

COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

Promoting respectful relationships and equitable communities



Community dialogues

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By Prabu Deepan

This resource has been written for Gender Champions who have been identified and trained using Tearfund's *Transforming masculinities* toolkit.

www.tearfund.org/sexualviolence

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Some of the activities in this manual have been adapted from the following resources to include a faith-based approach: *Engaging boys and men in gender transformation: Group education manual*, USAID and Promundo; *Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls: Engaging Men Through Accountable Practice*, International Rescue Committee; *One Man Can*, Sonke Gender Justice.



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INTRODUCTION

The community dialogues are a tool that Gender Champions can use to facilitate a series of reflections and dialogues. Their ultimate aim is for individuals to be transformed. This tool will be most effective if used in the context of the Transforming Masculinities approach. The discussion themes are tailored for both women's and men's groups, with the expectation they will come together for a joint reflection in Week 6. The themes are intended to prompt personal reflection and deepen understanding of the topics; the Gender Champions' (facilitators') knowledge will also feed into this process. The sessions are practical and action-oriented, so at the end of each one participants will be given personal and relational reflections to take home and think through during the week, with a view to sharing their thoughts in the following session. This will not only prompt them to reflect at length but also foster a sense of accountability and create a strong bond within their groups. This is important to ensure the dialogues are a safe space and a space for transformation.

The sessions are composed of both scriptural reflections and other tools to facilitate honest dialogues at the community level. The Gender Champions are welcome to adapt the reflections and points for discussions to make them meaningful and relevant for the participants and the community. The idea is that holy texts, either from the Qur'an or the Bible, are used to help address misinterpretations that support and perpetuate harmful masculine ideologies, gender inequality, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

THE PROCESS

The process is as important as the content of the discussions, if not more so. It is designed not to be burdensome to the participants or the Gender Champions, but to give enough space for dialogue, interaction and learning. These dialogues need to be integrated into people's daily lives, so it was important that the facilitated sessions were also designed to be used in the same way. The entire process, from planning and recruitment to debrief and planning again, takes about ten weeks.

Planning and recruitment: The process begins with planning with the Gender Champions' supervisors (trained project staff overseeing the respective communities) and local faith leaders, before moving on to recruitment. The Gender Champions will identify potential participants, with the help of their local faith leaders, and have informal chats with participants about joining their groups. This will be done within two weeks. Gender Champions are expected to keep a record of their participants' details, and share this with the supervisors at the end of the six-week cycle.

Length of the facilitation session cycle: six weeks, one session per week, two hours per session.

Number of participants: maximum of 8–10 participants per cycle. Note that the recruitment of new participants is not recommended during the six-week process. It is important that participants stay engaged throughout the entire process.

Participants and the groups: The group sessions will be in single-sex groups. A male Gender Champion will facilitate the men's group; likewise a female Gender Champion will facilitate the women's group. The single-sex sessions will last for five weeks, running in parallel, and both groups will come together on the sixth week for a joint session to end, celebrate and make pledges together.

Meeting location: The Gender Champions will agree on a meeting place and time with their group, so that it is convenient for all, preferably in a local setting where everyone congregates regularly, eg after a Sunday service, or Friday prayers, or in the field after work.

End of cycle: At the end of the six weeks, the Gender Champions should debrief with their supervisor. The debrief should include reflection on the process, the outcome and the challenges faced. Once the debrief has been completed, the Gender Champions will start to plan for the next cycle of community dialogues with their supervisor. In order to promote accountable practices, it is important that the two Gender Champions reflect on and discuss the power dynamics that exist between the two of them as they work together in their community as co-facilitators. The community dialogues concern individual change and societal change, and this reflection is part of the same journey for the Gender Champions themselves. It needs to be done within two weeks of the final session.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Participant selection is critical if the programme is to be implemented successfully. The Gender Champions will have to screen participants carefully. The following points are suggested criteria the Gender Champions can use.

The individuals selected should:

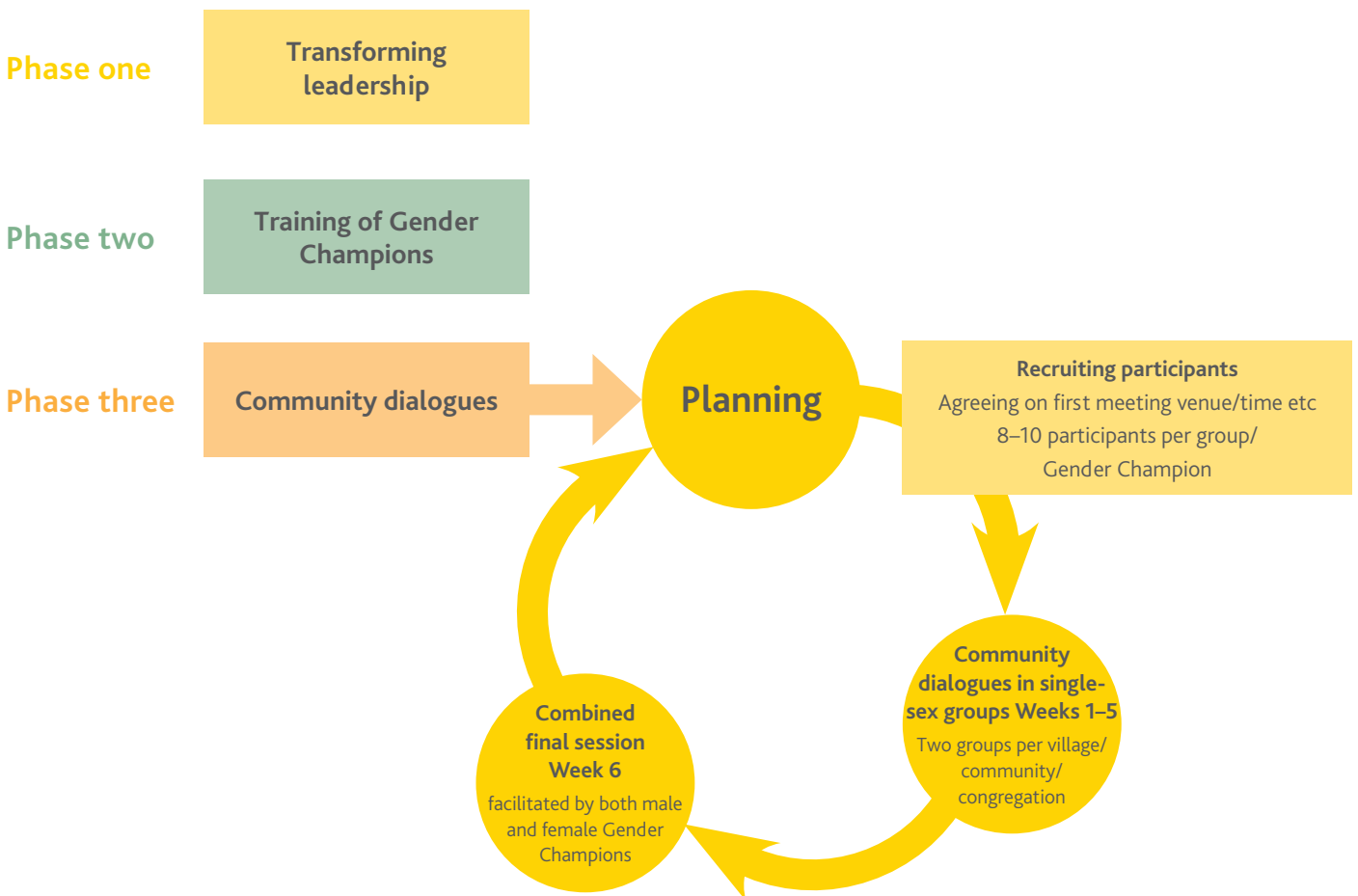
- be interested in the issue of SGBV and be willing and able to commit the time required for the six-week process
- be a member of or affiliated to one of the local faith communities where faith leaders have been trained in the process
- not be perpetrators of SGBV (as far as it is known)
- be willing to be held accountable, and commit to the process of personal transformation
- be willing to be involved and engaged in SGBV prevention and response activities in their respective local communities
- commit to keeping confidentiality and not putting other participants' lives at risk.

