

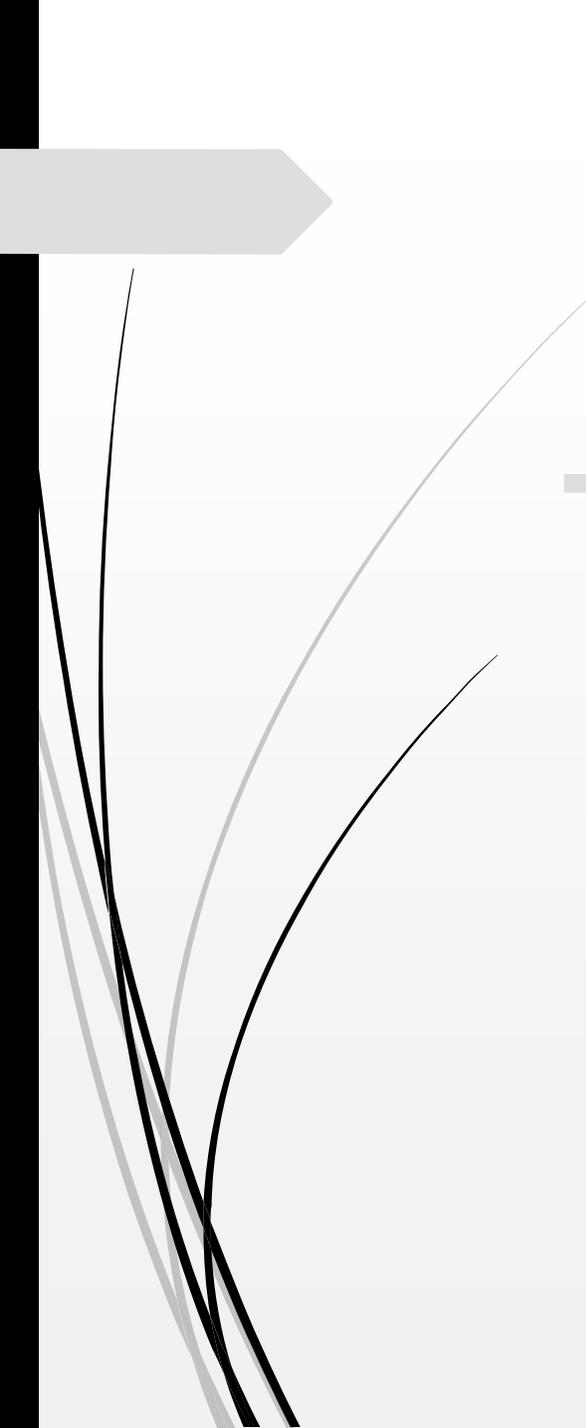


Exploring the Nexus between Harmful Traditional Practices, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Religion: Working effectively with Faith

Dr Elisabet le Roux & Dr Brenda E Bartelink

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- *Specific practices that are identified as HTPs include female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), son preference, female infanticide, child and early/ forced marriage (CEM), dowry, marriage by abduction, virginity testing, early pregnancy, nutritional taboos, child delivery related practices, (sexual) violence against women, and female inheritance issues/ widowhood (Coomaraswamy 2002, Wadesango, et al., 2011, Bradley and Longman 2015).*



Research as part of an on-going study

- ▶ DFID-funded study: “Working effectively with faith leaders to challenge harmful traditional practices”
 - ▶ A Consortium of the *Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities*
 - ▶ Multi-case case study; online survey; literature review
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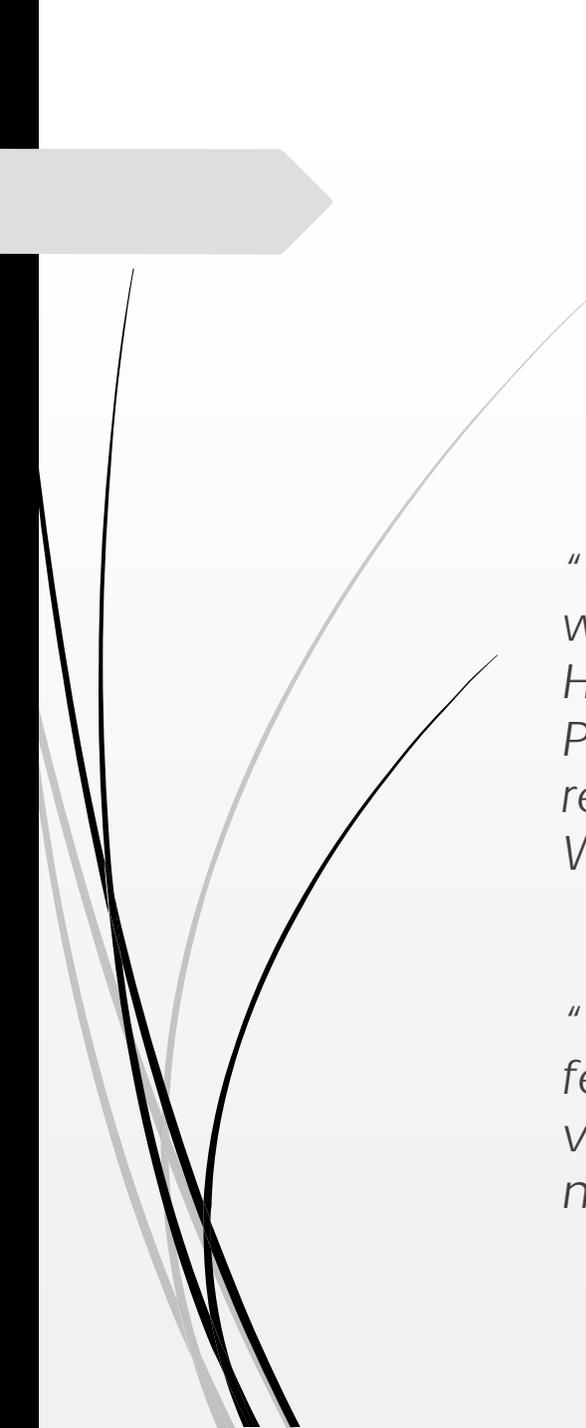
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resource center for gender equality



