostly influenced by cultural norms and practices, and reinforced by people’s skewed interpretations of scripture. The participants highlighted that this was limiting and restrictive for both men and women and caused frustrations at home and in the community, and affected their relationships with one another and their children. What was worrying to find was that many people had incorrect and skewed interpretations of the scriptures.

¹ *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence* (2013) WHO

Participants frequently misquoted the Bible in order to support their understanding of women as inferior to men. They believed she was created to be a helper for man and therefore her role was led and controlled by men.

This was challenging in a context where many men and women have had to take on alternative roles to make ends meet. They articulated that they find it difficult to fulfil the role that is expected of them, due to challenges with income generation, disability or the death of a spouse because of the violent history of Rwanda.

Holding on to strict gendered identities, which are motivated by inequality, isn't in the best interests of either men or women and is harmful to everyone's well-being.

Decision-making and leadership

The research findings on gender attitudes reflected a fairly low tolerance towards violence, unless it related to the honour of the family. Men and women held the view that household chores, childcare and domestic duties were women's responsibilities. The findings on gender relations found that many people interviewed believed that if a woman doesn't fight back then she is consenting to sex. People were also of the opinion that sometimes women asked to be raped by the way they behave and dress. The findings on gendered practices revealed that decision-making concerning women's health, children's education, financial investments and household expenses were made solely by men, and yet men were rarely involved in household chores or taking care of the children.

All men and women agreed that women should obey their husbands. However, only 50 per cent of men and 13 per cent of women were of the opinion that men should have the final say in all family matters. Yet male respondents said that most of the decisions related to women's health, children's education and activities, food and clothing, and financial management and investments were being made by men. Women disagreed with this with regards to the health- and child-related decisions, but through the discussions it was evident that men had the final say in all matters in reality – with little or no discussion involved.

The decision-making and controlling behaviour of men seemed to stem from a misinterpreted biblical concept of headship, and scriptures referring to men as the head of the household. What was challenging to find was the motivation or the expressed reasoning behind this view. Men perceived women to be inferior, and most women didn't think they were created equal. Men also felt that they had to make the decisions, because they were created for leadership. This also influenced how they described the attributes of headship – control, dominance and violence.

It was intriguing to see that during discussions and surveying, an attempt was made by some participants to convey that relationships were equitable in decision-making. But when probed further, this did not seem to be the case in reality.

Sexual relations and reproductive health

Even though only one per cent of men and seven per cent of women agreed with the survey statement that a woman could refuse sex to her husband, it was found in the discussions this was only during special circumstances, such as illness or menstruation. Men quoted 1 Corinthians 7:4: 'a woman's body is not hers, but belongs to her husband.' They used this as justification for why a woman cannot refuse sex. Surprisingly, some of the men were genuinely unaware of the rest of the scripture verse, which also states that, 'the husband's body does not belong only to him. It also belongs to his wife.'

Women expressed fear about refusing sex for two main reasons: being forced and the fear of men finding other partners and seeking sex outside marriage. Through the discussions and survey, women expressed that they had an inability or lack of power and position to negotiate not only when to have sex, but also whether to have children. This increases the risk of partner transmission of HIV and sexually-transmitted diseases. Seventy per cent of women agreed that it was their responsibility to avoid pregnancy and that there was a lack of discussion around family planning and reproductive health.

SGBV

Ninety-eight per cent of men and 93 per cent of women agreed that it is manly to defend the honour of the family, even with violence. This statement, and their response, was defended from a cultural and religious standpoint even when questioned if it was in line with the turn the other cheek teaching of Christ. Men felt they needed to protect their families by any means, and the use of violence was sometimes necessary. Women said that it is manly to defend the family, and that if a man cannot do this, then he is not a real man.

Both men and women unanimously disagreed with the survey statement that there were times when a woman deserved to be beaten. However, men said that there were times when they needed to discipline their wives if they disobeyed them, or in order to control their movements and correct them when they did something wrong. Some women even agreed with this during the discussions. In Rwanda, due to its past, there is a reluctance to talk about the use of violence within the home. It is a taboo subject and difficult for people to have the confidence to speak out. Some respondents even tried to express positive responses about the issue. This is something to consider and keep in mind when designing programmes to prevent SGBV. Most of the men and women interviewed agreed that they have heard of a recent incident of rape in their community, but that this was nothing unusual.

The question of marital rape was raised by the women. Fourteen per cent of men felt that if a woman doesn't physically fight back, it's not rape, but consent. Even though on paper the responses were extremely positive, during the discussions men and women expressed varied opinions around marital rape and most men felt that a woman cannot be raped by her husband because he is entitled to her body, and she was obliged to 'give sex' to him through marriage – also because of the teachings of scripture. The women mentioned that they were sometimes forced to have sex, especially when they refused or declined because they were tired from working all day, or weren't in the mood for it. They also stated that men, "never prepare us for sex, they just demand sex, and never thank us after it." This highlights that men felt entitled to sex and can do this without consent.

Globally it is well known that the most common form of rape or violence is intimate partner violence (IPV). Marital rape and intimate partner violence are not always recognized as a crime in many countries, and difficult to prove. There is stigma associated with the victim if a woman goes to the police and makes a complaint against a husband. She will be perceived to have dishonoured him. In some countries the law focuses on family well-being and policies and practice are focused on maintaining the status quo, rather than pursuing justice for the individual. This is also a further challenge for women and children. That means, despite the violence, there is always pushback on the woman to tolerate violence for the sake of family well-being. This also stigmatizes divorce, separation and also women seeking legal action against her husband, as it affects the well-being of the family. This is the same for children, as child abuse is kept secret to avoid family ties being broken or families dishonored. This also enforces many to try to resolve domestic issues privately and not seek justice through legal means.

When discussing incidents of rape, reporting or seeking help, participants voiced the challenges around stigma and victimization, the taboo of talking about personal experiences, and the need to keep the status quo within the community and family. These reasons are why a SGBV survivor may never seek justice or the help they need. In the case of marital rape or rape by a relative, women and girls suffer in silence, to maintain the honour of the family or to avoid a backlash against them. This allows more perpetrators to continue their shameful acts, as they take advantage of this culture of impunity.

In the changing socio-economic and political environment in Rwanda, men's identities and roles have been challenged, especially the role of provider for the family. Ninety-nine per cent of men and 93 per cent of women agreed that, to be a man means providing for your family and extended family. This seems to be a cause or the reason for many men feeling the need to establish their manhood and reinstate their position through violence. Sadly some feel that this was the way that God created them, as the provider and head. In order to effectively address the issue of SGBV, it is imperative we have discourse on gendered identities and roles with the basis of gender equality.

Recommendations and conclusion

Here are the recommendations for possible strategies and interventions in effectively engaging men and boys in the prevention of SGBV and promoting gender equality.

Break the silence: the church and its leadership should break the silence surrounding SGBV and stigma. The church should take the lead in denouncing violence, and this must be an integral part of preaching the gospel. This will be crucial in opening the space for discussion on SGBV not only at the grassroots, but also on a national level.

Awareness and education: theologically-based education and training for men and women on creation (equality), relationships, headship (based on Christ as the model) and gender roles. Information relating to laws and policies around SGBV also has to be promoted in order to end impunity.

Leadership: the church must continue to be committed to addressing SGBV within its congregations and communities. Their leadership is crucial to breaking the stigma on victimization and opening up safe spaces for dialogue on gendered roles. Working in partnership with other agencies and groups is also important. Leadership should promote positive role models and good practices and principles to contribute to the larger movement in Rwanda working to end SGBV.

