
Transforming Masculinities.

*An evidence-based approach to
work with faith communities on
gender and masculinities.*

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Photo: Faith leaders in a TM workshop in Goma, DRC



Tearfund, and the SV Unit

- ❖ Tearfund is a Christian relief and development agency, working in over 50 countries. Headquartered in the UK.
- ❖ Sexual violence prevention team has been leading SGBV prevention and response work for TF for the last 4 years. Our SGBV response focuses on 6 outcomes.
- ❖ Our vision is to mobilize 500 faith leaders, reach 25,000 people, engage 2500 men and boys, and support and grow a movement of 300 survivors by 2018.
- ❖ We are currently in Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Central African Republic, Tanzania and Kenya (with a focus on FGM/C) and South Africa.
- ❖ We are also looking to scale out response to new countries such as South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Myanmar, Colombia and the Middle East Region by the end of 2015.

What is the “Transforming Masculinities” approach?

- ❖ A series of interventions to work with Christian leaders, communities to promote positive masculinities and gender equality.
- ❖ Changing social norms around gender and masculinities using scriptural reflections and other tools.
- ❖ A continuous engagement process with men and women, boys and girls to address knowledge, attitudes and practices on gender and masculinities to facilitate behaviour change.
- ❖ Bringing this work on ending SGBV and promoting gender equality within the parameters / context of their respective faiths and cultures.

Why this approach?

- ❖ 3 qualitative studies titled “Men, Faith and Masculinities” were carried out from 2013 to 2014, in Rwanda, Burundi and DRC. Structured FGDs / group surveys were conducted with 1233 participants (610 men and 623 women).
- ❖ These study found that many men, women, boys and girls, and church leaders use scriptures to justify, defend and perpetuate harmful notions of gender and masculinities.
- ❖ Scriptures are quoted to educate, affirm and support male superiority, dominance and control over every aspect of the lives of women and girls.
- ❖ Also we found that scriptures are used to support social norms around gender inequality in cultural practices, tradition and beliefs - in day to day life.

Why this approach? (cont)

- ❖ These harmful social norms and practices create a conducive environment for SGBV in various spheres of society, silence, shame and lack support for survivors, and impunity for those perpetrating violence. *Eg: Men and women think it's okay for a man to discipline his wife, even using violence because he's the head of the house and she has to submit to him.*
- ❖ *Eg: Men and women believe that a woman has no choice over her body, she must have sex whether she wants/likes or not, because her body belongs to him*
- ❖ We know gender inequality is embedded in every aspect of life, and is at the core of driving VAWG in every sphere of society. What we know through our studies is the fact that many social norms, and individual behavior around gender inequality is largely stemming from the belief that “men and women weren't created equal”.

Why this approach? (cont)

- ❖ Church and church leadership play a critical role in shaping masculine identities and behaviors. Also because most church leaders are men.
- ❖ We also found that men are struggling themselves on the rigid roles and responsibilities, expectations and from their own trauma and suffering.
- ❖ The changing environment around them (social, political and economic) seems to be causing a male identity crisis, also contributing to the larger use of violence at home to reclaim, reinforce their role as the head of the house.
- ❖ We also found that men are conflicted between what they know / or say on how they should be, and who they really are and what they do now. *Eg: Even though many of them agree that women can say no to sex, they currently do not discuss or negotiate with their partners when they want to have sex.*
- ❖ Recent KABP (What Works) preliminary findings show strong affiliation between theology and behavior. (Men who hold the belief that God condemns rape are less likely to physically and/or sexually to abuse their partners)

Why this approach - theology?

- ❖ Key scriptures referred, quoted by participants, leaders that are preached, reinforced through marriage counseling / ceremonies and day-day activities are below:
 - ❖ **Creation:** *“God made Eve out of Adam, therefore she should be submissive, and she was made Adam’s helper.”*
 - ❖ **Roles:** *“God gave specific roles to Adam and Eve in the old testament, and likewise in the new testament God appoints man as the head of the house.”*
 - ❖ **Relationships:** *“Bible is clear that a woman should submit to her husband, like the Church submits to Jesus.”*
 - ❖ **Sexual relations:** *“Bible says a woman’s body doesn’t belong to her, but to her husband.”*

Transforming Masculinities - Who?

- ❖ The TM interventions are targeted at both men and women, young married couples (18-24) and both boys and girls (15-24).
- ❖ “Gender Champions” are trained facilitators who lead this work at the community level.
- ❖ Pastors, Elders, Bishops and their spouses at national, regional and local level. Also other faith leaders.
- ❖ The participants for these programs are from communities (usually from the respective parishes) where the respective Church is situated and has continuous engagement throughout the week within and outside their congregation.

What's the process?

- ❖ **“Transforming Leaderships”** - engaging faith leaders on gender, masculinities and SGBV using a mix of scriptural reflections/bible studies, and other tools adapted and used for the context.
- ❖ The trainings/workshops are 2-3 days, and for a maximum of 20 leaders per program. Followed up with a refresher training in 3-6 months.
- ❖ What do we aim to achieve?
 - ❖ To address their own knowledge, attitudes and practices on gender, masculinities and SGBV.
 - ❖ To use a theological framework for the Church to make this work their mandate.
 - ❖ To give these leaders tools, scriptural reflections so they can use it to transform harmful social norms around gender and masculinities.
 - ❖ Support, mentor and provide leadership to the “Gender Champions” who will work with the leadership on the SGBV response.