These are suggested guidelines only: the Gender Champions should use their discretion when selecting participants for their groups. It is important that the Gender Champions build a good relationship with participants, as this will ensure that the sessions flow smoothly and improve the level of engagement.

Important note: Please make sure you emphasise to the participants that they should approach you if any of the discussions or reflections are likely to trigger any form of trauma for them, so you can take the necessary steps to offer extra support. Make sure you have access to information on services available in your local area, or the contact details of a counsellor.

Note: For 'Facilitation tips', 'Definitions' and advice on dealing with difficult participants, please refer to the *Transforming masculinities* toolkit.

The community dialogue process



THE FACILITATED SESSIONS: WOMEN'S GROUP

Overview

Suggested time per session: 90 to 120 minutes

Maximum number of participants: 8 to 10 people

Weeks 1 to 5 in single-sex groups; join together with men's group in Week 6

Materials needed for the facilitator: A Bible, paper or a notebook (for note-taking), cards or sticky-notes for the activities, a pack of playing cards and a copy of the *Transforming masculinities* toolkit for reference.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION, AND SGBV ROOT CAUSES

Welcome the participants to the first of the six sessions and thank them for taking the time to participate in this process. If appropriate, start by inviting someone to pray. (Be inclusive so that people of other faiths do not feel left out. You can alternate the people praying through the upcoming sessions.)

Depending on the time of the day, it might be good to get everyone to sing a song together, just to get the group energised.

Introduction

- Since this same group of people will be meeting every week, it will be good for them to get to know each other.
 - Ask the participants to get into pairs, and take two minutes to get to know their partner.
 - Tell them that they will then introduce their new friend to the rest of the group, sharing the following information:
 - their name
 - what they enjoy doing in their free time
 - their favourite food
 - why they joined this group discussion.
 - After giving the participants about 5 minutes to talk in pairs, invite them to introduce each other to the group.
 - Introduce yourself in the same way, then thank them all for participating.
- It is important to set 'group agreements' for the sessions, and these will be most successful if the participants make the agreements themselves.
 - Some suggested group agreements: switching off/putting mobile phones on silent; confidentiality; respect for others' opinions; taking care not to give feedback in a way that could feel harmful to others; being on time; committing to all six weeks of this process.
 - Please refer to the facilitation guide in the *Transforming masculinities* toolkit for further details of this activity.
- Take time to introduce the objectives of the community dialogues, and the process involved. Explain the following:
 - Community dialogues are a series of dialogues and reflections held over six weeks to create space for personal transformation and empowerment.
 - Each week the group will discuss and reflect on themes related to gender, masculinities, SGBV and faith, and will learn to apply these reflections to their personal lives and relationships.
 - Participants are expected to commit two hours of their time, one day a week for six weeks. The day will be mutually agreed by members of the group.
 - While the women's group discussions are happening, there is a group of men doing the same thing; after five weeks of meeting separately, both groups will meet together for the sixth week.
 - This is a safe space for women: if anyone does not feel safe, they should speak to you privately.
 - Emphasise that this is not a space for women to be blamed or feel guilty, but to be reminded of how God created them in his image: equal, valuable and good. It is a space where they will be encouraged, empowered, challenged and transformed.
 - If any of the discussions are traumatic or trigger trauma, they should speak with you, so you can take the necessary steps. And if any of them want to disclose their experience of violence, please ask them to speak to you privately so you can provide information on relevant support services.
- Ask the participants if they have any questions. Take time to clarify concerns and questions, then move on.

Part 1: Why is it important to address SGBV?*(about 60 minutes)*

- It is important for participants to understand why they should even be talking about SGBV, and how it affects their lives as women.
- Invite the participants to share stories from their village on how SGBV has affected women's lives. Give them time to share a couple of stories, ask them what the impact on the survivor's life was. Are these kinds of incidents common? What are the different ways it affects the 'victim'?
- After they have shared the stories, ask them how they felt when they heard these stories. Can they identify with the stories? If so, how?