Safe spaces: for men and boys, and survivors, to share and heal from their own traumatic experiences, and share vulnerabilities to facilitate the process and space for transformative masculinities. There should be a non-judgemental space for men to talk about the challenges of being a man in their personal lives and where they live. Teaching a biblical understanding of shared roles, responsibilities and leadership is important in order to promote more equitable relationships, and a society free of violence.

Partnerships: the church can reach not only the most vulnerable, but also the most inaccessible areas. It has a strong voice and influence in all strata of society within Rwanda. This can be a valuable asset for other key agencies and groups also looking to end SGBV.

The survey findings and the outcome of the discussions re-emphasize the need to engage men and boys if our programmes are to be effective in ending SGBV. However, the work also needs to address the highly inequitable attitudes that some women expressed in relation to masculinities and manhood. The need for churches to engage men and boys and the deconstruction of male identities from a scriptural perspective is evident in the findings.

Violence against women is not just an issue that affects women and girls, but it is a threat to the social, economic and political development of Rwanda. Addressing some of the root causes and broader gender dynamics discussed here will not only help to prevent SGBV, but also break the cycle of violence in Rwanda.

The church is a catalyst and force for good in most societies. It has the potential to reach masses and the mandate to promote a holistic gospel, which encourages people to reach their full potential. It is well placed to address this issue in both rural and urban, and rich and poor, communities. The church must step up its work to end SGBV, and more importantly engage men and boys to holistically respond to the issue. In partnerships with other civil society and government organisations and groups, the church can work towards ending SGBV in Rwanda in our lifetime.

Definitions of key terms and acronyms

BASELINE: A minimum survey that can be used for comparisons

CDC: Center for Disease Control

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

FBO: Faith-based organisation

FGD: Focus-group discussion

GBV: Gender-based violence

ICPD: International Conference on Population Development

ICRW: The International Center for Research on Women

IMAGES: International Men and Gender Equality Survey

IPV: Intimate partner violence

SGBV: Sexual and gender-based violence

SRH: Sexual and reproductive health

SV: Sexual violence

TEASING: Eve-teasing (making sexual remarks and advances towards someone)

VAW: Violence against women

CHAPTER ONE

Why masculinities and men?

Introduction

We live in a world where 1 billion or one in every three women will face violence of some form in their lifetime (United Nations).² It is a staggering statistic, but more than that a heart-breaking one. It is imperative that the church addresses this issue. Encouragingly the efforts of churches worldwide and FBOs are becoming increasingly visible and crucial in the response to end VAW.

The work around gender, gender equity and equality, and SGBV has evolved since its early days. There is now an emphasis on the empowerment of woman and girls as opposed to just creating awareness of SGBV. There is a stronger, coordinated advocacy effort on laws, policies and accountability on themes around gender equality, and ending domestic and SGBV.

In the recent years, the trend in programming around the issue of VAW has also been influenced by studies around masculinities and men. Masculinity is a social and political construct that upholds patriarchal values, norms and systems, which contributes to behaviours that lead to the perpetration of VAWG and creates the space within the society to do so with high levels of impunity. These discussions have demanded that organisations must also work with men and boys, not only to address their behaviour, social attitudes and practices, but also their own experiences of violence, trauma and victimization.

In the last couple of years the work on men and masculinities or even work themed 'engaging men' has grown to become an integrated and integral component in programming and policy around ending VAW. This then also means that the church has to adapt, integrate and transform its response to include a focus on men and boys, and understand the different masculinities within the church, its theology and leadership.

This report will comprise three main sections: 1) The baseline, 2) The analysis of some of the key findings and narratives, and 3) Recommendations and programming suggestions, with guidelines to working with men and boys.

² *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence* (2013) WHO

Men, faith and masculinities

This section of the report is focused on highlighting some of the key concepts around men and masculinities, both from a mainstream and theological perspective. It is important to understand the knowledge, thinking and debate around masculinities in order to look at the bigger picture and effectively scrutinize the reflected responses around men, faith and masculinities that come from this research. While acknowledging the overwhelming amount of studies around this theme in the mainstream development setting, it is not the case within the Christian theological context. But there are a few key arguments, which are relevant to not only the Christian context, but also to Africa. This is encouraging, but needs to be expanded further. It is important to this discourse in the Great Lakes region, as most of the countries are of the Christian faith, and interpretations and teachings of masculine values influence lifestyles. This can be challenging when these values are misinterpreted or taught to amalgamate to fit in with the existing values, which lead to harmful cultural practices.

The pilot project

Tearfund has been working in Africa for decades around different programming themes, from responding to emergencies to proactively engaging churches to respond to the HIV and AIDS epidemic. It has a very successful track record of HIV and AIDS programming and is a respected and valued stakeholder. Even though Tearfund has been addressing SV as a sub-theme in its HIV and AIDS programming globally, in recent years this has evolved into a standalone programmatic theme and is being scaled up in the Great Lakes region and sub-Saharan Africa.

Tearfund has been working with the Anglican Communion on a two-year pilot project to end SV in this region, specifically in South Africa, Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia and Tanzania.

Engaging men and boys is an intrinsic component of Tearfund's *Ending sexual violence together* framework and programming. This area of work is being piloted for six months as a collaborative intervention with Restored and Sonke (Gender Justice) in Burundi and Rwanda initially, and then rolled out across another three countries.

In order to be effective in addressing the behaviour, practices, and attitudes of men and women with regards to gender and SGBV in these countries, a baseline study was carried out in Rwanda and Burundi in August-September 2013, a further study was conducted in DRC in March 2014.

This baseline study and the broader study around men, faith and masculinities in Rwanda were conducted within selected communities of the Anglican diocese of Kigali. The results will inform programme design and also be used to effectively engage men and boys in the respective communities to end SGBV.

The study of men, faith and masculinities seeks to explore what it means for Christian men – what do their behaviours, social attitudes and practices look like in the selected communities within the Anglican diocese of Kigali.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to ascertain the social attitudes, practices and behaviours of men and women in relation to gender and SGBV in the Anglican diocese of Kigali, Rwanda. A total of 189 males and 202 females were interviewed either through a survey, or focus-group discussions. The survey was structured with statements related to gender and SGBV, and the focus-group discussions were around related programming areas.

Objective

Assess and understand the given contexts and existing knowledge around gender, SGBV and masculinities within countries, in order to integrate engaging men with intervention projects.

Design

The statements of the survey were adapted from the *International Men and Gender Equality Survey*³ study tool, specifically the *Gender Equitable Men Scale*⁴ and gender-relations scale. The questions were adapted to the context and appropriateness. In consultation with local partners, the statements guided the discussions and other themes as identified by the researcher.

Sampling

Survey participants and the discussion themes were selected and approved by the Anglican Church, Tearfund's partner implementing the work on gender in this region. The respondents were selected based on their engagement with the respective parish, and based on the prior training they have received from the church on gender.

The respondents were from the following five parishes of the Anglican diocese of Kigali: Rutongo, Bumbogo, Mwogo, Bihembe and Ntungwa. The total number of respondents for the survey was 88 males and 87 females. The discussions consisted of 101 males and 115 females.

