

2003

Men and Masculinities Conference



Building Effective
Partnerships
Between Men and



Women for the
Achievement of
Gender Equality



GETNET

gender education and training network

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GETNET MEN AND MASCULINITIES CONFERENCE 1-3 DECEMBER 2003

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

To create a platform for discussion and debate on issues relating to masculinity and gender equality by key role players in the field;

To bring men and women together as stakeholders, in order to encourage partnerships for the achievement of gender equality;

To consolidate learnings and experiences and to develop further strategies that will guide work with men towards gender equality;

To use the opportunity provided by the heightened awareness and media coverage during the 16 Days of Activism and HIV/AIDS Day to focus on the gender aspects of these issues, especially the role of men.

WORLD AIDS DAY DEDICATION

Pethu Serote, Director of GETNET invited participants to use the space the conference provided to reflect on HIV/AIDS, to examine where we are as a country and as communities and to recommit ourselves to fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

We also recommit ourselves to the struggles we are fighting as a city, province and nation.

The Mayor, Dr Nomaindia Mfeketo lit a candle of peace.

Umthombo we Afrika, a theatre group presented a powerfully charged piece of community theatre on HIV/AIDS.



OPENING ADDRESS

THE MAYOR, ELDERPERSON DR NOMAINDIA MFEKETO



The mayor expressed her pleasure at being among friends working on gender issues which she herself felt passionate about as an activist, a leader and a mother of two boys whom she was trying to raise in a progressive way.

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in areas like Langa and Gugulethu clearly indicated that we have a war on our hands but do not know how to stop it. Men in particular do not come forward to talk about the HIV status. It is left to brave women to disclose their HIV status, to explain how they became HIV positive and what they do to make peace with themselves. HIV/AIDS is not a death sentence to those who know their status and take care of themselves.

women. If women are able to say NO and get out of abusive relationships and make a difference to the meaning of love, peace and happiness, then we will achieve a better society. Why is it so difficult to achieve these objectives? There are two major obstacles. The first is that young men do not understand that when you say NO you mean NO. The second is that men rape at home and in relationships and when you are used to doing that at home, nothing can stop you doing it outside.

Where do gender sensitivity and gender equality start? They start at home. Gender training starts with that little doll or that little car you give your little girl and little boy. It starts with fathers and mothers taking responsibility as parents.

It starts with empowering our children at an early age to differentiate between wrong and right.

“ A child is raped by a relative and is too afraid to tell her mother because we don't talk to our children. ”

As a society, we have forgotten that gender equality is not the responsibility of men only. It is a myth that African men are conservative. They can change. And they can regain the respect which they were accorded in pre-Eurocentric times. But men need to respect themselves and others before this can happen. It is a real challenge to instil the value of respect in the younger generation – respect for themselves and respect for women. There was a visible absence of young people at the march on 25 November, an event organised as part of the Sixteen Days of Activism against the Abuse of Women. The challenge of this workshop must be to reach young people.

Fundamental in this activism is to achieve a change of behaviour, a change of mindset and the empowerment of

We do not talk to our children about relationships. A child is raped by a relative and is too afraid to tell her mother because we don't talk to our children. Society consists of members of families. If I am doing my bit and you are doing your bit then we make a difference. We must take responsibility for our families for the sake of the country.

Let us stop preaching about gender and HIV/AIDS and talk about real issues and be practical about them. If we had theorised about our struggle without being practical we would not be here today. May your deliberations be fruitful for your group and at many other levels.

Let us now share a moment of silence and show respect for those who have died as a result of abuse or HIV/AIDS.

OPENING ADDRESS

EBRAHIM RASOOL, MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



The Minister congratulated GETNET for using the occasion of World Aids Day to focus on gender issues. He said that he had come to understand that getting to the beginning of the pipeline required coming to grips with gender issues, especially of empowering women to assert control over their own bodies and dealing with the contradictions of heterosexuality. Until we grapple with gender issues we are essentially looking in the wrong place, he said, and told a story to illustrate his point: One dark night, someone comes upon a man looking for his car keys under a street lamp. After fifteen minutes of searching, the man admits that he did not lose the keys under the lamp post but that was the only place where the light was shining. The lesson to be learnt, said Minister Rasool, was that we need to step out of the areas where tradition, custom and academia have shone the light and move into areas which are not clear to us. Coming to grips with the significance of gender in the HIV/Aids epidemic was one way of doing this.

The current information revolution was bringing epochal changes on a global scale. Change is occurring in every aspect of our lives. The relative certainty of a few years ago has given way to complete uncertainty. This often means a loss of power to individuals, religious institutions, multilateral organisations and nations. How we utilise this uncertainty is critical. We can see it either as a moment of power, an opportunity to reinvent tradition and move forward or we can capitulate to powerlessness. We should not see this as a moment of powerlessness but as a moment for creating a discourse that empowers us and creates the possibility of change. We can use this moment of great contradiction, flux and uncertainty to reinvent ourselves to make life different. We can take the opportunity to articulate change. Our mindsets determine how we utilise this moment. The more uncertain people are, the more dogmatic they become. We see that religious institutions under threat have become more defensive, more fundamentalist in their

mindset. The challenge is to encourage debate. We need to ask whether it is a good thing to have a world that is unbalanced by great concentrations of wealth and power. We need to reassert multilateral organisations to counterbalance the power of the USA.

The greatest victim of global flux is tradition, affecting, the family, sexuality and the division of labour. The notion that the man is the breadwinner is disappearing. The question is: How does tradition deal with this change? Does it roll with the punches or fight back? How does tradition cope with change? Tradition has a history of inventing itself. One response has been to hold onto traditional discourse. Families retreat into enclaves, insulated from the world, and hold on to tradition. They assert that whatever may happen out there does not happen in my house. A second reaction has been to try and stop the change, as we see with fundamentalists who identify the family and women's role as sites from which to fight back. Fundamentalists re-assert the primacy of these spaces and literal control of their lives. They teach women that they are only strong enough to retain a traditional way of life. Fundamentalists also understand that they cannot win this battle unless there is the possibility of state power and thus we see fundamentalist religious organisations of Hindu, Muslim and Christian persuasions attaching themselves to political parties or forming political groups in order to gain access to state power. There have also been economic, gender and environmental fundamentalists. As with religious fundamentalists, these fundamentalists fight back while traditionalists retreat.

The question is: How do we do things differently without denying the complexity of reality, retreating or attacking? What do progressives do that is different in their response to uncertainty? What do WE do?

Progressives understand the gap of uncertainty, they are not afraid of it. They understand that the antidote to

exclusivity is cosmopolitanism and diversity. They seek not simple truths but the common ground of consensus and negotiation, even in families. They understand that men and women negotiate the division of labour.

This men and women negotiate the division of labour. This does not just happen. We need tools that can help us reconstruct relationships and negotiate the terms of gender relations at home, at work and in our institutions. The tools that we need for this negotiation and this way of living need to be at the disposal of progressive people. Tools of negotiation are necessary for establishing good relations between government and citizenry and transforming the pomp and ceremony of politics into healthy citizenry. GETNET helps to provide these tools through its literature and workshops.