What does your faith say about suffering? Is God pleased with suffering? (Use appropriate language here.)

- Read scriptures from the Bible or Qur'an, and give time for the participants to reflect.
 - Bible: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 (see p36–37)
 - Ask Muslim participants to suggest texts, or use Qur'an: 49:10–11 on respecting others and valuing peace.
- After about five minutes, invite the participants to share their views on this, relating it to the stories they have shared.

- Conclude by saying that this is not how God intended people to live. SGBV does not glorify God: it affects the entire community and increases people's suffering. And this is not acceptable; it must change. This is why we need to talk about this issue as many women and girls are suffering in silence. There are also men who experience violence, even sexual violence by other men, and they also suffer in silence because of stigma and shame.
- What do your laws say about this?
 - Talk about specific laws from your country on rape and domestic violence.
 - Discuss what the punishment is for violating these laws.
 - If participants are not aware of the specific laws, share this information with them. But encourage them to find out about the laws, policies and rights related to SGBV for themselves.
- Conclude by saying that SGBV is not just against our faith, but also against the law of our country: it is a criminal offence. It is evident that this is causing great suffering: this is why we are here to discuss this issue. This is why we invite you to commit to the next five weeks of this process, and to the process of transformation.





Part 2: What are some of the root causes of SGBV?

(about 60 minutes)

Start the session by explaining why it is important to understand the root causes of SGBV.

- If you do not know the root causes, then it is difficult to understand the issue, prevent it or respond to it.
- Just like going to the doctor when you are sick, symptoms are different from the cause. For example: Your fever (symptom) can be due to an infection (cause) but you cannot cure the infection by giving medicine for the fever.
- Ask the group to split into pairs (groups of two) and discuss what they think are the consequences of SGBV.
- Bring the group back together and ask them to share their ideas on consequences. You can draw a tree on the ground or on paper, if available, and list the different consequences of SGBV where the tree branches and leaves are. Examples: death, disease, stigma, mental health issues, economic challenges, disabilities etc...
- The reasons it is important to understand the consequences include:
 - being able to differentiate between causes and consequences
 - understanding that the consequences of SGBV are not just physical or sexual: SGBV affects every aspect of a person's life, their families and societies as a whole
 - helping us to reflect individually on how SGBV affects us personally, in ways other than just physical ones.
- Now ask them to get back in the same pairs as before and consider the root causes of SGBV.
 - Help them think deeper than just 'cultural', or 'women's dress' or 'alcohol': ask them questions to help them get to the root of the issue.
 - If someone says: 'It is how women dress,' follow up with a question: 'If women dressed differently, would they not be affected by SGBV? And how do women in _____ [insert relevant village name] dress? And how is that leading to SGBV?'
 - If they mention alcohol, ask them: 'If people stopped drinking, would that end SGBV? Do all people who drink alcohol beat their partners, rape them etc?'
 - As a facilitator, it is important that you help them really understand how inequality and gender power imbalances lead to SGBV, and how these elements are embedded in our day-to-day life, our cultures, our way of interpreting scriptures etc.
- Help participants understand that there are factors that are not causes, but that encourage or foster SGBV by creating an enabling environment, eg conflict (due to a breakdown of law and order, increased corruption, hindrance to infrastructure development such as roads, hospitals etc). This increases people's vulnerability, and creates a space for impunity.
- Likewise, alcohol is a factor that impairs a person's thinking, and this can then combine with preexisting harmful attitudes to contribute to someone using power to beat or rape their partner or someone else in their community.

Conclusion

We need to transform our own attitudes, behaviours and knowledge on this subject, to work with men and boys to tackle the issue, and to address harmful notions of masculinities. Women can also play a critical role in perpetuating these harmful notions of gender and masculinities. They teach their children from a small age the different values placed on them: if you are a boy, then you are superior; if you are a girl, then you are worthless. This needs to change.

As women, it is important that we are aware of the different ways that SGBV affects our own lives, and we must be part of the response. Women also need to know what their faiths say about them and about things that affect them. Women have suffered in silence for a long time, and it is time for us to break the silence for ourselves and for others, whether we are affected personally or not.

It is important that our place of worship breaks the silence on SGBV, and we can work in partnership with them to address this issue.

Conclude the session by emphasising the need for them to be committed to this process for the next five weeks, and remind them of the time and venue for the next session. Close in prayer.

Homework for the group

How has SGBV affected your life or someone you know? What has your experience been of this? What have been the root causes of these experiences? What was the response/discussion in response to this incident?

WEEK 2: GENDER ROLES AND NORMS IN DAILY LIFE

Welcome the participants to the session and thank them for coming back and their commitment to their process. Ask how everyone is feeling, and how their week was and give some time for responses (maybe 5–10 minutes for a few people to share).

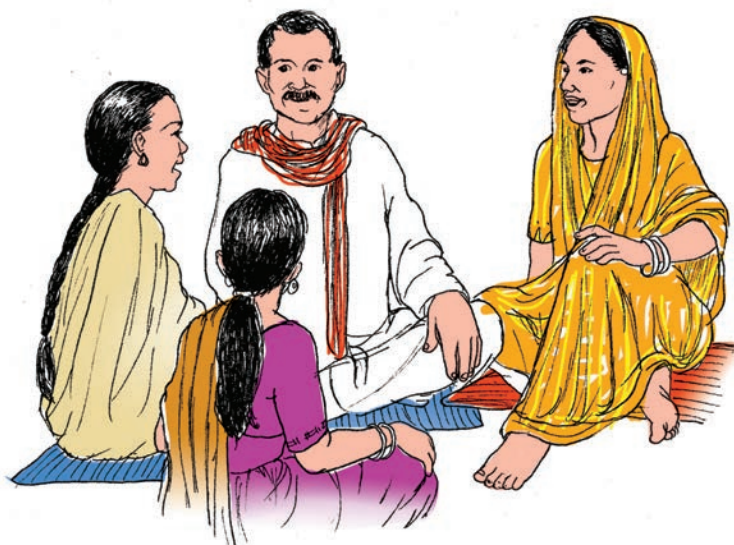
Start the session with prayer. (Please invite participants to open in prayer. Be inclusive so that people of other faiths/denominations do not feel left out. You can alternate the people praying through the upcoming sessions.) Invite them to share reflections on their homework. Prompt people if they hesitate, emphasising that this is a safe space and a space for learning.