³ International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) model, developed by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Instituto Promundo (www.icrw.org/node/765); the WHO multi-country study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women; and the South Africa study of Men, Masculinities, Violence and HIV, carried out by the Medical Research Council

⁴ The Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale was developed by Population Council and Promundo and by surveys on sexual violence and physical violence against women carried out by the Medical Research Council of South Africa

Distribution of respondents per according to location

Location	Males	Females
Rutongo	41	44
Bumbogo	40	31
Mwogo	42	58
Bihembe	31	36
Ntunga	35	33

Survey

The survey was conducted for males and females separately, and due to the limitation of time and resources was administered in a group. Responses were captured through a show of hands after each survey statement. There were 15 FDGs and 10 group surveys consisting of 27 statements, around gender relations, attitudes and practices, domestic violence, sexual violence, household duties and masculinities.

The list of statements is annexed in this report.

Structure of the tool

Survey

The survey was split into three sections, and there were multiple statements within the first two sections where participants could either agree or disagree. The third section on current practices consisted of statements where participants could choose the responses of either men or women. The following are the broad section themes.

Sections	Statement themes
Gender attitudes	Gender roles, domestic chores and domestic violence
Gender relations	Decision-making, partner relations, consent, attitudes around rape and victims and household duties
Current practices	Decision-making around health, assets and finances. Practices around domestic duties.

The discussions

As a separate exercise, four discussions were held after the group survey in each of the parishes, and were segmented as: youth (both young men and women) men, women, and leaders (parish and local administration). The discussions were guided by the survey statements, and also around participants' understanding of gender, GBV, and the role of the

church in addressing this. This was to gauge the commitment, will and interest of the members in addressing the issues.

Themes for the discussions were:

Theme of discussion	Discussed sub-themes
Gender	Gender roles, culture, faith, equality, GBV, root causes of GBV
Violence	Why violence, power, structures, the role of faith
Engaging men	Why/how men can contribute, challenges
Church	The role of the church, the challenges, what does the word of God say

Analysis

Data analysis of the survey results was done in two parts. The findings were analyzed on face value, in terms of what it represents of participants' attitudes, behaviours and practices. The responses also will provide a baseline for our work, which will be used to evaluate the impact of the work on engaging men in the respective areas. The findings will also be used for programme design, and for engaging the leadership of the Anglican Church in Rwanda, in order to integrate and mainstream the work with men and boys to end SGBV. Data from the survey and discussions will be used as a narrative to describe the current status of the attitudes and practices of men in relation to gender and SGBV.

Limitations

This exercise was carried out with great support from all parties involved; however given the subject matter and the timelines involved, it did have its limitations. The respondents were all from the parishes and therefore it is not representative of the wider community. The findings can only be used in relation to the respective parishes. Due to unavoidable circumstances, we weren't able to survey or interview non-Christians, this would have been great in order to compare the findings and assess the impact of the ongoing work. But it was logistically challenging to get participation.

The survey was administered in groups and some responses could have been influenced by the popular response of the group.

The timings were challenging. Each day there were four focus groups and four surveys, but some participants arrived earlier or later than their allotted time slot, so their responses could have been affected if they were tired. However, despite the limitations, the outcome was still positive to the intention of the assignment.

CHAPTER THREE

Defining key concepts

Gender

Gender is understood as socially and culturally constructed, encompassing behaviours, roles, responsibilities, rights and expectations that distinguish men from women. Classification forms around femininity (female roles) and masculinity (male roles) (Bhasin, 2000, pp.1-2).

Gender equality

Gender equality refers to equality in rights, opportunities and responsibilities for women, men, girls and boys. Equal rights refer to equality of rights under the law. Equality of opportunities refers to equality in access to work, land, education, health and other recourses that enable opportunities. Equal responsibilities refer to equality in tasks and contributions to the development of society.

Gender equity

It is the process of being fair to men and women. To ensure fairness, measures must often be put in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field. Equity is the means to achieving equality.⁵

Gender-based violence (GBV)

The United Nations (UN) defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women. This includes threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

IPV is a serious, preventable public health problem that affects millions of people. This term describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy.⁶

IPV can vary in frequency and severity. It occurs on a continuum, ranging from one hit that may or may not impact the victim to chronic, severe battering and even murder.

There are four main types of IPV (Saltzman et al. 2002):

⁵ Definition from UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework, April 2003

⁶ Definition by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- Physical violence is the intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, disability, injury or harm. Physical violence includes, but is not limited to, scratching, pushing, shoving, throwing, grabbing, biting, choking, shaking, slapping, punching, burning, use of a weapon, and use of restraints or one's body, size, or strength against another person.
- Sexual violence is divided into three categories: 1) use of physical force to compel a person to engage in a sexual act against his or her will, whether or not the act is completed; 2) attempted or completed sex act involving a person who is unable to understand the nature or condition of the act, to decline participation, or to communicate unwillingness to engage in the sexual act, eg, because of illness, disability, or the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or because of intimidation or pressure; and 3) abusive sexual contact.
- Threats of physical or sexual violence use words, gestures or weapons to communicate the intent to cause death, disability, injury or physical harm.
- Psychological/emotional violence involves trauma to the victim caused by acts, threats of acts or coercive tactics. Psychological/emotional abuse can include, but is not limited to: humiliating the victim, controlling what the victim can and cannot do, withholding information from the victim, deliberately doing something to make the victim feel diminished or embarrassed, isolating the victim from friends and family, and denying the victim access to money or other basic resources.
- It is considered psychological/emotional violence when there has been prior physical or sexual violence or prior threat of physical or sexual violence. Stalking is often included among the types of IPV. Stalking generally refers to, "harassing or threatening behaviour that an individual engages in repeatedly, such as following a person, appearing at a person's home or place of business, making harassing phone calls, leaving written messages or objects, or vandalizing a person's property." (Tjaden & Thoennes 1998).

Sexual violence (SV)

Sexual violence (SV) is any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone's will. SV encompasses a range of offences, including: a completed non-consensual sex act (eg, rape), an attempted non-consensual sex act, abusive sexual contact (eg, unwanted touching), and non-contact sexual abuse (eg, threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal sexual harassment).

Violence against women (VAW)

The UN defines VAW in the Vienna Declaration⁷ as;

Article one:

For the purposes of this declaration, the term violence against women means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women. This includes threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Article two:

Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

- (a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation
- (b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution
- (c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

⁷ The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was adopted without vote by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993

Masculinities

This term conveys that there are many socially-constructed definitions for being a man and that these can change over time and from place to place. The term relates to perceived notions and ideals about how men should or are expected to behave in a given setting. Masculinity and femininity are relational concepts, which only have meaning in relation to each other. The word masculinities (plural) is used as opposed to masculinity (singular) as different forms of masculinities exist – shaped by class, ethnicity, race, tribes and sexual orientation. And also because, within masculinities, there are hierarchies – some are dominant or hegemonic while others are subordinated, marginalized or complicit. Masculinities are normative practices, structured and shaped by gender relations. It's inherently historical and its making and remaking is a political process affecting the balance of interests in society and the direction of social change (Connell, 1995, p.44).

Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)

Sexual health and reproductive health overlaps. In addition to supporting normal physiological functions such as pregnancy and childbirth, works needs to be done to reduce the adverse outcomes of sexual activity and reproduction (ICPD, 1994). SRH programming within development work aims to enable people of all ages to have safe and satisfying sexual relationships by tackling obstacles such as: gender discrimination, inequalities in access to health services, restrictive laws, sexual coercion, exploitation and gender-based violence.⁸

⁸ As defined by the UN International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994

CHAPTER FOUR

Rwanda, Christianity and masculinities

Rwanda, known as the land of a thousand hills, is located in what's known as the Great Lakes Region in Africa. Sharing its borders with Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and the DRC, it is one of the rapidly developing countries⁹ in the East African community and in the whole of Africa. Since its independence in 1962, it has faced many cycles of violence, which has not only affected its people, but also destroyed the life of its society. The most recent was the genocide in 1994 that claimed millions of lives and left Rwanda utterly destroyed. But post-genocide Rwanda, with the help of the international community and progressive policies, has brought Rwanda beyond its past, to a place of stability and growth today.

In 2008, Rwanda passed a law on the prevention and punishment of GBV. In late 2010 the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion developed a national policy against GBV. This policy was published in 2011, which was also a catalyst for the national strategic plan (NSP) for fighting against GBV for the period 2011-2016.¹⁰ This document is comprehensive and has great analysis and guidance for implementing programmes related to GBV.

According to a demographic health survey in 2005, thirty-one per cent of all women reported to be victims of physical violence (NSP Rwanda 2011-2016, pp.4). A publication by the Rwandan Police for 2005 stated that an average of eight women and/or girls were raped every day in Rwanda, and 80 per cent were 18-years-old or under.¹¹

Rwanda and the church

According to the Rwandan government¹², as of November 2006 the breakdown of the religious affiliations of the people is as follows: 56.9 per cent Roman Catholic, 26 per cent Protestant, 11.1 per cent Seventh-Day Adventist, 4.6 per cent Muslim and 1.7 per cent claimed no religious affiliation.

In the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide, the Christian churches in Rwanda have faced extreme criticism from diverse groups and people. The church was not only accused of failing to effectively oppose the genocide, but of active complicity in the violence (Longman, 1997).

The church as an institution, with its vast resources and power continues to be influential on the policies and governance of Rwanda. In the discussions with several activists and pastors from Rwanda, it was evident that the church was ashamed of its failure to prevent the events of 1994.

⁹ News of Rwanda *Rwanda Remains EAC 'Fastest' Growing Economy – World Bank* . Published on 25th January 2013 (<http://goo.gl/m0WxY>)

¹⁰ For a comprehensive policy analysis of the NSP, please refer to the “detailed policy report for Rwanda, 2013” by Sonke

¹¹ Report on Masculinity and Gender-Based Violence in Rwanda, RWAMREC, MenEngage, & ICRW 2010

¹² International Religious Freedom Report: Rwanda (2007) United States Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

This catastrophic event has forced it to reinvent itself, to push its boundaries beyond evangelism and look at the social development of its people. This may be only a theory or individual perception; however this was evident in the commitment of the Anglican Church in Rwanda towards ending SV. Also evident was the struggle of the church leadership with its theology and interpretations of gender, gender equality and VAW.

Christianity continues to be an influential force in Rwanda, but skewed exegesis has led to Christianity being a negative force that has exacerbated SGBV. This is why it's crucial that the church to engage in ending SGBV, given its willingness and commitment.

Masculinities

The study of masculinity was an outcome of feminist studies and activism, and is now becoming an integral section within the field of gender studies. In order to discuss this in relation to GBV and the role of men and boys, the following concepts are helpful and discussed in the publication *Redemptive Masculinities* by the World Council of Churches. The following are excerpts from the introduction by the authors, Chitando and Chirongoma.

Firstly, there has been general acceptance of the plural word masculinities as opposed to simply masculinity based on numerous research that shows that there is no typical way to be man, and that there are different versions of manhood.

A further study by Barker and Ricardo emphasizes the need to take the plurality of masculinities in sub-Saharan Africa. They define the versions of manhood in Africa as:

(i) Socially constructed, (ii) fluid over time and in different settings and (iii) plural. There is no typical young man in sub-Saharan Africa and no single version of manhood. There are numerous African masculinities, urban and rural and changing historically, including versions of manhood associated with war, or being warriors and others associated with farming or cattle herding. There are indigenous definitions and versions of manhood, defined by tribal and ethnic group practices, and newer versions of manhood shaped by Islam and Christianity, and by Western influences, including the global media.

Secondly, masculinity is not seen as monolithic, but shaped by many processes and intersecting identities or conditions that produce multiple variables amongst different groups, individuals, institutions and societies (Gardiner, 2002, p.11).

This means that men are susceptible to change. This also gives the possibility that we can transform negative masculinities into positive ones in relation to gender-equality and freedom from violence. The following is an excerpt on African masculinities, which resonates the same sentiments as above.

That definitions of African masculinities are not uniform and monolithic, not generalizable to all men in Africa, and that masculine behaviours in Africa are not natural or unchanging— suggesting the possible emergence of new (and less violent and less oppressive) ways of being masculine. (Morrell and Ouzgane, 2005a: 8-9)

Sexual Violence, masculinities and the Bible

There has been extensive literature focused on sexual violence, masculinities and the Bible, and the most relevant and comprehensive narrative can be found in the World Council of Churches (WCC) publication *Redemptive Masculinities*. It is highly recommended for anyone interested in an extensive and systematic reading in relation to this theme.

For the purposes of this report, and to give an overview of the existing thoughts on masculinities in relation to Christianity, the following narratives are quoted from *Redemptive Masculinities*. But it is advisable to read the publication provided in the references section of this report, from page 173 onwards, entitled *Thus Says the Lord? Sacred Texts and Masculinities*.

Tamar

In 2 Samuel 13:1-22, the story of Tamar is found. The WCC publication goes on to discuss the “Tamar Campaign”, which is used as a bible study to discuss the issue of rape, and also discusses the concept of alternative masculinities. This section also gives an outline and discussion guide on how to use this story from the Bible to discuss this issue. It is an extremely effective campaign in terms of “breaking the silence” surrounding rape from within the church.

Hosea and his wife Gomer

In Hosea 1-3, God uses Hosea’s marriage to Gomer to highlight Israel’s unfaithfulness to God and worship of other gods. However it is also an excellent study on how Hosea, as the husband, is commanded to forgive his wife and bring her back to him after she was unfaithful. This section is found from page 193 in *Redemptive Masculinities*.

Joseph

In Matthew 1:18-25 the events leading up to the birth of Jesus are narrated. We see the unusual situation of Mary – miraculously pregnant with Jesus. As she is soon to be Joseph’s wife we also see a conflicted Joseph, unsure of how to respond to this challenging situation. Given the context, standing by Mary is not an easy decision for Joseph to make as a Jew and as a man. However the Bible also describes him as righteous and he chooses to follow the leading of the

Holy Spirit and make the difficult decision to continue to marry Mary, irrespective of the consequences and potential shame and embarrassment it may bring them. Joseph also assumes the role of a father. Luke 2: 41-52 gives an account of the incident when Joseph and Mary couldn't find Jesus. The scripture highlights Joseph's actions, "*Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.*" (Luke 2:48). This can be discussed in promoting positive fatherhood in relation to today's context, when many men abuse and discriminate against their children based on gender or due to the circumstances of their birth. This is from page 211 of *Redemptive Masculinities*.

Paul

There is extensive review of the Epistles of Paul, a book which was written within the context of the Roman Empire and how this should be read with this context in mind in relation to what it says on marriage, sex, gender equity, hegemony and hierarchy. Also a section on Paul as an example, who breaks down the concept of hegemony and dominating behaviours by describing himself as: "slave to all" (1 Corinthians 9: 19-23).