South Africa's achievements in moving towards a progressive society are captured in the Constitution. The Constitution has led to negotiation for gender equality in the tax regime, the welfare system and in the health and diplomatic fields. While there has been movement in the direction of equality between black and white, women and men, there are many shortcomings. Women and black people remain stacked at the lower end of the job scale. There are also abuses of the Constitution. Companies make their wives 50% partners and then claim equity to win contracts. The patriarchal mindset has not yet been deconstructed. Issues of identity have not been won. All the faultlines are still racially defined. Gender mechanisms are in place but sexism has still not been removed from the school curriculum or religion. Entrepreneurship remains difficult because apartheid robbed black people of confidence and the ability to take risks and develop economic leadership skills.

Civil society is extremely important for the process of transformation in South Africa. GETNET and other organisations should not take civil society passively but defend the very notion of civil society in the process of building a South African citizenry. Civil society is not a threat to government but a means of strengthening government. Civil society and government have different approaches but we are all in the same boat. We need to identify the common ground amongst us and understand the differences between us.

At every level we need to debate: What is a gendered curriculum? What helps to build a confident psyche? We need to see this moment of enormous flux and uncertainty as an opportunity to stand up and contribute to the confident remaking of society. While gender has been used as a springboard for fundamentalism, it is important that we use gender for creating a world that is more progressive, gentle and equal.

DISCUSSION FOLLOWING THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Identity

The issue of identity emerged as a strong theme. It was generally agreed that apartheid and patriarchy had disrupted identities and that all of us are victims in certain ways. It was felt that since neither men nor women achieve a gender lens automatically, GETNET and other gender organisations have a crucial role to play.

Globalisation

Minister Rasool said that the South African government was both a combatant and a victim of globalisation. At home, the achievements of the first decade were largely quantitative and perhaps we had been carried away by statistics. A different discourse was needed for the second decade to ensure that political representation of women translated into where street lamps, bus shelters, parks and informal training should be located and what a gender sensitive curriculum should look like.

Patriarchy

More work was needed on the terrain of ideology if patriarchy was to be combated. Patriarchy was under assault globally and the world was ready for a new set of ideas and a battle plan that would achieve a new way of seeing the world. We must use gender ideology to go do battle, to scrutinise, question and debate but remain open to negotiation rather than to dominate. 'This is the moment for persuasion' said Minister Rasool.

ENGAGING MEN AND MASCULINITIES IN THE STRUGGLE TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY



PANEL: Peter Jordaan - GETNET Men and Masculinities Programme
Keith Ruiters – UWC Psychology Department
Mbuyiselo Botha – South African Men's Forum.

GETNET's Men and Masculinities Programme

Presentation: **Peter Jordaan**



GETNET is the first organisation in South Africa to have a dedicated men's programme.

Philosophy: The philosophical assumptions underlying the programme are:

- Men are powerful and influential and influence the outcome of struggle that involves the situation and rights of women;
- Men are either not involved and usually opposed to gender struggles;
- Some men can be persuaded to participate in the struggle for gender equality

Methodology:

The programme centres around a two and a half day workshop which aims to engage men and targets men in NGOs, the public and private sector. The programme uses

adult learning methodologies such as interactive and participatory group work. It seeks to create a safe place for men by ensuring that facilitators and participants are all men and following a male based experiential learning approach.

Content:

Key areas of content covered in the first two days encompass self-reflection; interrogation of culture, tradition and religion; deconstruction of power relations; a close look at HIV/AIDS and Gender Based Violence (GBV). The third day involves planning for change and grounding it in the real world through discussing what it means to be 'a new man', obstacles to change and personal planning.

Outcomes:

Four hundred men have been trained so far. Some of these have been invited to join the Gender Coordinators' Training offered by GETNET.

Assessment:

The issue of how one measures success presents a number of challenges:

The first hurdle is the difficulty of measuring whether a paradigm shift has occurred for an individual. The second is whether one seeks formal assessment through the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). GETNET opted not to seek NQF accreditation. Also, GETNET found that since organisations and institutions were less willing to send people to participate in a men's programme, the programme had to be subsidised.

Men as partners and men as parents for the struggle for gender equality

Presentation: Keith Ruiters

INSIGHT:



It is important for men to become more effective care-givers. If they do not cultivate the empathy which can be generated by caregiving, it is more possible for them to commit violence without feeling anything. In societies with very little violence, men are more involved in care-giving.

Gender inequality:

Keith Ruiters said there was more gender inequality in South Africa than most believed. White males are threatened by white women and black men in the economy; black men are threatened by the rise of women, unemployment and poverty. Women headed households were on the increase. While many women were experiencing greater freedom, women in the rural areas were experiencing greater poverty as unemployment affected women more than men.

Men as social partners were informed by heterosexual assumptions so that most men were concerned with success and responsibility for families even if they were not able to achieve these aims.

Men's behaviour as sexual partners contributed both to the high incidence of Gender Based Violence in South Africa and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Statistics showed that South African men were the most violent in the world with one rape occurring every thirty seconds. Sexual violence was triggered by men's insistence on penetrative sex; it was often perpetrated by vulnerable young black men who were poor and with few prospects. Peer pressure to be studs – virile, active, competing with other men and scoring women – was high in poor communities.

Men as fathers were less involved with care-giving than in the past. It was important for men to become more

effective care-givers. If they did not cultivate the empathy which can be generated by caregiving, it became more possible for them to commit violence without feeling anything. There was ample evidence that in societies with very little violence, men were more involved in care-giving.

What sort of creature is the new man?

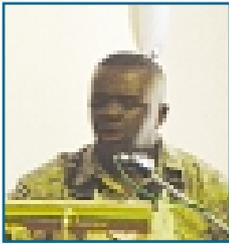
The old man is associated with an image or abstraction of what men ought to be rather than what men are really experiencing. In developing the new man, we should not replace new abstract images for the old, impossible-to-attain image. We need to develop the new man on the basis of what men are actually experiencing.

“ While many women were experiencing greater freedom, women in the rural areas were experiencing greater poverty as unemployment affected women more than men. ”

The experience of the SA Men's Forum

Presentation: Mbuyiselo Botha

INSIGHT:



CEOs are largely men. We must challenge CEOs to engage in gender campaigns in their companies and take gender based violence seriously. Victims of GBV are not productive workers.

The SA Men's Forum was launched by Dr Bongani Khumalo, the current CEO of Transnet because he saw that South African men were turning their backs on women after both had been in the trenches fighting apartheid. He established the SA Men's Forum to see if men could focus on themselves as men and intervene to stop violence against women. He believed that to stop gender violence men needed to become involved in advocacy so they could move among men and challenge the mindset of masculinity centred on male power and privilege.

It is a lonely road for men who do not conform to 'what men are supposed to do'. Men who advocate change face strong resistance. Men tell you: 'A man is a man. Why do you take the things of whites and bring them here?' or they say, 'You are serving your own interests by talking this way.' Women too, defend patriarchal institutions and practices such as the church

Advocacy is important because South Africa has entered new terrain through the Constitution which endorses the idea of changing the gender order. This new terrain needs special care.

What does the SA men's Forum do?

- SA Men's Forum and ADAPT are engaged in talking to schoolchildren about fatherhood.
- SA Men's Forum and the HSRC are involved in a major project focussing on best practice among men

through a photographic exhibition that will be taken to schools.

