

# UGANDA

## Designing a gender-transformative intervention to involve men and boys in the prevention of intimate partner violence against women and girls in rural Uganda

Authors: Jennifer A. Wagman, Fred K. Nalugoda, Paul Fleming, Gertrude Nakigozi, Neema Nakyanjo

### BACKGROUND

Efforts are greatly needed to effectively engage men and boys in the prevention of intimate partner violence (IPV), the most common form of violence against women and girls (VAWG) worldwide.<sup>1,2</sup>

This study seeks to design an evidence-based intervention framework for successfully engaging Ugandan boys and men in programming that addresses VAWG and aims to reduce men's perpetration of violence and lead to sustained transformation of social norms surrounding gender and masculinity. The setting for the project is Rakai District, Uganda. Researchers from Rakai Health Sciences Program (RHSP), a 25-year HIV and reproductive health research and service organization, have conducted extensive investigation, including intervention research, over the past 16 years to understand the epidemiology of male-perpetrated IPV against Ugandan women and develop effective prevention interventions.

RHSP designed and implemented a primary IPV prevention intervention, called the Safe Homes And Respect for Everyone (SHARE) Project, between 2005 and 2009.<sup>3</sup> SHARE

was nested into RHSP's existing HIV research and service provision infrastructure, to combine efforts to reduce IPV and HIV infection.<sup>4</sup> SHARE involved community mobilization and clinic-based screening and brief intervention and was evaluated through a cluster randomized trial nested in the Rakai Community Cohort Study (RCCS). Findings from the trial suggest exposure to SHARE was associated with significant decreases in physical and sexual IPV (including forced sex) against women and HIV incidence in the general population.<sup>5</sup> While these findings greatly advance the field of IPV and HIV prevention, an outstanding limitation is that SHARE had no impact on men's self-reporting of perpetrating IPV against their female partners. The current project aims to address this gap by conducting mixed methods research to understand Rakai men's and boys' attitudes about IPV and gender norms; assess barriers and facilitators to their participation in activities aimed at reducing VAWG and promoting gender equality; and design a culturally appropriate, gender-transformative intervention to involve men and boys in the prevention of male-perpetrated IPV against women and girls in Rakai, Uganda.

### PROJECT AIM

To develop an integrated, evidence-based framework for working with men and boys to prevent IPV against women and girls in Rakai.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Analyse two modules of existing data on men's participation in SHARE (module 1) and attitudes about gender norms (module 2) and use findings to inform development of qualitative guides for formative intervention design research.
- Qualitatively assess perceived individual, relationship/family, social barriers to men's/boys' participation in IPV prevention focused on masculinity norms.
- Qualitatively examine men's/boys' violence and social norms surrounding gender and masculinity.
- Develop a tailored, integrated framework for a gender-transformative intervention to involve men and boys in the prevention of IPV against women and girls.

### PROJECT METHODS

A sequential, 3-step, mixed methods approach will be used.

**First**, we will conduct a secondary analysis of RCCS survey data collected in 2008-2009 from men (15-49 years) living in the 4 SHARE clusters (N=600). Male RCCS participants in SHARE clusters completed 2 survey modules: **Module 1:** Men's exposure to, participation in and attitudes about SHARE activities. **Module 2:** Attitudes about gender norms. Data from these modules will be analysed, using descriptive statistics to assess trends and characterize differences between men who do/do not report IPV perpetration, to include frequencies for dichotomous and categorical variables, using X<sup>2</sup> and Fisher's exact tests for differences in proportions by IPV status. Continuous variables will be assessed by means and medians using t-tests and Wilcoxon rank sum test. Findings will inform the development of in-depth interview (IDI) and focus group discussion (FGD) guides.

**Second**, we will conduct 40 IDIs and 12 FGDs with male community members and local leaders, men's health providers, RHSP staff and RHSP Community Advisory Board members. Qualitative interviews and focus groups will aim to: (1) Identify barriers to engaging men in IPV prevention activities; and (2) Explore underlying factors of men's violence; social constructions of masculinity and male gender norms; types of men's controlling behaviours and their association with violence; perceptions about women's rights and empowerment; and generate ideas for tailoring a gender-transformative approach for involving men and boys in

the prevention of IPV against women and girls. IDI and FGD notes will be transcribed, translated into English, word processed and imported into QSR NVivo V10.<sup>6</sup> Qualitative data will be analysed through identification of recurrent themes following Crabtree and Miller's 5 step "interpretive process."<sup>7</sup> Transcripts will be read to identify common themes, codes will be developed and ~10% of data will be double coded and inter-rater reliability assessed. Coded text will be extracted and organized and read to identify emergent themes. Matrices will be created to compare codes by type of participant (age, IPV typology, marital status, etc.).

**Third**, we will follow multiple steps to develop a gender-transformative intervention to involve boys and men in prevention of IPV. We will begin by using the "spectrum of prevention" model<sup>8,9</sup> to develop a compilation of promising IPV perpetration approaches to reach men at all levels of the population. Next we will triangulate findings from the secondary data analysis, qualitative research and literature review to develop a unified framework and specific approach for the tailored intervention. The framework will be shared with key individuals and groups for feedback. Their input will be used to refine and finalize the intervention. Research findings and a description of the intervention will be disseminated via peer-reviewed publications, scientific conferences and local meetings. Lessons learned and findings from this study will be used to develop a grant proposal seeking support to conduct a larger study/trial to scale up the intervention and evaluate its effectiveness.

### WHAT WE WILL ACHIEVE

This work will result in:

- New knowledge of men's participation in IPV prevention
- Expanded understanding of masculinity norms
- Strengthened knowledge of men's participation
- New model for IPV prevention for men

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