Part 1: Gender, gender roles and relations/relationships

(about 45 minutes)

Suggested steps

- Introduce the session to the participants. This session is about exploring our gender identities. It is about being a man or woman and how gender identities affect our relationships, lives and interactions with people.
 - Divide the group in two, and ask them to sit in their groups.
 - Ask the groups to take time to reflect on the following questions. Group 1: 'What do you like about being a woman? What do you not like about being a woman?' and Group 2: 'What do you like about how men are? What do you not like about how they are?'
 - The exercise is to help them reflect and discuss the attributes and characteristics of being a man or woman, and the privileges and power that they have or do not have.
 - After 10 minutes' discussion, invite the groups to share their thoughts with everyone.
- Conclude the session by saying that, as men and women, we both enjoy privileges and power associated with our gender. However, often being a woman is equated with being weak, vulnerable and less important than men, which can lead to harmful practices and violence at home and in communities.



Part 2: Gender boxes: Act like a woman/Act like a man

(about 60–75 minutes)

Thank the participants for their honest reflections in the previous session. Tell them that you want to unpack how gender norms/roles affect our lives, so they understand how this is critical in the discussion of SGBV.

- Divide the group in two, and tell one group that they will discuss 'acting/being like a man' and the other group will discuss 'acting/being like a woman'. Distribute coloured sticky notes or flash cards to the groups: ask them to write down their examples and stick them on the flipchart in the relevant column.
- Ask Group 1 to discuss and answer the following three questions:
 - Give examples of messages that men/boys are given when they are told to 'Act like a man/boy'. (*Tough, not emotional, decision-maker, protector, provider, adviser, the person who disciplines, can have multiple partners, should not ask for help, controls the finances and the women in the house etc.*)
 - Where (eg home, schools etc) and from whom do these messages come?
 - How are these messages given, sent or conveyed (eg sermons, TV/radio, school etc)?
- Ask Group 2 to discuss the following three questions:
 - Give examples of messages that women/girls are given when they are told to 'Act like a woman/girl'. (*A woman cannot lead, she has to give birth to many children, if she can't, then she is dishonourable or not valued, she must not speak too much, she has to be submissive and obedient, be faithful etc.*)
 - Where and from whom do these messages come?
 - How are these messages given, sent or conveyed?
- Ask the groups to share the main discussion points. (They can do this verbally or even act it out as a group.)
- Now ask the participants the following questions:
 - What happens to men/boys and women/girls who do not conform to these ways? (*Beaten, raped, shamed, stigmatised, harassed and coerced to do things they do not want to, etc*)
 - How are men and women kept within these boxes? What strategies/tools/actions are used?
 - Are there men and women who do not conform to these messages? How do they do that?
 - Are there messages here that are harmful to men and women? (Refer to what happens when they do not conform to messages.)
 - Are there specific consequences for women and girls who do not conform?

- Now ask both groups to reflect on how women and girls might feel when they experience these harmful actions/words because they do not conform or when they are forced to conform.
- You can also ask about how men and boys feel when forced to conform to these 'boxes'? And as women, what role do they (the participants) play in forcing boys/men to conform to these roles? What do they do when men/boys step outside of these boxes?
- Ask the participants to share their thoughts. Conclude by saying we can now begin to see how society creates very different rules for the behaviour of men and women. Explain that these rules are sometimes called 'gender norms' because they define what is 'normal' for men and women to think, feel and act. Explain that these rules restrict the lives of both women and men by keeping men in their 'Act like a man' box and women in their 'Act like a woman' box.
- When these roles are limited, controlling and rigid, men and women are both harmed because their autonomy is taken away. These assigned roles of men and women create pressure when it is difficult to follow them, and often lead to different forms of violence inflicted on the one who does not conform.
- As we discussed, these rules/norms are created by the society we live in, our communities, our leaders. We are the ones who are part of these communities contributing to these norms. If we are to change harmful characteristics and attributes, we must take action: we can start this process of change, collectively and individually, in our homes, churches and communities so that we can live a life without violence.
- We need to address these gender dynamics if we are to prevent SGBV.

Homework for the group

Reflect on what you are currently doing that might be harmful to others and how you are contributing to shaping these norms. How can you change that?



WEEK 3: POWER, STATUS AND SGBV

Welcome the participants to the session and thank them for coming back and their commitment to their process. Ask how everyone is feeling, and how their week was and give some time for responses (5 to 10 minutes for a few people to share).

Then, start the session with a prayer. (Please invite participants to open in prayer. Be inclusive so that people of other faiths/denominations do not feel left out. You can alternate the people praying through the upcoming sessions.)

Invite the group to share reflections on their homework. Prompt people if they hesitate, emphasising that this is a safe space and a space for learning.

Now explain to them that you are going to look at how gender inequality and unequal power and status lead to harmful practices and violence.

Part 1: Power and status

(suggested time: 45 minutes)