- SA Men's Forum is involved in a shebeen project which entails talking to men in shebeens and sports stadiums. 'And you don't do it after drinks, you do it before.'

“ It is a lonely road for men who do not conform to 'what men are supposed to do. ”

What does the SA Men's Forum mean by advocacy?

- We need to actively use a gender discourse so that other men and the media can see that men are passionate about the inequalities of gender and the things that are done to perpetuate this inequality.
- We need to influence the media to think about how issues of gender violence are portrayed and encourage them to show alternatives to violence.
- Some men pretend to know all. We need to challenge this game.
- CEOs are largely men. We must challenge CEOs to engage in gender campaigns in their companies and take gender based violence seriously. Victims of GBV are not productive workers.
- We must influence trade unions to commit themselves to making gender a focus of their programmes – especially the issue of men as fathers.

PLENARY DISCUSSION: ENGAGING MEN AND MASCULINITIES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

INSIGHT:

Changing mindsets requires continuous education, training and debate; it is not a once-off thing. It needs a lot of persuasion and patience. Change is threatening and encroaches on a person's comfort zone.

How do we move beyond culture as a defence?

Mbuyiselo Botha said that black men often hide behind 'culture' to avoid talking about and engaging in change. Some men used culture in the way that they might use racism. 'Who are you to attack my culture?' is a defensive reaction; it stifles debate so that you cannot involve people in any credible discourse. Changing this mindset requires continuous education, training and debate; it is not a once-off thing. It needs a lot of persuasion and patience. Change is threatening and encroaches on a person's comfort zone. Culture, poverty and access to wealth influenced each other and impacted on gender.

How do we reach men where they are?

Three examples of efforts to reach men where they are

- SA Men's Forum tries to engage men where they are in shebeens and sports stadiums.
- GETNET training encourages men to engage other men, on the streets or wherever they might be.
- Soul City focus on masculinities has been very successful in reaching men through the medium of television.

COMMISSION REPORTS

COMMISSION: GENDER EDUCATION AND TRAINING MEN

Facilitator: Peter Jordaan

INSIGHT:

Developing empathy and listening skills among men is an essential starting point for men's training and needs to precede work on gender and human rights. Empathy and listening skills for men parallels assertiveness training for women. Men should be encouraged to embrace their own identities separately from the pack. They need to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Context: The Gender education group highlighted three issues that were important to the context in which men's training takes place. The first is the legislative and constitutional context which guarantees equality and sets out a vision of a non-racist, non-sexist society. The second is the challenge of having a legislative framework that is in many instances, ahead of the people. The third is the understanding that as people we cannot come to full humanity if we live in a skewed relationship with people.

How do men learn?

There was consensus that the 'pack' or herd mentality that men develop as a result of their socialisation made group work a necessity. It also means that trainers need to encourage men to see themselves as individuals with their own identities within the pack. Some aspects of the way men learn serve as obstacles to changing mindsets. For example, men tend to listen selectively; they tend to lack emotional intelligence because they are trained to deny their own emotions; men are trained to operate cognitively, from the head; men live by myths such as 'it is appropriate for men to have power over women'. For many men, the myths become a reality.

Content: The group felt that it was important for men's training to create a safe space for men to discuss the impact of their socialisation, deconstruct myths and get in touch with their own emotions.

Other issues of content included exploring issues of Culture and gender; sexuality and sexual orientation; condom negotiation; power and assertiveness.

Tools and what they can do: It was agreed that workshops using adult education methodologies are necessary but often do not go beyond theory and so do not change behaviour. The media can encourage people to talk about gender issues but the challenge is to design different messages for different audiences. For example, the Charlize Theron message, 'Real men don't rape' encouraged debate but did not reach all men in the desired way. After care in the form of counselling, mentoring and coaching can help to give support and develop positive images and role models for people to live by. It can also help men to deal with contradictions in their own behaviour.

Contradictions: 'Freedom fighter by day, terrorist by night' captures the contradictions in some men's behaviour and highlights the gap between slogans and practice. The group felt that the gap between theory and practice was particularly problematic when it became 'sexy' or trendy to attend men's workshops but to do nothing about the issues after the event.

Directions to move in: The group made the following recommendations:

- Developing empathy and listening skills among men is an essential starting point for men's training and needs to precede work on gender and human rights.
- Empathy and listening skills for men parallels assertiveness training for women.
- We should encourage men to find their individual identities separate from the pack and to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- The aim of men's training should not be simply to sensitise people but to effect change.
- GETNET should develop materials to help facilitate discussion of sexuality and sexual orientation.

- The media needs to portray positive male role models such as young, unemployed black men who carry their children to creches.

COMMISSION: MALE ACTIVISM: MEN'S GROUPINGS AND FORMATIONS

Facilitator: [Jeremy Daphne](#)

INSIGHT:



A male activist is someone who talks in a non-stereotypical way about gender issues; tries to conduct himself in a non-stereotypical way; takes up the challenge to work among those who may not readily accept the

message; engages in organised activity and consciously works for change.

What is a male activist? The group identified key characteristics of an activist.

A gender or male activist is someone who:

- talks in a non-stereotypical way about gender issues; tries to conduct himself in a non-stereotypical way;
- takes up the challenge to work among those who may not readily accept the message;
- engages in organised, collective activity rather than working alone (see list below);
- conducts consciousness-raising activities and works for changes in consciousness.

Directory of men's activist organisations in South Africa

Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (ADAPT)
Commission on Gender Equality (CGE)
Moral regeneration
Embizweni
Five-in-six

Gender Advocacy Project (GAP)
 Gender Links
 GETNET
 Hearts of men
 Khula Madoda
 Masimanyane
 Media Institute of South Africa (MISA)
 Men as Partners (MAP)
 Men for Change
 Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA)
 Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPSA)
 SA Mens' Forum

The challenges of men's activism included scarcity of resources, cultural practices and myths, the tendency for men to expect to be paid for their work while women volunteer; sexist behaviours induced by male socialisation.

A key strategy for male activism was conducting workshops on the Constitution and linking the need for change to rights and responsibilities. The group felt that the starting point for these workshops was among children at school and should be encouraged by the curriculum. People in powerful social positions should take the lead in male activism. The group felt that men should work with men but also take up women's issues.

The group identified tasks for GETNET as a follow-up to the workshop:

- Providing guidelines and materials on how to engage men in discussion around complex gender issues;
- Compiling a directory of gender/men's activist organisations to facilitate links between them and individual activists.



COMMISSION: MEN AS PARTNERS AND PARENTS

Facilitator: **Keith Ruiters**

INSIGHT:

For change to take place, men need to see love and intimacy differently; they should not equate it with sex but link it to respect. We should not make the aspirations of the new man too abstract. How we project those abstractions is what becomes real.

The group reported that they asked a lot of questions they did not have answers for; the more they talked about men as partners and parents, the more issues they opened up. Here are some of the questions which the group discussed.

How do we help men to feel accepted and to have self-confidence? Unemployed men need opportunities to raise their self-esteem so that unemployment does not mean a loss of manhood. It was felt that it was important to avoid making the aspirations of the new man too abstract. How we project those values becomes real.

How do we translate slogans into action? We need to find ways of bridging the gap between talk and practice, slogans and behaviour. One of the main difficulties is that men may talk in a progressive way at a workshop but behave differently at home. To overcome this division, men need to find ways of dealing with social pressure to conform to chauvinistic notions of masculinity.