Paul calls men and women equal in Christ, and calls for gender equality in sex and marriage. Galatians 3:28 and 1 Corinthians:7 provide a great reflection for man – setting a standard for equitable relationships. This section of the publication can be found from page 229 in *Redemptive Masculinities*.

Redemptive Masculinities is a great resource for faith-based interventions to end SGBV. By re-reading some of the scriptures we can understand better what the word of God says in relation to gender equality, masculinities and sexual violence. It also provides case studies, discussion guides and real-life examples to assist related work.

CHAPTER FIVE

The baseline

Introduction

This section is mainly to report on the findings from the survey, and includes some direct quotes and narratives from discussions with the respondents. As evident in the responses discussed below, the work around engaging men and boys is in no way diverting the attention from the ongoing work with women and girls. It is still vital to address the victimization of SGBV survivors and prioritise women's empowerment programmes. It is also interesting to see how women uphold inequitable attitudes as well – that masculine notions aren't just upheld or promoted by men. It is important to acknowledge the crucial role women and girls also play in constructing and perpetuating damaging male identities and roles.

Gender attitudes

Gender roles

Attitudes on women, and their roles (male response)	Agree	Disagree
A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family	61%	39%
Changing nappies, giving kids a bath and feeding the kids are the mother's responsibility	61%	39%

Attitudes on women, and their roles (female responses)	Agree	Disagree
A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family	99%	1%
Changing nappies, giving kids a bath and feeding the kids are the mother's responsibility	92%	8%

Attitudes on men, and their roles (male response)	Agree	Disagree
To be a man, you need to be tough	-	100%
To be a man means providing for your family and your extended family	99%	1%
It is manly to defend the honour of your family even by violent means	98%	2%

Attitudes on men, and their roles (female responses)	Agree	Disagree
To be a man, you need to be tough	-	100%
To be a man means providing for your family and your extended family	93%	7%
It is manly to defend the honour of your family even by violent means	93%	7%

Attitudes on sexual and reproductive health (SRH)

Attitudes on SRH (male response)	Agree	Disagree
It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant	7%	93%
A real man produces a male child	-	100%

Attitudes on SRH (female response)	Agree	Disagree
It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant	70%	30%
A real man produces a male child	-	100%

Attitudes on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)

Attitudes on SGBV (male response)	Agree	Disagree
There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten	-	100%
A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together	1%	99%
Women should accept teasing even of a sexual nature because it is harmless	-	100%
Teasing becomes harmful to women only when there is physical contact	2%	98%
It is manly to defend the honour of your family even by violent means	98%	2%

Attitudes on SGBV (female response)	Agree	Disagree
There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten	-	100%
A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together	1%	99%
Women should accept teasing even of a sexual nature because it is harmless	-	100%
Teasing becomes harmful to women only when there is physical contact	5%	95%
It is manly to defend the honour of your family even by violent means	93%	7%

Gender relations

Decision-making

Gender relations – decision-making/domestic (male response)	Agree	Disagree
I think that a woman should obey her husband	100%	-
I think that a man should have the final say in all family matters	50%	50%
I think that men should share the work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning and cooking	84%	16%
I think that a woman cannot refuse to have sex with her husband	1%	99%

Gender relations – decision-making/domestic (female response)	Agree	Disagree
I think that a woman should obey her husband	100%	-
I think that a man should have the final say in all family matters	13%	87%
I think that men should share the work around the house with women such as doing dishes, cleaning and cooking	99%	1%
I think that a woman cannot refuse to have sex with her husband	9%	91%

Sexual violence, inclusive of rape

Gender relations – SV, inclusive of rape (male response)	Agree	Disagree
I think that when a woman is raped, she is usually to blame for putting herself in that situation	1%	99%
I think that if a woman doesn't physically fight back, it's not rape	14%	86%
I think that in any rape case, one would have to question whether the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation	-	100%
I think that some women ask to be raped by the way they dress and behave	97%	3%

Gender relations – SV, Inclusive of rape (female response)	Agree	Disagree
I think that when a woman is raped, she is usually to blame for putting herself in that situation	8%	92%
I think that if a woman doesn't physically fight back, it's not rape	-	100%
I think that in any rape case, one would have to question whether the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation	-	100%
I think that some women ask to be raped by the way they dress and behave	91%	9%

Current practices around decision-making and household work

Decision-making

Practices – decision-making (male response)	Men	Women
Who in your household usually has the final say regarding the health of women in the family?	78%	22%
Who in your household usually has the final say about decisions involving your children (their schooling, their activities)?	95%	5%
Who has the final say about decisions involving how your family spends money on food and clothing?	77%	23%
Who has the final say about decisions involving how your family spends money on large investments such as buying a vehicle, a house or a household appliance?	84%	16%

Practices – decision-making (female response)	Men	Women
Who in your household usually has the final say regarding the health of women in the family?	14%	86%
Who in your household usually has the final say about decisions involving your children (their schooling, their activities)?	37%	63%
Who has the final say about decisions involving how your family spends money on food and clothing?	67%	33%
Who has the final say about decisions involving how your family spends money on large investments such as buying a vehicle, a house or a household appliance?	91%	9%

Household work

Practices – who does the following at home (male response)	Men	Women
Preparing food	-	100%
Cleaning the house	-	100%
Washing clothes	1%	99%
Taking care of the children	-	100%

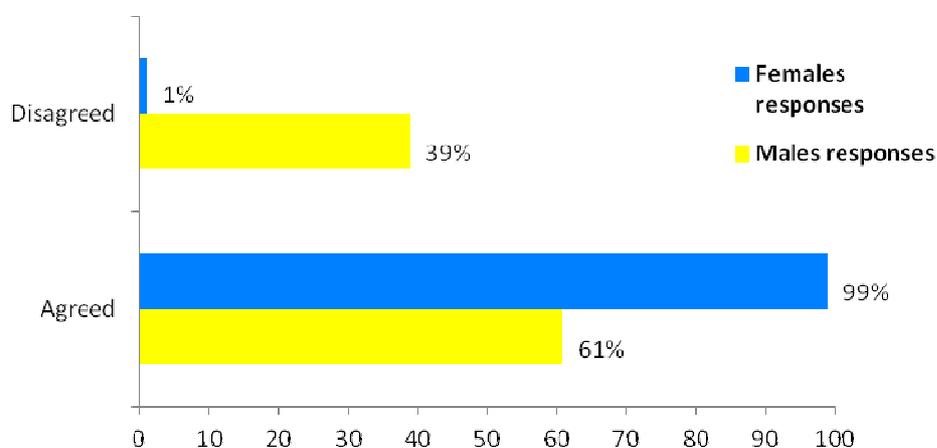
Practices – who does the following at home (female response)	Men	Women
Preparing food	-	100%
Cleaning the house	-	100%
Washing clothes	-	100%
Taking care of the children	-	100%

Discussion of the findings, both survey and focus-group discussions

Gendered roles and identities

The attitudes of men and women were fairly consistent around what was perceived to be a man's and woman's role. Women were considered to take care of the home, while the men took care of 'important' roles and tasks such as, finances, decision-making and protection. This is consistent with most of the literature on masculinities and gender. However, even though 39 per cent of the men disagreed with the statement: "A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family", 99 per cent of women agreed with it. This was an extra burden on women, who were often involved in supporting their family through income-generation activities. When asking the women if they think that men should help out at home, 99 per cent of the women said yes and surprisingly 84 per cent of men also agreed with the statement.