1. The role of religion in HTPs



“In many Muslim communities FGM/C is attributed, at least partly, to religion, with some holding the view that Islam requires FGM/C as an obligation. However FGM/C pre-dates Islam, it is not mentioned in the Qur’an and the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, did not advocate for it. It is also a relatively unknown practice in large parts of the Muslim world.” – Islamic Relief Worldwide

“So what we have seen is that in some of the areas [the community members] feel that this is a practice that is required by the religion and they cannot violate it. So this is where we used the religious leaders to explain that that is not part of the religion. It was not an easy job.” – Islamic Relief Worldwide



2. Engaging faith leaders - the importance of the process



"...[I]f you come to help them understand that no, these practices are not right but are harmful, these practices cannot be bound by scripture, it will take a long time...[W]e walk with religious leaders by helping them improve their capacity so that they change from what they thought was right before, to something that they can now see." – Christian Aid

"[During the workshops we are] just exploring, allowing them to be themselves. And as we discover and bring in the facilitation, they realise that, actually, this [i.e. the faith leaders approach] is wrong. But also allowing these [faith leaders] not to feel like they are condemned in what they've been doing ...We will allow them to express themselves and the way they believe and so on." - World Vision



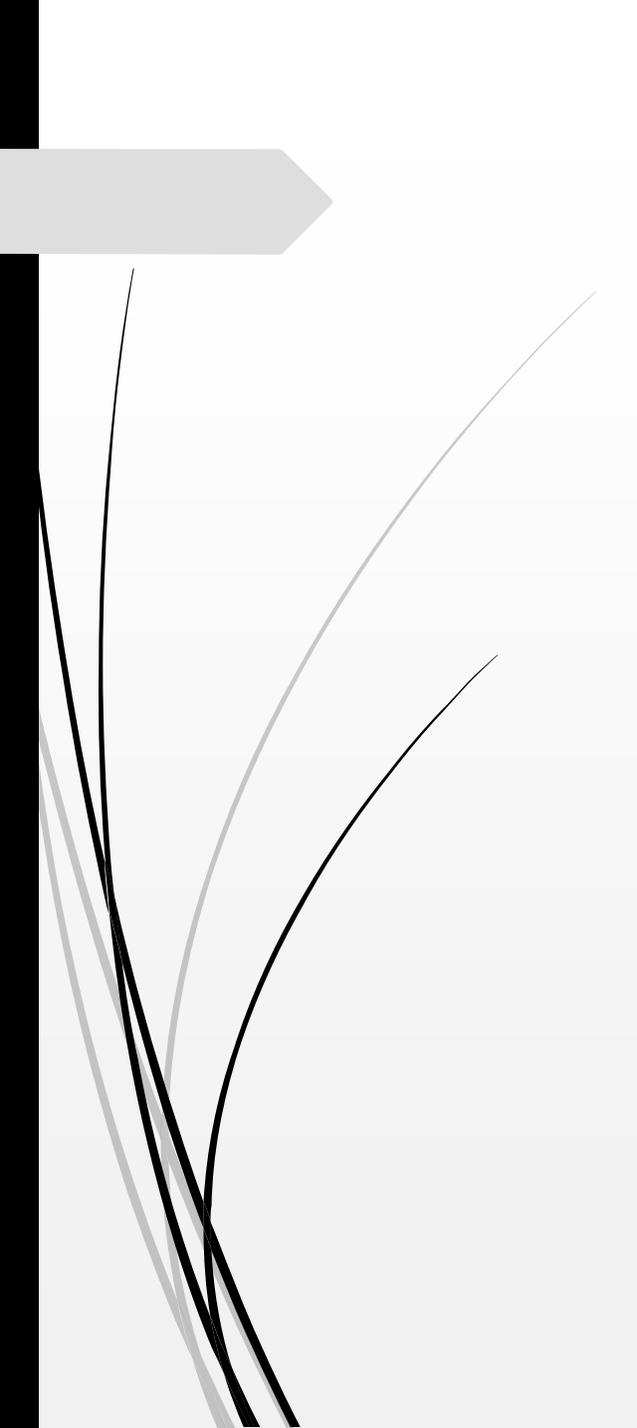
3. Problematic terminology: SGBV framing



" ... ABAAD addresses harmful, or traditional harmful practices without necessarily referring to this terminology in this course, but in action we definitely focus on issues relating to forced child marriages and on other issues that has to do with these practices." - ABAAD

"... we will still submit a proposal to our major donors using the vernacular 'harmful traditional' or 'harmful cultural practices'. Just because we know that that is the vernacular and it resonates and that's what they [the major donors] are working towards." - World Vision

"It is a term we used to use, but we try to stay away from that word to the community. We just call it a harmful practice because we don't want to demonise culture and we don't want to come with these imposing western forces, trying to tell them that their culture is bad. ...It's a non-starter..." - World Vision



Thank you!

Elisabet le Roux (Stellenbosch University)

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Brenda E. Bartelink (University of Groningen)

eleroux@sun.ac.za