'Can I trust my husband with my children?' Women are often not sure if their children are safe with their partners; their mistrust stems from the prevalence of child abuse and abuse of women. The group felt that it was incumbent on men to earn the respect and trust of women.

Are all men potentially rapists? How do we help men to look at their own vulnerability? The group felt that there was a tendency to pathologise rape in the media and this made it difficult for women to accept that their own partners could be rapists. One way of dealing with the issue of vulnerability was to interrogate the rituals that men used for creating masculinities.

How do we bridge the communication gap between fathers and children? The main issue was the change in values between generations. The group identified some helpful strategies. The media, especially television programmes like Soul City, was trying to construct scenarios around these issues. Community theatre was also an effective method of spreading the word and engaging people in gender issues.

How do fathers educate their children around issues of sexuality? The group felt that fathers should take more interest in their children and find alternatives to violent forms of behaviour in the home. Positive images of men as fathers in the media would be helpful in establishing new role models.

PLENARY DISCUSSION OF COMMISSION REPORTS

Chair: [Geoff Mamputa](#)

INSIGHT:



The message we need to convey to men is: START TALKING. As you build an open relationship between men and women, men and men, the answers will begin to fall into place.

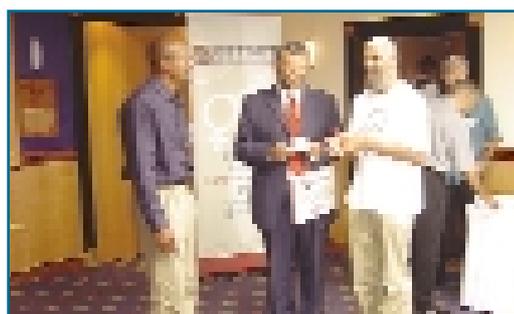
Why does society continue to put patriarchal structures in place? What is the pay-off for different groups in society? What are the fears? It was felt that men's training needed to grapple with these questions.

What are the objections to building partnerships between men and women? The issue of partnerships between men and women was identified as contentious even among progressive people. Some women's groups were opposed to spending resources on men. In contrast, GETNET saw men's work as bringing men on board in order to strengthen mainstreaming gender work.

Challenges common to all three commissions:

- The challenge of getting men to START TALKING. Talk helps to build an open relationship between men and women, men and men and the answers begin to fall into place.
- The challenge of interrogating what men mean by Culture;
- The challenge of translating slogans into practice;
- The challenge of changing mindsets and shifting paradigms of masculinity;
- The challenge of strengthening progressive masculinities as an alternative to violent, patriarchal masculinities
- Using the power of the media to portray positive masculinities and so to change rather than reinforce stereotypes
- Urging GETNET to develop materials for activist men to use in the discussion of complex gender issues such as sexuality, sexual orientation and gender based violence.

“ The question is: Why does society continue to put patriarchal structures in place? ”



INTERSECTION BETWEEN HIV/AIDS AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

PANEL: Khaya Nkontso, Planned Parenthood Association
Neil Hendersen, Department of Social Work,
UWC
Luann Hatane, Western Cape NACOSA

MEN AS PARTNERS

Presentation: Khaya Nkontso

INSIGHT:



Language is gendered. A man with many women partners is described as 'udlalani', 'sbethi', 'umancula', expressions that make a man proud. A woman with multiple partners is referred to as 'isifebe', a pejorative and derogatory term.

Men's training through PPASA

The Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPASA) works with men around parenting issues, sexual health and the eradication of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The underlying assumption that informs this work is that sexual health is a reflection not only of the absence of disease but of the quality of relations and relationships. PPASA targets men in Khayelitsha and Langa as these areas are believed to have a high HIV/AIDS rate of infection and donors identify these as key areas.

Working with men shows that societal expectations of men place them at risk of contracting the HIV/AIDS virus and also of passing it on. These expectations are evident in the language used to talk about men and women who have multiple partners. A man with many women partners is described as 'udlalani', 'sbethi', 'umancula', expressions that make a man proud. A woman with multiple partners on the other hand is referred to as 'isifebe', a pejorative and derogatory term. PPASA targets men who spend most of their time in townships.

PPASA is involved in sex education in order to debunk myths surrounding sex and HIV/AIDS. PPASA encourages people to go for HIV/AIDS testing. Knowing your status helps you to live healthily and positively even if you are HIV positive; it helps you to remain loyal to your partner if you are HIV negative.

Training activities

PPASA runs workshops for men and women (12 men & 12 women) to discuss sexuality. These workshops give men the opportunity to listen to women and to ask difficult questions like: Why do women say NO when they want to have sex?

PPASA also runs a peer educator programme for groups of 15 men at a time. Once trained, these men educate men in their communities. PPASA targets prison officials, hospital workers, men in trade unions who act as gatekeepers. They have tried to access the police services but have not been successful. The programme has been running for six months. PPASA also conducts education with people in the streets such as truck drivers at depots or men at taxi ranks.

PPASA runs programmes for pre-initiates to help young men to debunk myths around sexuality (such as flesh-to-flesh contact with a circumcised penis) and to discourage heavy drinking.

Follow-up: All these programmes are followed up through special events such as condom week, health week or World Aids Day. The PPASA office in Khayelitsha is open all week and men are free to come and talk with the PPASA workers at any time.

Challenges

Many challenges are encountered in implementing these programmes. Unemployed men expect payment and certificates for the training and jobs afterwards. They have difficulty in understanding that a certificate of attendance

speaks on their behalf. Sometimes unemployed men who are smokers harass other participants for cigarettes. An educator who is a bachelor encounters difficulties talking with married men who do not accept him. Some uneducated men do not understand the terms used in the training and become hostile to the ideas. However, many participants are pleased to have the opportunity to talk about gender issues and to discuss sexuality among men.

Questions raised in discussion

The sex act is not the only act of intimacy in a relationship. How does one talk about other forms of intimacy? PPASA educators try to encourage men not to see women as sex objects. They encourage men to talk about cultural taboos such as masturbation and the fear of being 'bafazini'.

Does PPASA engage circumcision officials?

PPASA has formed ties with the traditional surgeons' organisation Izwi Lwabantu in Khayelitsha. PPASA hopes to train these men to help prevent the transmission of the HI Virus.

Talking about how to negotiate condom use is an important aspect of peer education. Men admit that they have difficulty in asking women how to use condoms.

FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE ABUSE OF WOMEN BY MIDDLE EASTERN IMMIGRANT MEN IN GOTHENBERG, SWEDEN'

Presentation: [Neil Hendersen](#)



INSIGHT:

We need to get men to talk about their experiences of abuse in childhood as a means of preventing their abuse of others in adulthood.

Neil Hendersen presented the research findings of his MA thesis on Middle Eastern immigrant men in one city in Sweden. The study was based on interviews with 13 people, 2 of whom were Middle Eastern immigrant men

convicted of gender based violence. The Middle Eastern men in this study came to Sweden from Iran.