Suggested steps

- Start the session by playing a game: ask participants if they are familiar with 'playing cards'.
- Take the pack of playing cards out, and ask them to tell you the hierarchy of the cards, or the order. (For example: the Joker is the highest-value card, then the Ace, King/Queen/Jack, 10, 9 etc). Reconfirm the order to make sure there is consensus in the group.
- Take a mix of high-value and low-value playing cards, exactly the same number of cards as the number of participants. Display the cards, explaining the value of each card according to what was agreed by the group.
- Now ask them to stand together in a circle, and shuffle the cards. Hand each participant a card facing down, so they do not know the card they have. After everyone has received a card, explain the rules of the game:
 - Each person's card has a value as discussed as a group, and everyone knows which card is of high or low value.
 - When given the command, each person has to hold their cards to their foreheads for others to see but they cannot see it.
 - Instruct the group to interact with each other based on the value of the card, treating those with high-value cards with respect, and those with the low-value cards without respect.
 - Give them about five minutes to interact: observe and assist with the activity so that they engage fully.
- Stop the game and bring them back into a circle. Ask for feedback on how they felt. Now ask them to look at their cards.
- Ask those holding high-value cards, how they felt in response to the way people treated them with respect. Take responses from all the participants in this group if possible.
- Now ask the people holding the low-value cards how they felt about how they were treated. Give time for responses from everyone.
- Follow up by asking: Are people in our communities treated like this? In our homes? How are people in our communities valued less? In our homes? How does it feel when people treat you badly?
- Ask everyone if they had any choice in the cards they received. And who decided on the value?
- Conclude by saying that we have no control over what we are born as (woman or man), and these roles and rules are assigned to us by our society, which we also contribute to creating. However, we are the ones responsible for treating groups of people like they have no value, worth or dignity, and that is harmful. Usually we see this happen to women: they are treated as if they have no worth to society, and sometimes even men are treated like this, especially if they are unemployed or have a disability.
- We are here to change this: it must start with us, as we are the ones who contribute to shaping these norms and roles, especially when they are harmful to people and our communities.



Part 2: Persons and things

(suggested time: 60–90 minutes)

Turn the discussion towards the question of how power imbalances can lead to violence. This discussion is important so that the group can sense how power imbalance in our societies can make people vulnerable, create a culture of impunity and enable violence to take place, and even cause us to normalise, internalise and justify violence. (You may need to explain what it means for us to internalise beliefs. An individual internalises beliefs, attitudes, perspectives or values from a wider group without questioning and without realising she or he is being shaped by them.)

Suggested steps

- Explain that you are going to lead them in an activity that will help them understand this discussion a bit better, and learn from experience.
 - Divide the group into three, with a minimum of three people per group. If you do not have enough participants, it is okay to just have one person in the third group, but it is important to have equal members in Groups 1 and 2.
 - Ask members of Groups 1 and 2 to face each other, so they are paired up with someone from the opposite group. Ask Group 3 to stand on the side and observe.
 - Now tell Group 1 that they are 'persons', so like any person they have a voice, they have rights, they can do whatever they like, and more importantly they have power over their partner from Group 2.
 - Tell Group 2 that they are 'things' or 'objects', and that they have no power, voice or rights. They have to do what the 'person' commands and cannot refuse.
 - Tell Group 3 that they are observers, and ask them to observe the interaction between 'persons' and 'things'.
 - Now tell them they have three minutes, and the 'persons' can do whatever they want with the 'things' or 'objects'. After three minutes, ask them to switch roles with their partners and keep the same rules.
- Finally, ask the groups to go back to their places and use the questions below to facilitate a discussion.
 - How did your 'person' treat you? How did you feel? Did you feel powerless? Why or why not? How did you treat your 'thing'? How did it feel to treat someone this way? Did it make you feel powerful? Why or why not?
 - Why did the 'things' obey the instructions given by the 'persons'? Were there 'things' or 'persons' who resisted the exercise?
 - In your daily lives, do others treat you like 'things'? Who? Why? In your daily lives, do you treat others like 'things'? Who? Why?
 - For the 'observers': How did you feel not doing anything? Did you feel like interfering with what was happening? If so, what do you think you could have done?
- If you had been given the chance to choose between the three groups, which would you have chosen to be in and why?
- Why do people treat each other like this?
- In your communities, do men usually belong to one of these three groups? Which group? Do you as women usually belong to one of these three groups? Which group? Why do you think this is?
- What can we do to make sure that different groups such as men and women live in an equitable world where they can enjoy the same opportunities, equal treatment and equal rights?
- Point out the controlling, dominant and sometimes violent ways the 'persons' treated 'things'. Ask them why they acted in such ways. Were they asked in the instructions to behave in a harmful way?
- When the roles were reversed, did you see a pattern? What was it? (*When 'things' take on the role of the 'person' after experiencing what they did, they usually tend to remodel the behaviour and are sometimes even more harmful.*)
- We also can see how our children remodel some of these behaviours: boys learn how to be a man by seeing and hearing how men behave, and girls learn how to be a woman in the same way. They learn that one is more dominant and powerful over the other, and sadly that they may have no voice to contest this. Usually they internalise this as the norm and perpetuate it themselves.
- Women also can internalise and remodel harmful behaviours when power shifts within the home or community, and likewise women also tend to internalise the notion that they are 'weak', 'subordinate' and 'have no voice'. This makes them vulnerable and puts them at risk.
- Mention specifically how power and gender roles are used to justify marital rape. The belief that 'a husband is entitled to his wife's body' is so internalised that most people do not even acknowledge it as rape.
- Point out that even men who are not violent do nothing to intervene, or engage their peers, just like the 'observers'. This is mainly because this use of power is considered acceptable behaviour and the unwritten rules in our communities hold us back from speaking out when we see something that is not right. Yet, as people of faith, our scriptures tell us to speak out against injustice.
- Ask them to continue to reflect on the dynamic link between power and violence, and between gender inequality and violence.

Homework for the group

Reflect on how power dynamics affect your day-to-day life, your relationships and also life in the community. How can this be changed? What would life look like if everyone were treated equally? What can you do when you are in the position of an 'observer'?

WEEK 4: FAITH AND SGBV

This week, we are going to explore further what our scriptures say about gender, gender equality and SGBV. As people of faith, we need to learn and apply the word of God in our daily lives.

Start the session with prayer. (Please invite participants to open in prayer. Be inclusive so that people of other faiths/denominations do not feel left out. You can alternate the people praying through the upcoming sessions.)

Part 1: Gender equality and faith

(suggested time: 60 minutes)

Since we have been discussing gender, the power imbalances between genders and gender inequality, let's look at how our scriptures describe how we were created.