What's the process? (cont)

- ❖ **“Gender Champions”**: Training of facilitators (both male and female), who will be resource person in the community / church, and lead community transformation processes on gender, masculinities and SGBV.
- ❖ The trainings are 3-5 days (depending on funding, 3 being the minimum allowed), and for maximum of 16 participants. We actively encourage equal representation from both men and women so we can pair facilitators for community programs.
- ❖ What do we aim to achieve?
 - ❖ Build local / community capacity to sustain this work
 - ❖ Integrate these scriptural reflections as integral to the mandate of the Church, making SGBV prevention and response an important aspect of the life of the Church.
 - ❖ Facilitate ongoing dialogues and community engagement to create a safe space for transformation.

What's the process? (cont)

- ❖ **“Community Dialogues”**: Facilitated dialogues at community level to create a safe space for both men and women in separate groups to discuss gender, masculinities and SGBV. These community dialogues are facilitated by trained “Gender Champions” using the same tools.
- ❖ These community dialogues are for 6 weeks per group, maximum of 2 hours per week and 20 participants per group. After the completion of 5 weeks, the final week discussion will be with both men's and women's groups together.
- ❖ What do we aim to achieve?
 - ❖ Create a safe space to facilitate behavior change, addressing knowledge, attitudes and practices around gender, masculinities and SGBV. The process is relational and builds a supportive environment for the participants. Promoting personal and relational accountability practices.
 - ❖ Changing social norms, one group at a time. Even though it takes many years to change norms and behavior, these 6 weeks will create an enabling environment for the journeys to begin, and continue to provide support.
 - ❖ The participants will move on to be engaged in other ways after the 6 weeks, the co-facilitators will reflect on their interactions, behavior and accountability practices and debrief with the supervisor. Then they start another group.

Key features of the TM approach

- ❖ Scripture-based reflections.
- ❖ The sessions are framed around the key scriptures that influence norms.
- ❖ Group learning and a safe space for dialogues.
- ❖ Interactive and from a practical lens.
- ❖ Brings the discussions on gender, masculinities and SGBV within the context of their faith and culture.
- ❖ Promotes accountable practices at all levels (participants, facilitators, Church leadership and related staff).
- ❖ Key reflection for masculinities in relation to the life of Jesus.
- ❖ Refresher training for Gender Champions and Faith Leaders, including the mentoring program for Gender Champions.

What's the impact, so far?

- ❖ Trained over 50 gender champions and 40 faith leaders.
- ❖ We have “engaged” over 1000 men, women, boys and girls through community dialogues in the last 2 years.
- ❖ Our work in the last 2 years have reached over 20,000 people in Rwanda, Burundi and DRC.
- ❖ Most importantly the stories of transformation like the following stories are many, and it's just the beginning...

Stories

- ❖ *“My mind-set has changed. Before I came here, I believed that man and woman were not created equally. That Man was superior to woman. But these teachings have changed my beliefs. Now I know that they are both equal, none is above the other. Now, I clearly understand gender equality and I started teaching others” - Pastor Samurenzi Leonnidas*
- ❖ *“I have learnt 3 important lessons. First, I used to do violence without realizing it. For example, forcing my wife to do something just because she is my wife, or correcting the domestic assistants rudely instead of showing them what to do with respect. Secondly, I used to watch while victims faced violence and I was not concerned. Thirdly, I judged the survivors of rape and accused them, I couldn't reach out to the girls that were raped or who may have acted in an immoral way, because I used to think that they have done unthinkable acts and that they should be isolated from the church. But now things have changed, back home I started an anti-SGBV club, and helped victims and I treat all people with respect, especially my wife” - Pastor Azarius*
- ❖ *“Before the trainings, my wife didn't have right to my material possessions (land, bank account...) but now we share the family's bank account. I also started involved her in the church activities and she is very talented in preaching. I started engaging the men to encourage women of my church to use their talents for the kingdom of God and women are very happy and very active” - Pastor Noel*
- ❖ Such stories are many....

TRANSFORMING MASCULINITIES

"Things changed in my home and in the Church as Church members testify. I have trained two teams already and one more is about to finish the course. In my community a woman was beaten and mistreated because she was giving birth to only girls, but now things changed because of the training they got and the sharing of the teachings with her husband."

*Ps. Musonera Alex
Ntaho Parish*

tearfund

What's next?

- ❖ Finalize the TM manual, also offer alternative scriptural reflections based on Qur'an - within the "What Works" project in DRC.
- ❖ Work with key partners such as Sonke, Abaad (Lebanon), Promundo, MenEngage etc to make the tool more accessible, and adapt to interfaith work.
- ❖ Launch of the *Passages* project with IRH and PSI, including FP into the TM approach. Work is in Kinshasa province in DRC.
- ❖ Expand the work beyond the GLR, currently scoping in Central African Republic (CAR), Myanmar and the ME region.

THANK YOU :)