Findings

Middle Eastern men are subordinated and marginalised within Swedish society and their masculinities are damaged as a result of experiences in the Middle East and in Sweden. Wives are empowered in Swedish society and men lose control of their families. While Middle Eastern men have low status in the Swedish job market, Middle Eastern immigrant women are more likely to get employment because of Swedish gender equality norms. This means that wives work and bring in money, sharing the role of breadwinner. Their men are threatened by this empowerment of women as earners within the family. Women's confidence implicitly questions the hegemonic masculinity of Middle Eastern culture which pressurises men to succeed, defines men as breadwinners and women as dependent and passive.

Many of the Middle Eastern immigrants have come to Sweden after having their political power usurped in the Middle East. In Sweden, they are unable to get jobs, their degrees are not recognised and they are uncomfortable culturally. Their children, educated in Swedish schools, are questioning their fathers' authority.

“ We need to get men to talk about their experiences of abuse in childhood as a means of preventing their abuse of others in adulthood. ”

Middle Eastern families live in a segregated area on the outskirts of Gothenberg as this was the only accommodation available. Their isolation makes the immigrant community more subordinated and renders women more vulnerable to abuse. Middle Eastern men's masculinities are damaged before coming to Sweden as many were beaten by their fathers. These men tend to continue the cycle of violence.

30% of Middle Eastern immigrant men are likely to beat their wives, but many men do not abuse. Younger Middle Eastern men who have lived in Sweden longer are likely to be more tolerant of Swedish values and less likely to beat their wives. Iranian couples are four times more likely to get divorced than Swedish couples.

What do we learn from the study about men and gender based violence?

We need to get men to talk about their experiences of abuse in childhood as a means of preventing their abuse of others in adulthood. We need to speak to immigrant and marginalised communities in South Africa to find out what is happening.

INTERSECTION OF HIV/AIDS AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Presentation: [Luann Hatane](#)



INSIGHT:

HIV/AIDS messages tend to assume that women have the choice to negotiate condom use, but the reality is that many women have no choice about when and how they

have sex. Status and power relations within relationships influence women's ability to negotiate safe sex. We need forums where dialogue can take place within culture so that we can learn to understand each other better and develop ways of relating that give respect and dignity to ourselves and each other.

Luann Hatane of NACOSA in the Western Cape presented a detailed description of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa. This summary captures the main points.

Why is HIV/AIDS a gender issue?

HIV/AIDS occurs as a result of sexual intercourse. More women are affected by HIV but men drive the epidemic. Social status, gender and structural inequality are factors which sculpture the epidemic and labour women. It is women who carry the burden of the epidemic as people who are ill and as carers for the sick.

Over 5 million South Africans are infected with HIV. By 2015, there will be 3.6m to 4.8m orphaned children under the age of 15. In the Western Cape, the incidence of HIV infection jumped from 8% to 12.4% in 2003. The 20 - 30 year old group is most affected.

Women are biologically more vulnerable to HIV than men. Women have a larger mucosal surface which can come in contact with the virus; sperm has a high concentration of HIV; STI's are more difficult to detect in women and cultural practices such as dry sex and female circumcision make women more susceptible.

What messages do we convey about gender and HIV/AIDS?

Do we all have equal choice in what we do? Messages tend to assume that women have the choice to negotiate condom use, but the reality is that many women have no choice about when and how they have sex. Status and power relations within relationships influence women's ability to negotiate safe sex.

How do we influence the messages that are guided by institutions like the church?

The church can help by encouraging safe sex. It can also help by changing men's attitudes to caring and taking responsibility. We need to correct the gender imbalances in the way we handle the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Since the burden of disclosure falls mostly on women, we need to encourage men to go for HIV testing and to disclose their status. Since the burden of care falls mostly on women, we need to encourage men to see that they can also provide care in the household. Since the burden of volunteering in the community falls mostly on women we need to encourage men to volunteer. Men tend to ask, What is the benefit to me? We need to market the benefits of changing practices to men.

“ **Status and power relations within relationships influence women's ability to negotiate safe sex.** ”

HIV/AIDS AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

The cycle of stigma and discrimination

It is a myth that conjugal rights exist in marriage. What are women's rights in marriage and how do women access those rights?

Women who test positive for HIV at antenatal clinics talk about the risks they face within families. Social inequality situates them in a place where rights are denied. Unable to negotiate safe sex, they are vulnerable to HIV. They become infected. Their HIV status leads to more social inequality. Women are trapped in a cycle of stigma and discrimination.

How do we break this cycle of stigma and discrimination? By:

- Understanding women's rights and human rights and taking responsibility for implementing these rights;
- Changing attitudes and beliefs;
- Examining the value and significance of culture to ensure that culture upholds life, respect and dignity for men and women;
- Establishing dialogue within cultures;
- Finding the tree-shapers among men who can challenge other men.

We need forums where dialogue can take place within culture so that we can learn to understand each other better and develop ways of relating that give respect and dignity to ourselves and each other.



DISCUSSION OF THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN HIV/AIDS AND GBV

INSIGHT:

GBV is often designed to break women's power; repeated abuse breaks women down.

The challenge of HIV is that at one moment in time, you understand your life one way and the next moment you have to understand it very differently.

GBV and stereotypes of abusers

We need to look at the impact of our past on our men and try to understand the burden that black men face in South Africa. For example, what is the impact of migrant labour or Zulu men working as 'kitchen boys' on how Zulu men feel about masculinity? Abusers do not necessarily act in terms of the stereotypes associated with patriarchal culture. Multiple factors are involved. We need to dialogue to explore the issues.

Communities at risk of HIV

HIV is a disease and like any other disease, once it gets into a geographical location it impacts that community dramatically. The viral pool is more highly concentrated in communities with a high incidence of HIV.

Some communities like Mitchell's Plain have a relatively low HIV infection rate – 4% - but they are nevertheless at risk. Because the teenage pregnancy rate in Mitchell's Plain is so high, when the HIV epidemic enters this community, it will spread very fast. These factors impact on our planning and education work in such communities. A national HIV plan is not necessarily the most appropriate means of planning for prevention work since communities face different kinds of risk.

Power, inequality and dialogue

People want to hold on to their power and masculine identities are one way of doing this. Gender based violence is designed to break women's power. Repeated abuse of women does break their power.

The relationship of inequalities in our society makes it difficult for people to come to grips with their own histories and to embrace their own identities. How we understand ourselves as men and women requires dialogue.

Real dialogue is not about safer sex. People are not practising safer sex. The real dialogue is about socio-economic issues, how we are placed in relation to accessing food and anti-retrovirals.

COMMUNICATING WITH MEN: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN HIV/AIDS WORK

Special Input: [Geoff Mamputa](#)

INSIGHT:

There are masculinity issues in language. It is important to use language that men understand and relate to. For example, instead of saying, 'Be faithful to one partner', which goes against socialisation as a playboy or stud man about town, one can use words like 'Have guts enough to stick to one', or 'Weak men run away from relationships'.

Translation is not enough

It is not enough to translate concepts from English to indigenous languages. The challenge is to use appropriate and relevant language that incorporates and reflects local and regional idioms, values and norms. The current practice is to translate concepts into the eleven languages without regard to local and regional needs.

Despite translation of formal concepts, HIV/AIDS is still spoken about in an abstract manner even when the person in the street is being addressed. The language used is that of 'educated' people. Concepts such as safe sex, norms and values are not grounded in local languages and are foreign to most people in South Africa. Although these terms can be translated, they do not live within the local idiom and people cannot relate to them.