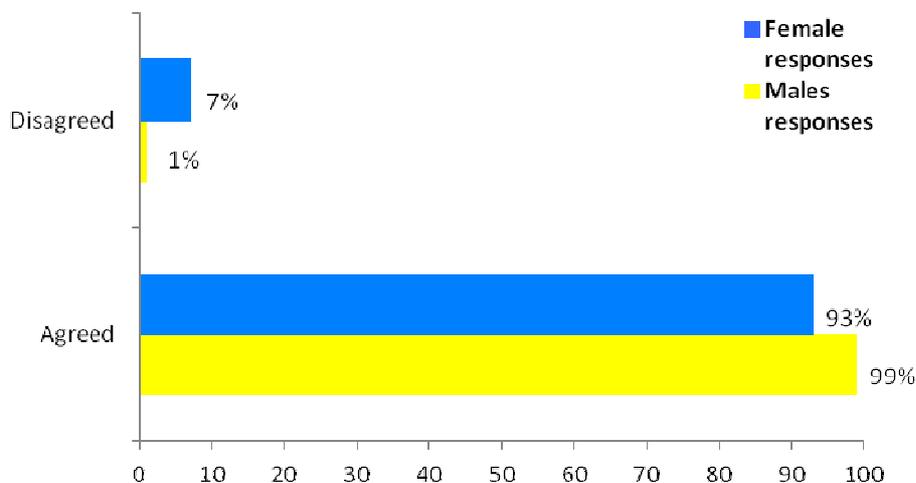
A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family.



These responses show that the women desire that their husbands are more actively involved at home, but because of the cultural norms, and acceptance of their fate, they do not think it is worth the trouble in trying to change the status quo. Women also stated, “The men in the house will milk the cow, and the women/girls will clean after them.” This leads to the question of dignity for women in their community, where women are perceived to be only good enough to do less important tasks. This demonstrates why there is reluctance by most men to get involved in household or caregiving roles, as they are perceived to be softer, more feminine roles.

The providing and protective roles of men were consistently highlighted. Both women and men agreed that, “to be a man, you need to provide for your family and extended family,” and also, “it is manly to defend the honor of the family, even using violent means.” When discussing this response with men most admitted that they have no time to spend at home because they are overburdened by the expectations their family has for them to provide. This corresponds to the feedback from men on the need to control the finances, in order to be the family decision-maker.

To be a man means providing for your family and your extended family.



One man said, “There is a problem in my house, it is the wife who makes the decisions, because she is the one earning.” He was physically disabled and unable to work. This attests to the argument that men are also victims of unhelpful masculine cultural notions, and when they fail to live up to their expected roles, they face violence and stigma in different forms within the home and in their community.

Participants used the word of God to support cultural norms. Men who are head of the household, as Jesus said they were, needed to be concerned about the well-being of the family.

Women were expected to do the household work and everything dominant males wanted them to do – in obedience to him and the word of God. They cited scripture, saying women were created as a helper to man and in Ephesians, Paul said: “wives submit to your husbands.” These were the prevailing cultural norms and practices. The challenges were that these results and opinions don’t provide space for negotiation on roles. In the Rwandan context, with the genocide backdrop, cultural norms and expectations are further affected and the broader gender dynamics have shifted. There are many female-headed households and many men and women with disabilities due to the past conflict.

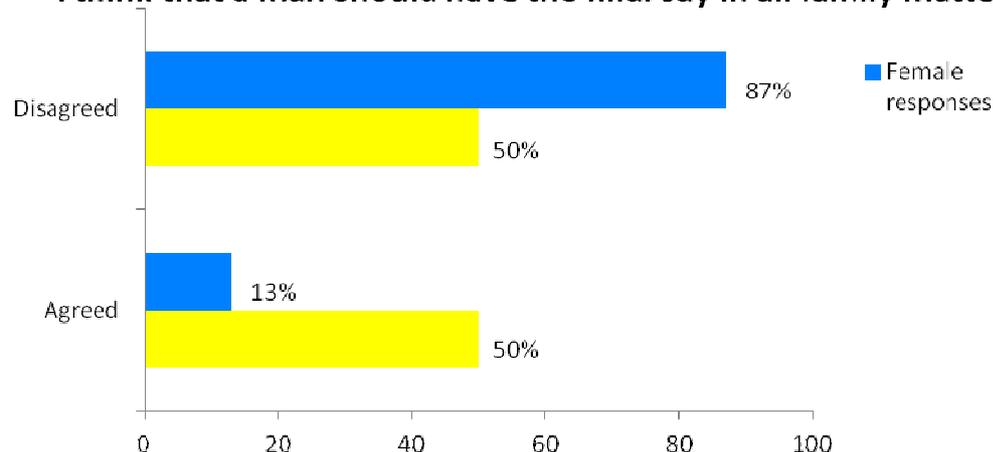
It was evident through the discussions that both men and women faced challenges in living up to these gendered roles and expectations. Women desired for men to be loving, and more involved, and men felt limited and challenged in being able to provide or spend time at home with their children. In the changing environment around livelihoods in Rwanda, where more women are involved in income-generating activities than the men due to various reasons, the male identity of ‘provider’ was challenged when it hinged on being the head of the house or the key decision-maker.

Most of the attitudes and current practices around gendered roles stemmed from interpretations of creation – both men and women articulated beliefs that woman was created as a ‘helper’ and therefore inferior or unequal to man. What needs to be challenged is not what men and women do at home, but the motivation behind it, which is inequality.

Decision-making and leadership

All men and women interviewed agreed that, “women should obey their husbands.” This was primarily influenced by the scripture that “men are the head of the household,” and “wives submit to your husbands.” It is however interesting to note that not all husbands referred to faith and most of the women stated that their husbands were not Christians. Eighty-seven per cent of women and 50 per cent of men disagreed with the statement, “men should have the final say in all family matters.” This warrants discussion around equitable decision-making and companionship with wives rather than seeing them as a mere ‘helper’.

I think that a man should have the final say in all family matters.



An inaccurate understanding of scriptures and teachings on headship was the dominant reason that man was viewed as the head. Scriptures were used to reaffirm what was already the norm in Rwandan culture. Men believed that they were the leaders of their homes and they only were capable of making important decisions. They were of the opinion that women didn't possess those skills or weren't created to do so. Through the various discussions what was evident was the controlling nature of the relationships between men and women, and the desire by men to dominate and restrict women. Most of the men and women upheld very dominant views on leadership, rather than the principles of Christlike leadership. They made references to the teaching around headship from the New Testament, and the men referred to having to correct/discipline women because men were the head of the house.

Ninety-nine per cent of women and 84 per cent of men agreed that men should help out at home with domestic duties and taking care of the children. However this contradicts the actual roles they currently have within the family where 100 per cent of men and women stated that it is the woman who currently does work such as, cooking, cleaning, washing clothes and taking care of the children. This highlights the gap between the practices of men and their attitudes. Most of them understood or knew that the correct thing to do was to help at home, but didn't really get around to actually doing so.

Over 70 per cent of men claimed to be making all decisions related to the health of women in the house, children's education and activities, day-to-day expenditure and large investments. However, women responded differently saying that they made the decisions regarding their health and the children, but other decisions related to finances and investments were made by men. When probed further, they said that men made the final decisions if present in the house.