Suggested steps

- Invite someone from the group to read aloud Genesis 1:26–28 from a Bible or from p36 at the back of this publication (but if they are unable to read, you can read it aloud).¹
 - Read the passage a couple of times, slowly spelling out key sections (Let us... in our own image, etc.).
 - Give them a couple of minutes and ask them to reflect on the passage.
 - Now divide them into three groups, and ask them to reflect on the following thoughts as a group:
 - What are your initial thoughts when you hear the scriptures?
 - What does it mean for man and woman to be created in God's image? Does it mean both are equal? Does it mean one is more powerful, more important than the other?
 - Are we as men and women dominating each other? Is this what God said to Adam and Eve in creation (Genesis 1:28)?
 - If God created man and woman in God's image, as equals but with different gifts, skills and roles, where did inequality come from? What caused the relationships between man and woman to break and to become harmful?
 - Can this relationship be restored? Can the harmful elements of being a man or woman, the power imbalance, the inequality be changed if we aspire to live the way we were created to be?
- Emphasise that at creation men and women were created in the image of God, the Trinity: equal in power and worth but with different roles, responsibilities, skills etc.
- After creation, God tells both Adam and Eve to be blessed, and to rule over the creation, not over each other as we see in relationships in our current context. God did not create Adam to be superior to Eve, or vice versa.
- Sin separated us from God, and from each other. It is only after the Fall that we see God giving Adam commands about his roles, and likewise Eve (Genesis 3:14–19, see p36). So we see that this inequality and power imbalance are a result of sin, and not God's intention at creation. So we must work towards restoring this broken image, because we can see how this is leading to harmful and violent behaviours that are affecting people, especially women and girls.
- Also read Galatians 3:28 in this context (see p37) to make the point that in God we are all the same, God's children. 'There is no male nor female, we are all one in Christ.'
- Can we imagine what we (men and women) would be like if we lived according to God's intention for us, if we treated each other as people created in the image of God the Trinity? (As facilitator, you should take notes on the feedback on this particular point, so that you can remind the participants in the following week's discussion.)



¹ Include scriptures from the Qur'an if there are Islamic participants in the group.

Part 2: Relationships

(suggested time: 60 minutes)

As we have looked at God's intention for man and woman, understanding what it means to be created in the image of God, it is important to look at our own relationships and reflect on the teachings of the scriptures. We know that in our day-to-day lives we have used scriptures to shape our relationships. Based on our experiences we know some scriptures have been interpreted to support harmful practices. So it is important to reflect on these scriptures that we hear often and to understand them in the context of God's creation and the creation of man and woman in the image of God.

Suggested steps

- Lead the group in a reflection on scriptures commonly used when talking about relationships from Ephesians 5:21–33 (see p37). Read these passages slowly so the group can understand them properly, in order to reflect on them later.
- Divide the group into two groups, and ask the groups to reflect on these two aspects of the passage.
 - Group 1: What does it mean for a wife to submit to her husband? Is this an act of love? Or should it be forced? How does the church submit to Christ?
 - Group 2: What does it mean for a man to love his wife as Christ loved the church? Is this reflected in the way you are loved today?
 - Give them five minutes to reflect and discuss as a group, and then another five minutes to share their thoughts with the rest of the group.
- If we are to love one another just as Christ loved us, should we not give what we expect to receive – love and respect – and be uplifting, gracious, life-giving, promoting others' interests first, supporting, serving etc? Where are we going wrong? Why is this act of submission used to support marital rape? Is this what Paul is talking about?
- Is not our act of submission to Jesus an act of love? Then why is submission always referred to as an act of defeat or inferiority? Why is it associated with the submission which, if not done voluntarily, must be demanded, forced and achieved at whatever cost?
- If husbands are to love their wives like Christ loved the church, and gave up his life for the church, what does it mean for you as a woman? As a wife?
- Does it mean that men/your husbands should create the space for you as a woman to have the right to enjoy life in abundance? Should they create the space for you to make decisions that affect your lives, bodies and reproductive health?
- Salvation is for all, and a life of abundance is for all (John 10:10, see p36), both for women and men. Seeing what has been described as the roles of women and men, it is clear that women often experience a life without dignity, not a life of abundance. Being controlled, beaten, raped, humiliated and treated as inferior does not look like abundance. This is not acceptable: it is not the gospel and it must change.
- If we are Christians, Jesus Christ is our ultimate role model and we want to be more like him. In these passages, we see that he is the model for our relationships too. He treated others with respect, dignity and love. He treated women as his equals, he spoke against injustice, he was humble, he was a servant leader, and he gave of himself to those he loved. It is important for us to reflect whether these characteristics and attributes are reflected in our lives, our relationships. If not, what can we do to work towards a Christ-centered relationship?
- As women, what must we do to live in this way? How can we experience the abundant love of God in our life, in our relationships? Because this is God's intention for us. We are valuable, we are important, we are beautiful, and most importantly we are loved by the creator of all things. And his intention for us is that we should have life, and life in abundance (John 10:10, see p36).
- Gender equality is not impossible to achieve. It is not a Western concept. It is God's intention, in his creation, for us to share, love, live a life in companionship with each other and with God. Violence does not please God, and it is not acceptable for us as people of faith to use violence or experience it.
- We need to change the way we think, but we also need to change what we model to our children, our daughters and sons. We teach them from a small age that boys and girls have different value, but this is not how God created them.
- As women of faith, we should accept that God made us important and valuable and that we are precious in God's eyes. Let's teach the same to our children, and expect the same from our partners. Let's work with them to create a relationship that reflects this in all we are and do.

Homework for the group

Reflect on Genesis 1:26–28. How would our life be if it were to reflect the way it was intended in creation? What can you do to restore this image within yourself, in your relationships and in your community?



WEEK 5: MOVING FORWARD BY REFLECTING ON THE PAST

This is the final week for this group, and it is important to reflect on what has been discussed so far through this process. But most importantly it is vital to ponder how this can be related to participants' own lives, their experiences and their hopes in order to move towards a life free of violence. After this week, this group will meet with the men's group, which has been going through a similar process. This is an important occasion to be able to dialogue with the men, so that the women can share their thoughts and reflections and so that together both groups can imagine a community free of violence.

Start the session with prayer. (Please invite participants to open in prayer. Be inclusive so that people of other faiths/denominations do not feel left out. You can alternate the people praying through the upcoming sessions.)