Contextualise language and use appropriate local concepts

This abstract, foreign way of talking creates discomfort and a perception that HIV/AIDS education is being imposed on communities. The challenge is for workers and educators in the sector to contextualise the language and concepts. For example, people in Cape Town townships find it difficult to relate to a slogan like 'Real men do not rape'. However, something like 'Genuine outies bullie nie' or 'Dis net moegoes wat vrou slaan' would be far more effective. The issue is not simply one of translating the message into the local lingo. The concepts of 'moegoes', 'genuine' and so on are concepts that resonate deeply with young and some older men in these communities.

Masculinity issues in language

There are also masculinity issues in relation to the use of language. It is important to use language that men relate to. For example, instead of saying, 'Be faithful to one partner', which goes against socialisation as a playboy or stud man about town, one can use words like, 'Have guts enough to stick to one', or 'Weak men run away from relationships'. These are important elements of men's language and ways of communicating that one needs to tap into when working with men.

It is important to understand local idioms. Most of the older people in the communities we work with do not name HIV/AIDS but refer to 'this thing outside', 'lent'iphandl'apha'. Youngsters talk about 'Two-Three', referring to the fact that this disease is fast, and can affect anybody, even the most attractive looking. 'Ugawulayo' refers to this great epidemic that chops down everything in its way. It is a more powerful term than AIDS. Why don't we use UGAWULAYO?

When we compel local populations to name sensitive issues and not to evade, we create discomfort. Frankness is interpreted as imposition and people become defensive.

COMMISSION REPORTS

COMMISSION: WORKING WITH MEN TO PREVENT AND COMBAT THE SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS

Facilitator: Khaya Nkontso

INSIGHT:

Building men means getting men to embark on a process of gender sensitivity, including sensitivity to their own gendering.

Promoting the conception of equal partners is an important part not only of HIV/AIDS work but of building men and promoting development in the country.

The challenge of working for the prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS

One of the main obstacles is the absence of a health-seeking lifestyle. Men do not want to take HIV tests or to accompany their partners to the clinic. They also do not want to use condoms. The challenge of HIV/AIDS education is to change lifestyles.

Building men means getting men to embark on a process of gender sensitivity, including sensitivity to their own gendering. It also means getting men involved in the caring aspects of HIV/AIDS.

Promoting the conception of equal partners is an part not only of HIV/AIDS work but of building men and promoting development in the country. The common principles of the Constitution and Human Rights frameworks can be used to help men accept the idea of equal partnerships.

Educators need to help men to unpack the notion of Culture and to relate Culture to political changes. Political changes should not be seen as separate from broader social changes. The new man needs mentorship. Progressive minded men need to support the new man. Dialogue is extremely important between men and between all those involved in the prevention of HIV/AIDS.



Working with men who are employed

Educators need to target areas where men are concentrated such as the mines and truck stops. We need to encourage company leaders to set the example for behavioural change.

Working with unemployed men

Educators need a structured approach when they communicate with men, especially unemployed men. Educators need to be aware of the language and idiom of specific localities and they should use materials of the appropriate literacy level.

We need to think about the needs of the unemployed when we recruit them to do volunteer work. Poverty alleviation and HIV/AIDS work should be linked. Interventions should be integrated so that unemployed men see the benefit of involvement in HIV/AIDS work.

“ Promoting the conception of equal partners is an part not only of HIV/AIDS work but of building men and promoting development in the country. ”

COMMISSION: THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN HIV/AIDS AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Facilitator: Neil Hendersen

INSIGHT:

Men act defensively to hold on to their power and use sex as a weapon. Building non-violent men is not a once off thing but an ongoing, every day process.

The problem of Gender Based Violence

Why are men violent? The group agreed that multiple factors contributed to the violence of men against women, children and other men. For example, social change affects intergenerational authority and impacts on 'traditional' ideas of male power, authority and control. Men act defensively to hold on to their power and use sex as a weapon.

Why do men who are not violent remain silent? The group felt that non-violent men should speak out more so that young men could follow their example. It is difficult for men to come out against GBV as there is resistance by state institutions and powerful individuals to talking about GBV. There is a culture of silence in relation to GBV.

Working with men to combat GBV

Building non-violent men is not a once off thing but an ongoing, every day process.

Facilitators working with men to combat GBV need to discuss issues such as:

- What is in it for me? What are the benefits for men who give up an aggressive identity?
- How do men improve their parenting skills? Men need training in conflict resolution and gender sensitivity.
- Learning tolerance means that men need to engage 'the other' and come to terms with homosexuality

and transgender identities. A safe environment is necessary for these conversations to occur.

Breaking the culture of silence

State institutions must take the lead in breaking the culture of silence. To develop the political will in state institutions we need to pressurise the judicial system to impose harsher sentences on GBV offenders and engage in advocacy.

Partnerships are important. To achieve more effective messaging we need to develop partnerships with private sector companies that regularly communicate with men, such as South African Breweries. For example, SAB could have a slogan like 'Men who drink Castle don't beat up their wives.'

PLENARY DISCUSSION OF COMMISSION REPORTS

Chair: Mhloti Mathye

INSIGHT:



GBV is invisible to many men; it is not recognised as violence and as something wrong. It is important to break the culture of silence surrounding GBV.

There are potential dangers in paying people for coming to workshops. Payment might discourage people taking action to improve their lives.

Can the way men learn be utilised in progressive men's education?

Some participants felt that educators should utilise the herd/pack mentality in communicating new ideas to men and in preparing materials for men's education. Men have certain ways of doing things and move in packs in which the pecking order is very strong. If the alpha male says something, he is always quoted. Others warned that the danger in utilising how men think in order to teach men might perpetuate stereotypes.

Strategic communication

Strategic communication is important in combating GBV. Some felt that local language was very important while others felt that a single unambiguous slogan and message was the best strategy. How do we develop specific messages for specific groups while trying to develop a clear message that talks to everyone?

Benefits and incentives

The issue of men wanting to work for money while women were prepared to volunteer was discussed at some length. Some felt that nobody should become poorer for wanting to work with others' and that HIV/AIDS work should be linked to Public Works projects. Programme managers should budget for salaries for HIV/AIDS workers. Others felt that communities could not depend on paid work only and that even in a capitalist society it was necessary to develop a culture of volunteering. It was pointed out that men who came to workshops were undergoing training and developing as persons rather than delivering a service to others. There were potential dangers in paying people for coming to workshops especially when peer pressure was involved. Payment might lead to discouragement of people taking action to improve their lives.

Culture of silence and invisibility of GBV

It was agreed that we need to break the silence on GBV and that men should be encouraged to speak about GBV. The difficulty was that GBV is perceived as a women's issue and even women only whisper about it. GBV is invisible to many men; it is not recognised as violence and as something wrong.

“ How do we develop specific messages for specific groups while trying to develop a clear message that talks to everyone? ”

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY



PANEL: Rev. Courtney Sampson: Independent Electoral Commission
Gertrude Fester: Commission on Gender Equality
Kamogelo Lekubu Wilderson: National Network on Violence against Women

BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

Presentation: [Rev. Courtney Sampson](#)

INSIGHT:

The challenge for gender work is to get people to feel abhorrence for and to name GBV as a common enemy. Abhorrence should not silence and marginalise people who have experienced GBV; abhorrence should become a unifying factor, the reason why people come together.