There wasn't anyone who talked about planning the finances together, or even the education of the children. It is quite evident that it was seen as a 'manly' thing or a man's duty or responsibility to make decisions as the head of the household. The only exception to this was with widowed women who said they now have to make the decisions, but previously it would have been their husbands.

The work around equitable decision-making is imperative to the discourse on ending SGBV, there needs to be discussion around transformation of masculine notions of men and women which respects and values the autonomy of the women in their homes and communities. The survey findings highlighted that there was a perception that women were disempowered and had no value other than to take care of the home. This was rooted in their understanding of the story of creation from the Garden of Eden. Men had misinterpreted scripture and thought that the reason the woman was taken from the rib of man was because she was supposed to be a helper to him. Sadly most women didn't know how to read or didn't even own a Bible.

The empowerment of women and girls is crucial while addressing dominant notions and practices of masculinities in these communities. There needs to be teaching and discussions around relearning the word of God through a gender-equitable lens, and being sensitive to the context of the scriptures which were often misquoted or used to dominate those perceived to be of less value or power. Promoting Christlike leadership models and depictions of headship is important to deconstruct the dominant cultural norm, which is damaging.

It was evident through the discussions that the men made the final decision, but the women tried hard to either justify men making the decision or to prove that there were discussions involved in the process. This felt as if it was said to protect their own pride, because when questioned further they were disappointed in their own answers.

SRH

This section pivots around one statement about whether a woman can refuse to have sex with her husband. Even though only one per cent of men and nine per cent of women agreed with the statement, it was evident that most men and women felt that a woman cannot refuse or shouldn't refuse sex unless she was ill or pregnant. Most women feared that if they refused sex to their husbands, he would find another woman or provoke them in order to be able to cheat on them. This is also important to look at from the perspective of HIV and AIDS as this would exacerbate infections and the transmission of sexually-transmitted diseases. Most men have the decision-making power in sexual relations and the use of contraceptives. This can increase the vulnerability of women further to being infected with HIV (Klinken, 2011).

Men also quoted the Bible, texts such as 1 Corinthians 7.4: "The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband." But men had interpreted only the first half of the scriptures and failed to acknowledge the reverse, "In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife." Through nervous laughter, most men agreed that a woman shouldn't refuse sex. Women interviewed also stated how most times, the sex was only pleasurable for the men, as there was no 'preparation' before sex, and this correlates to the ideology of most men that sex should be only for the pleasure of men and reproduction. Most men also were of the view that, "*a woman cannot be raped by her husband,*" even though women had opposite views on this.

This again links to decision-making. A woman doesn't feel that she has the right to make decisions related to her body and a man feels that the woman has no rights over her body. This is also evident in decisions involving reproductive health.

When asked the question about who is responsible for avoiding pregnancy, 93 per cent of the men disagreed that it is entirely a woman's responsibility and instead said it was both. But surprisingly 70 per cent women agreed that it is their responsibility to avoid getting pregnant.

Usually when surveys of this nature are administered, the responses around attitudes are fairly consistent and don't show such high variance. This makes it problematic to understand the underlying attitudes in order to effectively respond. Even though it was highly evident that these communities were male dominated, ironically it was the men who seem to show higher equitable attitudes than the women in their survey responses. In a faith-context, where topics such as birth control are taboo issues, the burden of avoiding pregnancy fell on women. But this can lead to women taking extremes measures to try to abort, such as using traditional methods or hitting the stomach, in order to avoid a backlash from her husband or community. This is not only physically harmful, but also traumatizing.

What is lacking is the space within the family to discuss issues relating to the well-being of the family, and also more importantly the lives of women/mothers.

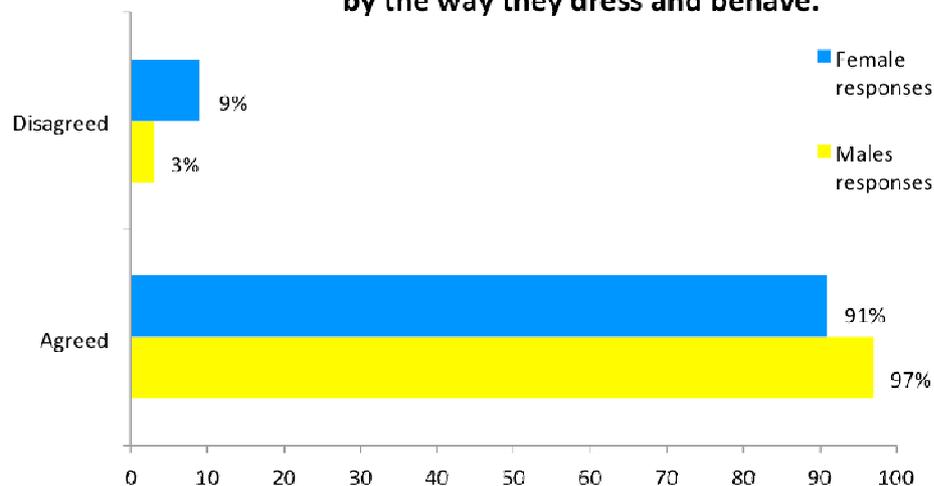
SGBV

Even though all men and women surveyed disagreed that there were times when a woman deserves to be beaten, what was intriguing was that 98 per cent of men and 93 per cent of women agreed with the statement, "It is manly to defend the honour of your family, even by violent means." This was surprising as most of the respondents were averse to discussing violence and dismissed it as a cultural issue that may contribute to SGBV.

The acceptance to the use of violence, even though everyone was church attending and considered themselves a devout Christian is very disturbing and worth debating more fully. When asked what the Bible says about violence, it was easily dismissed with the comment, "it's not like we can watch on without fighting when someone dishonours the family." Use of violence was justified by both the women and men, and the church and community leaders, as long as it was to defend the honour of the family. It is vital to unpack this further to understand if the use of violence to correct or discipline women was justified in the same manner within the family, if they were perceived to be doing something to dishonour the family. It was difficult to get responses on this issue because the groups didn't agree with the use of violence on women. However this could dramatically change if the questionnaire was administered in a confidential manner to capture individual attitudes, rather than a group response.

There are many contradicting responses around victimization and the culture of blame that surrounds those who have experienced SGBV. Men and women disagreed with the statement, "when a woman is raped, she is usually to be blamed for putting herself in that situation," and "in any rape case one would have to question if the victim has bad reputation." However almost all participants agreed that some women asked to be raped by the way they dress and behave (97 per cent of men and 91 per cent of women). This is a major contradiction yet this view was very dominant during the discussion. Men cited examples of women provoking men to rape them.

I think that some women ask to be raped by the way they dress and behave.



One man said, *“You can’t go to the jungle and blame the animal for attacking its prey,”* referring to men as the animal and women as the prey. According to some men, women should not dress inappropriately because if they do, they shouldn’t complain when they are sexual abused or assaulted.

This attitude focused on the behaviour of the victim and is problematic to addressing the root causes of sexual violence. The focus needs to be on the attitudes and behaviours of those perpetrating the violence. Blaming victims will only increase stigma and discourage those who have experienced abuse from reporting crimes or even seeking the medical or counselling help they need after an attack. This also creates an environment for perpetrators to continue their violent acts with impunity.