Part 1: Looking back...

(suggested time: 60 minutes)

You are going to lead the women in an activity to prompt them to reflect on their lives. As you ask them these questions, pay careful attention to the responses so that you can facilitate a meaningful discussion.

Suggested steps

- Tell the group that you are going to take them back in time, to their childhood, and start reflecting on what their experiences of growing up were like. In order to do this, everyone needs to be open and honest with themselves and others. If anyone does not feel comfortable sharing, that is fine. But they should know this is a safe space.
- Invite them to sit in a circle, with you sitting outside of the circle. Ask the following questions:
 - What is the most difficult thing about being a woman/girl in... [insert the country or community name as appropriate]?
 - What do you remember about growing up as a girl in... [insert the country or community name as appropriate]?
 - What did you like about being a girl?
 - What did you not like? What was difficult about being a girl?
 - What rights are hardest for women to achieve here in... [Insert the country/community as appropriate]?
 - What do you want to tell men that will help them better understand women?
 - What do you find difficult to understand about men?
 - How can men better support women's empowerment?
 - How can men be better allies for women?
 - Is there something you never want to hear said again about women?
 - Who are some positive male influences in your life? Why are they positive?
 - Who are some positive female influences in your life? Why are they positive?
 - Is there one Bible/Qur'an verse that made you feel uplifted, protected or supported as a woman?
 - Is there one Bible/Qur'an verse that you felt disempowered women or was used against women because of misinterpretation?
- Note down significant answers so you can share these with the men's group too during the Week 6 session.
- You can tell the group that, as they shared, they can see there have been good and bad things about being a girl/woman in this particular community, and usually this is the same for women all around the world. Unfortunately, according to research, one in three women/girls will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. This is a sad reality for women; however, it is unacceptable.
- If this situation is to be reversed, we also need men to start changing their behaviours, for violent men to denounce violence, for silent men to start speaking up against violence, and for faith leaders and communities to speak out against SGBV. This needs to start now. And this group is an important part of this work in this particular community.
- We as women can support survivors of SGBV and not contribute to their stigma by blaming or shaming them. They are not at fault. They need support, not stigma. And as we have learnt in this process, stigma is not acceptable. Stigma will further silence women and make it difficult for them to go on with life and access the services they need (health and legal); it will also help perpetrators commit violence with impunity.
- Explain to the group that you will look again at some of their responses so they can agree as a group what they want to share with the men's group when they meet during Week 6's session.
- Conclude this session by saying that it is important to have dialogue sometimes to share what we have experienced and our thoughts in order to create change and make an impact. In order to do that, creating safe spaces is important, so that people can share their experiences safely. Everyone here has been impacted in some way or another because of unequal gender roles, the notion that women are unimportant: we have been taught that by our parents, our churches, our partners and communities. Yet, as we have discussed, this is not how God intended it to be. This is a result of sin, and therefore we need to work towards restoration.

Part 2: Aspirations for change

(suggested time: 30 minutes)

This session will reflect on discussions about gender and gender roles from Week 2, and explore an alternative to some of the characteristics and attributes listed previously. If we become aware of what must be changed, then we must also know what we must change to. This session will focus on the aspirations of this group in imagining an alternative, where violence is not acceptable.

Suggested steps

- Invite the participants to come back together as a group. Tell them that you are all going to imagine an ideal community, a different way of being women and men.
- Divide the groups into two. Ask the groups to discuss the following in their groups and report back to everyone.
 - Group 1: If you are to be a woman/girl as God intended in his creation, what kind of a woman will that be? What are her characteristics and attributes? (Examples: She will be confident, have leadership roles, have importance in society, work together with men in making decisions, and she will not accept violence etc.)
 - Group 2: If men were to be men like Christ, what would that look like today? (Examples: They will not be violent, will be involved in household work and childcare, will not be abusive or dominant over women etc.)
- After the groups have shared their feedback, read some of the key aspects again. And tell them that this is possible if we commit to working towards change, and by the grace of God. We need to unlearn the harmful things that have been taught us, both men and women.

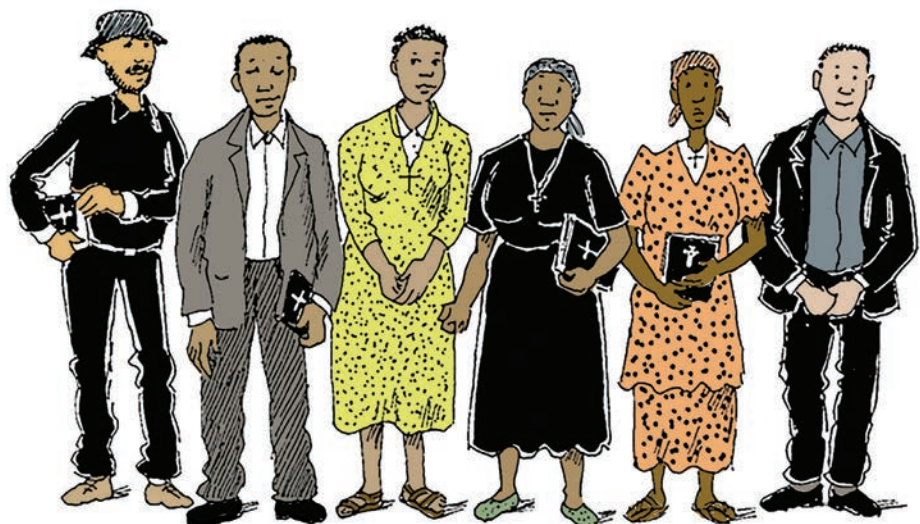
Part 3: Dear men...

(suggested time: 30 minutes)

It is almost the end of the five weeks, and you have come to the last session for this part of the process. It is important that a common message is communicated to men when you meet them as a group during the sixth session. Facilitate a session with this group to finalise what this message will be. It is important that this is clear, honest and action-oriented.