We need to create an ever-widening base of those who believe in gender equality. We have seen how one can no longer find anyone who believed in apartheid. This is because the new base has crowded out those who did. We need to do the same for gender equality so that we reach a point we can't find anyone who believes in male domination.

The IEC is a permanent body whose task is to conduct free and fair elections and to declare the outcome of those elections. The IEC works with the South African Local Government Authority (SALGA) since it relies heavily on local government infrastructure, both

personnel and physical infrastructure such as halls for meetings and polling stations. The IEC has sensitivity to gender issues but has not developed a strategy to address these issues. There is understanding that gender sensitivity is needed to achieve free and fair, decent and dignified elections.

Common enemy and common goals

The IEC has found that it is extremely difficult to bring all people into working towards a common goal in post apartheid South Africa. Achieving a common goal is more difficult than working against a common enemy. This insight should be utilised for gender work. For example, abhorrence of sexual abuse against women and children may help bind people together against this practice, but GBV had not yet become a common enemy. People do not find it abhorrent enough, it is perceived as something that just happens. The challenge for gender work is to get people to feel abhorrence for and to name GBV as a common enemy. Abhorrence should not silence and marginalise people who have experienced GBV; abhorrence should become a unifying factor, the reason why people come together.

Building good relationships through group work

The philosophy that informs the belief that common goals can be achieved is based on an understanding of the importance of relationships. If we are able to develop meaningful relationships among people, we are more able to achieve common goals. If our relationships are bad, people will find fault with the goals, because the relationship is at fault.

We need support and a team to work on relationships in a particular environment. High levels of co-operation are needed to work on building the trust and interdependence needed for common goals. Interaction between people in groups is important for team building and achieving common goals. Interaction is more effective than email communication. It is more important than book learning in a society where literacy levels are low and a culture of reading is absent. There is a saying that 'If you want to hide something from black people you must publish it in a book.'

Interaction is also important because our generation has to be the bridge between the past of apartheid and the new South Africa. Our generation has to sit and work through these issues in order to achieve a healthy society. Group interaction is based on oral story telling; it facilitates mentoring. Democracy is not only the work of black people or women. Democracy requires interaction between all our people. How does race intersect with gender and democracy?

A culture of rampant materialism is threatening our democracy. The new South Africa is being damaged by rampant materialism in the public service where materialist interest drowns all other issues. The public service is a sector in which one can achieve a decent living with little skill so people hang on to it. This means that for public sector employees, the primary focus is not the goals of the public service but materialistic concerns. Preoccupation with money raises unhealthy competition for jobs. The problem of materialism is far more rampant than it appears. People are willing to undermine one another to achieve their own ends no matter what history they may have shared. The power dynamic in this materialistic culture drowns issues of gender and race.

While affirmative action may speed up black advancement, it does so by encouraging racism. To make affirmative action work, you need a race consciousness. You have to count how many white and black people are in what jobs. The line between race consciousness and racism is very fine. Racism very quickly drowns all other issues, including gender. Vincent Maphai says the ANC should have placed a particular time frame on affirmative action. This raises the question: how short is the step between gender consciousness and sexism?

How do people unlearn?

The debate on how men learn is the wrong debate. How do people unlearn is a far more challenging question. There is no way you can learn on the old blocks of the past. This does not mean lowering standards but shifting standards, creating a new standard. We need to create an ever-widening base of those who believe in gender equality. We have seen how one can no longer find anyone who believed in apartheid because the new base has crowded out those who did. We need to do the same for gender equality so that we reach a point we can't find anyone who believes in male domination.

How do we widen the base of those who believe in gender equality? By:

- Creating a culture of reading;
- Engaging people in small groups where they meet for other purposes such as at clinics;
- Engaging in caucus discussions with like-minded people;
- Building partnerships between men and women.

BLACK MASCULINITIES AND GENDER POWER RELATIONS

Presentation: [Gertrude Fester](#)

INSIGHT:

Men must admit their collusion with and benefits from patriarchy. Men need consciousness raising; they need a men's movement and separate spaces to talk about men's issues in relation to achieving gender equality. The personal is political. There should be no schism between theory and praxis

The following summary extrapolates key points pertaining to the issue of partnerships between women and men in the achievement of gender equality.

Black masculinities and power

Black masculinities is a problematic concept. Quoting from psychologist Kopano Ratele Gertrude Fester said it was time to unravel the ambiguities of black manhood. Is black manhood the same for all black men? Do black men want the same for themselves as white men? Masculinities is political because it does not mean the same thing in different cultures.

Power, on the other hand, is the same for all men in patriarchal societies. Men in patriarchal societies are more powerful than women and they subscribe to the myth that it is their right to have power over women. While

men have power over women, all men do not have the same power. Gay men are marginalised in patriarchal society. Patriarchy is reinforced by all religions and cultures. Given this scenario, men have a critical role to play in eradicating sexism.

Partnerships between men and women

The Commission for Gender Equality is tasked to promote respect, gender equality and the protection of Human Rights in gender relations. Respecting Difference does not mean Difference should be hierarchical. Men and women should have substantive equality. Men should be our partners in an environment where men and women can realise their full potential.

Before men and women can develop true partnerships, two conditions need to be fulfilled. Firstly, women must realise that men are not their enemies and relations with men should not be antagonistic. Secondly, men must admit their collusion with and benefits from patriarchy. We need to own some things as a problem for gender partnerships. Whites must apologise for apartheid and men must apologise for colluding with patriarchy. Both whites and men still have power; both whites and men need to take responsibility for their past actions.

In building partnerships between men and women, we can learn from Feminism (with all its flaws), particularly from the strategy of consciousness raising of Feminist practice. Men need consciousness raising; men need a men's movement and separate spaces for men to talk about men's issues in relation to achieving gender equality. The personal is political. There should be no schism between theory and praxis. It is extremely problematic when men stand on platforms and talk of gender equality when they are wife-beaters at home.

We need to transform institutions that promote patriarchy

Many institutions in the new South Africa continue to promote patriarchy. These institutions require transformation from within and from outside in order to promote the values of the Constitution and equality in gender relations. Patriarchal institutions include faith-based

institutions which perpetuate the myth of patriarchy and cultural institutions such as the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa. Some legislation such as the Traditional Leadership and Governance Bill, the Black Customary Law and Succession Bill and the Communal Land Rights Bill also promotes patriarchal controls. Gender activists should engage in advocacy to prevent the promotion of patriarchal values in the law. Outside of these institutions, patriarchy is promoted in rap songs and other forms of popular culture, the media and in families.

Strategies for achieving Ubuntu

We need to strive to eradicate militarism from our society and to promote the values of Ubuntu which encompass respect and dignity. We can use many strategies to achieve ubuntu:

- Men must organise themselves and publicly condemn violence;
- Men must respect their partners;
- Men must practice safe sex and respect women's right to negotiate sexual practice;
- Men must engage in the care work of HIV/AIDS.
- Women need to support other women;
- Young women who look for 'sugar daddies' should realise their collusion promotes patriarchy;
- Women and men should participate in parenting workshops so that they avoid socialising their children in patriarchal ways.