Participants were asked a subsequent question on whether it is still rape if a woman doesn’t physically fight back. Fourteen per cent of men agreed and all women disagreed – stating was still rape. Discussions were had with h men around how not fighting back can be interpreted as consent, and then leading to the question around marital rape and also the need to have physical evidence if the perpetrator is prosecuted.

All men and women disagreed that, *“there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.”* However this unanimous response could also be due to the limitation of the method used to collect the data and could be because it was the popular opinion or the politically correct thing to say. This was highlighted during the discussions, when men mentioned the need to correct or discipline women, *“so she knows what she has done it wrong,”* even though they all disagreed with the statement above. This relates to their response around being a man and defending the honour of the family by using violence. However men disagreed with the statement that, *“a*

woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together,” but when probed further it was evident that there was an expectation that the women would do so. This was justified again by an incorrect interpretation of the scriptures and believing a wife should be submissive to her husband.

Ninety-nine per cent of men and 93 per cent women agreed that it is manly to provide for your family and extended family. But manhood was challenged when men’s primary role to provide was limited. This role is now taken by women and men seemed to want to express their manhood through various other ways, such as justifying the use of violence. Use of violence is deeply rooted in gender inequality and the general acceptance of violence in problem solving. The church needs to engage in this issue and use scripture to denounce violence.

CHAPTER SIX

Recommendations and conclusion

The survey and subsequent discussions revealed the urgency of working with men, women, and the entire community to transform the negative and damaging cultural norms, attitudes and practices that are currently present. It also highlights importance of addressing concepts of masculinity if we are to end SV in our communities and within the home. SV is fundamentally an issue of inequality, unequal attitudes, practices, beliefs and structures and it has created an environment conducive to perpetrating violence against women and girls. It also contributes to the impunity in addressing such violations and makes it challenging to break the cycle. Programmes need not only to be holistic, but also to address this issue at every strata of society. In this particular context, it is vital to work with church leadership to urgently address issues around skewed theology and teachings that have taken root in many lives and communities. The church has a key role to play in breaking the silence around SGBV, its voice is influential at every level of society.

Following are some key recommendations and suggestions for strategies and interventions. These are focused on the role of faith, specifically of the church as this study is in the context of Christian faith. These recommendations also highlight areas of collaboration for none-FBOs to use with churches.

Church/faith-based organisations

Breaking the silence

- Breaking the silence on SGBV through theologically-sound biblical teaching is crucial. This will open up a space for dialogue on what's considered a taboo or private matter.
- The church and its leadership need to break the silence on intimate partner violence and marital rape.
- The church needs to openly denounce use of violence in any form and reject the normalization of violence under any circumstances – challenging this through scriptures.
- The church needs to break the silence and stigma associated with the victims of violence. This will encourage victims to speak out and have the faith and courage to pursue justice through the courts. It will also help survivors seek the necessary help/services that they need in the short and long-term future.

Awareness and education

- From a biblical point of view there needs to be facilitated discussions on gender relations and gender equality, and how the church and its members can start deconstructing the negative patterns that have taken root with the church and community.
- There needs to be pre- and post-marriage counselling for couples on positive, equitable and non-violent relationships – promoting shared values and roles.
- There needs to be Bible studies for men and boys on positive biblical standards for being a man, and further dialogue and debate on how that interacts with their own identities and culture.
- There must be promote and awareness-raising of existing laws, policies and services related to SGBV and how survivors can access these.

Leadership

- The church leadership, at all levels, needs to promote positive leadership models and Christlike characteristics. This is in order to challenge the dominating, controlling and violent leadership that has been previously exhibited by men both within church, community or business settings.
- We need to promote masculinities, which are committed to promoting women's participation in leadership – and where men/fathers create the space for and encourage women to take up positions of leadership.
- The church needs to seek out and interact with marginalised people to promote positive masculinities.
- Church leaders need to show commitment to uphold the law of the land, and promote good practices and principles in dealing with survivors of SGBV, even accompanying them through court trials.
- The church and its leadership have to work with local and national level authorities to promote the rule of law in relation to SGBV.
- The church needs to create spaces for men and women to dialogue on fatherhood, motherhood, relationships and gender identities from a cultural, biblical and practical viewpoint. It should promote positive, uplifting and non-limiting gendered roles and gender equality.
- Leaders need to break the stigma around victimization; the focus needs to shift away from the victim to the perpetrator. This has to be demonstrated from the pulpit and within private spaces when counselling.

Safe space

- We need to provide safe spaces for men, women and children to heal from their own traumatic experiences of violence and to reflect on their own feelings and seek psychosocial help.
- We need to create safe spaces for survivors of SGBV and accompany them when seeking justice. The church also needs to prioritise legal or healthcare services for survivors.

Partnerships

- The church has access to remote areas and can work in partnership with service providers and other agencies on SGBV prevention and response.
- The church and its leadership must engage in joint advocacy efforts and add its voice to others' campaigns in order to boost Rwanda's efforts to end SGBV.
- The church should take the lead in working with other organisations to engaging men and boys in the prevention of SGBV and promoting gender equality programmes that are beneficial to both the church and the respective partnering organisation.
- The church should explore common ground and collaborate with other agencies in order to save resources and increase impact.
- The church can explore interfaith dialogues with other denominations and work towards promoting a coordinated and uniform response by the churches in Rwanda to end SGBV. It should also help promote greater accountability between the churches, denominations and faiths.

Conclusion

Violence against women and girls affects the whole of our society; it's a threat not only to the social development of any nation, but also to its economic well-being. Engaging men and boys in this discourse is imperative. While it is important to work with men and boys to transform their inequitable attitudes and practices stemming from masculinised culture, beliefs and norms in society, it is important to address the same with women and girls.

Most often women are also gatekeepers of such dominant and violent masculine notions and attitudes, and this is then passed on to future generations. The church has a niche role to play in the work to end SGBV, it also needs to be committed to this process in order to become a catalyst in promoting positive masculinities.

A frequent concern from the findings is the power of decision-making, and this is almost always connected to the well-being of a woman or girl. The power is solely in the hands of the men. This can be harmful to the well-being of the entire family. Works needs to be done on promoting equitable decision-making at different levels in society and within the family unit.

This discourse of transformative masculinities, or also known as “engaging men and boys” is not only vital for programmes on gender and SGBV, but also on ending HIV and AIDS.

The World Council of Churches resource *Redemptive Masculinities* is one of the most comprehensive literatures available today in addressing masculinities in relation to HIV and AIDS and SV. It is highly effective in providing insight into both the mainstream understanding and biblical perspectives.

The church needs to relearn its theology, which is often misinterpreted or manipulated by the leadership and congregation members to perpetrate diverse forms of gender violence. The concept of male leadership in the church, community, families, workplaces and nation needs to be realigned with biblical principles of leadership – positive, vocal on injustice, non-violent, engaging and transformative.

The church needs to continue to denounce the use of violence, and as evident in this study, the accepted cultural norm that violence is an attribute of manhood. This is crucial in not only deconstructing current expressions of manhood and then realigning it with Christian principles, but also breaking the cycle of societal acceptance and normalisation of violence.

The survey and discussions also revealed that there were positive reactions to the prospect of change and transformation, both individually and in the communities, and an understanding that this would be for the betterment of all citizens. The Anglican Church of Rwanda is committed to ending SGBV, and the time for the church to be the catalyst for this work is now. This commitment needs to be translated into meaningful and impactful actions, and the Anglican Church should be a role model for other churches and FBOs on this issue, along with other stakeholders.

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