Men should look forward to being able to say: 'Now that I am looking after my child I feel a whole person. I am discovering aspects of myself I never knew existed.'



STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

Presentation: [Kamogelo Lekubu-Wilderson](#)

INSIGHT:



Men are not homogenous but this does not mean we cannot develop common goals. We must not straight-jacket men (like trying to put peacocks into penguin suits) but accept that through our diversity we can work towards common goals.

The following summary focuses on specific strategies discussed by Kamogelo Lekubu-Wilderson for the promotion of effective partnerships between men and women.

Developing strategies around gender needs proper planning. Proper planning means that we should set objectives and outcomes from the beginning and that we should engage our target groups in setting these. Since gender is a new way of thinking we need to be careful when we engage men. We have to advocate for people to accept our project.

Kamogelo Lekubu-Wilderson gave the example of a pilot project conducted by the National Network on Violence Against Women in the Kuruman area. The Network had planned a Gender Based Violence agenda but found that the main issue was customary law. The lesson learnt from this experience is that a needs assessment should inform our awareness training programmes. Work among the Bafokeng also highlighted the importance of continuous awareness training in modifying behaviour. Continuous awareness training work with the Bafokeng traditional leaders led to the chiefs themselves deciding to have women become part of decision-making structures.

Human Rights principles

Legal and policy interventions need to be based on Human Rights values of dignity and respect, safety and

security and good health. These rights are a fundamental expectation of any good society and we need to work towards guaranteeing these principles for all in South Africa.

South Africa's Constitution and the international protocols which we have signed establish the principles from which to work on gender issues. Men want socio-economic rights and so they can be drawn into discussion of gender issues through the link between socio-economic and Human rights.

Respect for diversity

Men are not homogenous but this does not preclude establishing common goals across different contexts. We must accept that men do not need straight-jacketing (like trying to put peacocks into penguin suits). Rather, through accepting our diversity we can work towards common goals.

Men and strategies for institutional transformation We need to empower organisations to be able to run men's programmes and GBV programmes. How do we do this? We can advocate for political leaders to take responsibility for gender transformation and stop relegating gender issues to gender desks. We can advocate that institutions must invest time and money in coaching mentors. The need to realise that one or two sessions do not equip men to promote gender transformation. Men engaged in gender transformation need support groups. Men who support gender equality should be highlighted as role models.

While we look for ways of drawing men into gender work, women must continue to be at the forefront. 'Nothing should be done for us without us.'

PLENARY DISCUSSION STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Participants endorsed the importance of Ubuntu as a means of setting the values of humanity and dignity at the forefront of gender work.

There was consensus that patriarchy was the common enemy since patriarchal values underpinned GBV, militarism and heterosexist prejudice.

It was agreed that subliminal sexism, like subliminal racism was a more serious problem than overt sexism or overt racism. Subliminal sexism was more difficult to deal with because it was more hidden and the perpetrators often denied that their practices were sexist.

What does democracy really mean? This question was raised but not explored in the plenary session. Rev. Courtney Sampson said that the challenge of building a culture of constructive criticism lay ahead of us as we enter the second decade of democracy in South Africa. A key aspect of this challenge was to ensure that we did not end up with women doing all the work of democracy while men reap the benefits.



CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

Peter Jordaan summarised the key findings of the conference.

Strategies for combating patriarchy

The conference named Patriarchy as the common enemy and identified strategies for combating patriarchy in the mindsets and behaviours of men. Some of these are:

Identifying and highlighting positive role models

Problem: men are often negatively portrayed in the media and their portrayal reinforces stereotypes rather than presenting positive role models.

Strategy: We need to advocate for more complex representation of men in the media and highlight men who support gender equality as role models for the new man.

Rejecting patriarchal culture as an acceptable excuse

Problem: Men tend to hide behind the notion of culture to condone patriarchal practice.

Strategy: Gender educators need to encourage men to unpack what they mean by culture and to identify progressive identities within culture.

Using appropriate language in communicating gender messages

Problem: The language used to convey messages around HIV/AIDS issues and best practice gender relations is often abstract, foreign and alienating for black men.

Strategy: Gender educators need to construct messages in the idiom appropriate for particular communities.

Breaking down the schism between theory and practice

Problem: men may talk about gender relations in a progressive environment but continue to impose patriarchal control in the home.

Strategy: Gender trainers need to provide forums where men can talk about these issues and change their behaviour even in the hidden place of the home.

Recognising poverty as part of the cycle of violence

Problem: We assume that women have equal choice in negotiating safe sex but many are trapped in fear of male violence and of poverty.

Strategy: We need to advocate for a two-pronged approach: integrated strategies that tackle HIV/AIDS issues in ways that are linked to poverty alleviation and support groups and safe spaces where women can receive support in their efforts to get out of violent relationships.

Replacing the culture of silence with dialogue

Problem: Men and women cannot embrace their identities as victims and perpetrators of violence and so they cannot speak about GBV.

Strategy: Educators need to create safe spaces for men and women to discuss the problem of GBV and to break the culture of silence. Men need mentoring to ensure that they do not lapse into violent behaviour. Women need safe spaces where they can talk about their fear and receive support in their efforts to get out of violent relationships.

Achieving a paradigm shift

Problem: How do men learn/unlearn in order to grow towards embracing a new identity, becoming a new man?

Strategy: By advocating a Human Rights framework for socio-economic and gender rights, activists give men a way into embracing gender equality that links to development and does not break them down.

Requests for GETNET to follow-up the conference by:

- producing materials for masculinities training in the area of sexuality and sexual preference as well as GBV;
- arranging forums for GETNET partners to discuss issues pertaining to the training of men for gender equality;
- compiling (and updating continuously) a directory of gender/men's activist organisations to facilitate links between them.

CLOSING

Geoff Mamputa for the GETNET Board closed the conference with a metaphor:

Initiation is a process in some cultures that indicates that a young man has reached a stage in his life where he can take responsibility. The process, properly conducted, takes many months. It is a test of physical and emotional strength. It teaches men how to be good fathers and to take responsibility in society. There is a brief part in this process, a part that takes half a minute, a part called circumcision. It is at this part that you shout, 'I am a man!' Manhood is linked to that moment. And yet there is so much more to the process of initiation into manhood. So much more that is good.

This conference has focussed on the issues that fill the remaining three months of the initiation process. By ignoring circumcision and focussing on what is useful for men to live responsible lives, the very notion of masculinity had been called into question. A shift has occurred towards a new paradigm.

The staff of GETNET are to be congratulated for a professional and well-run conference that enabled participants to achieve depth and rigour in their deliberations.

GENDER IN A CORNER

(a comment on gender corners, gender desks and the odd day or two of men's activism against violence against women and children)

Gender in a corner?
Squeezed into a corner, with a desk,
(a gender desk?)
like a Committee,
as a sop, a bone.
To keep women, children and gender-sensitive men satisfied, quiet (for 16 days).
To keep men satisfied, too, to have
women quietened
by their corner, a gender corner, their 16 days.

Comrades everywhere, bring the corner to the centre,
to the front pages, comrades in the trade unions,
to the front lines, comrade activists in the NGOs and CBOs,
and not the back
(of some cellophane-wrapped glossy or a newspaper tabloid).

*David Kapp, Resource Action Group (RAG),
written sometime in the very early morn of 05 December 2003*