Suggested steps

- Explain this activity to the group: tell them that they are going to finalise their message to the men's group, so that they can share it with them when they meet the following week. While many of the experiences women have had with men may not have been positive, there have been men who have journeyed with women as allies in speaking out against SGBV.
- The message to the men needs to be honest, clear and also tied to concrete actions that men can take in response.
- Ask the group to discuss the following, and share their feedback:
 - What do you want to say to men? What have your experiences been so far? What do you want to say about that?
 - What do you want to say about men using violence?
 - What do you want men to hear about men's own struggles and challenges? How can you encourage them to dialogue?
 - What do you want them to change?
 - How do you want them to improve their relationship with you?
 - What are you willing to commit towards this process?
- As they take time and respond to these questions, take notes on the feedback. Make sense of the responses: summarise them into a couple of paragraphs that can be read out. Read the summary and get their approval for it to be shared during the final week.
- Ask the group which of them would be comfortable in sharing this message with the men. And then finalise the message.
- Explain to them the importance of dialogue as a vital part of engagement for change. We all need to commit to this process. Even though it is predominantly women who are victimised, there are so many ways women too can change so that harmful ideologies, victim-blaming and other harmful practices are not promoted or taught.





Closing the single-sex group sessions

(suggested time: 15 minutes)

You have come to the end of the time as a group. Take the time to reflect on the journey as a group. Then invite participants to reflect on their own personal journey over the last five weeks. Give them time to think about the following:

- What has been good/positive about this journey?
- What has changed? How has this impacted our lives and relationships?
- What was difficult about this process? What is more difficult to change?

Invite people to share their reflections to these questions with the group. After everyone has shared, conclude the session.

Suggested steps

- Take time to thank them for their faithful participation in this process. Invite them to continue to be involved in their local churches and communities in preventing and responding to SGBV.

- Survivors need our support. Encourage participants to continue to support survivors and not stigmatise them.
- Changing behaviour is difficult, so they must continue to reflect on their own lives and continue to engage with others. Ask them to think about how they can continue these discussions on their own, and in their own churches. Suggest that they can agree with their church/women's group to continue these sessions.
- Explain the importance of the last session with men, and encourage them all to participate in it.
- Remind them that they were all created in God's image and are valued by God. And they should never ever forget that.
- Now in conclusion invite someone from the group to pray and commit everyone's lives to God.
- Thank them once again, and share details about the time and place for the final session.

This completes the five-week session with women's groups. As a facilitator, you will find the notes from these sessions are invaluable, so keep them with you so you can share with your counterpart men's group facilitator, and then the supervisor.

THE FACILITATED SESSIONS: MEN'S GROUP

Overview

Suggested time per session: 90 to 120 minutes

Maximum number of participants: 8 to 10

Weeks 1 to 5 in single-sex groups; join together with women's group in Week 6

Materials needed for the facilitator: A Bible, paper or a notebook (to take notes), cards or sticky notes for the activities, a pack of playing cards, and a copy of the *Transforming masculinities* toolkit for reference.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION, AND SGBV ROOT CAUSES

Welcome the participants to the first of the six sessions and thank them for taking the time to participate in this process. If appropriate, start by inviting someone to pray. (Be inclusive so that people of other faiths/denominations do not feel left out. You can alternate the people praying through the upcoming sessions.)

Depending on the time of the day, it might be good to get everyone to sing a song together, just to get the group energised.

Introduction

- Since this same group of people will be meeting every week, it will be good for them to get to know each other.
 - Ask the participants to get into pairs, and take two minutes to get to know their partner.
 - Tell them that they will then introduce their new friend to the rest of the group, sharing the following information:
 - their name
 - what they enjoy doing in their free time
 - their favourite food
 - why they joined this group discussion
 - After giving the participants about five minutes to talk in pairs, invite them to introduce each other to the group.
 - Introduce yourself in the same way, then thank them all for participating.
- It is important to set 'group agreements' for the sessions, and these will be most successful if the participants make the agreements themselves.
 - Some suggested group agreements: switching off/putting mobile phones on silent; confidentiality; respect for others' opinions; taking care not to give feedback in a way that could feel harmful to others; being on time; committing to all six weeks of this process.
 - Please refer to the facilitation guide in the *Transforming masculinities* toolkit for further details of this activity.
- Take time to introduce the objectives of the community dialogues, and the process involved. Explain the following:
 - Community dialogues are a series of dialogues and reflections held over six weeks to create space for personal transformation and empowerment.
 - Each week the group will discuss and reflect on themes related to gender, masculinities, SGBV and faith, and will learn to apply these reflections to their personal lives and relationships.
 - Participants are expected to commit two hours of their time, one day a week for six weeks. The day will be mutually agreed by members of the group.
 - While the men's group discussions are happening, there is a group of women doing the same thing and, after five weeks of meeting separately, both groups will meet together for the sixth week.
 - This is a safe space for conversations; if anyone doesn't feel safe, please ask them to speak to you privately.
 - Emphasise that this is not a space for women to be blamed, but for the men to be reminded of how God created women in his image: equal, valuable and good. It is a space where they will be encouraged, empowered, challenged and transformed.
 - If any of the discussions are traumatic or trigger trauma, they should speak with you, so you can take the necessary steps. And if any of them want to disclose their experience of violence, please ask them to speak to you privately so you can provide information on relevant support services.
- Ask the participants if they have any questions. Take time to clarify concerns and questions.

Part 1: Why is it important to address SGBV?*(about 60 minutes)*

- It is important for participants to understand why they should even be talking about SGBV, and how it affects people's lives.
- Invite the participants to share stories from their village on how SGBV has affected women's lives. Give them time to share a couple of stories, ask them what the impact on the survivor's life was. Are these kinds of incidents common? What are the different ways it affects the 'victim'?
- After they have shared the stories, ask them how they felt when they heard these stories. Can they identify with the stories? If so, how? As men what does it make you feel when you hear that a man perpetrated violence against a girl/woman?
- What does your faith say about suffering? Is God pleased with suffering? (Use appropriate language here.)
- Read scriptures from the Bible or Qur'an, and give time for the participants to reflect.
 - Bible: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 (see p36–37)
 - Ask Muslim participants to suggest texts, or use Qur'an: 49:10–11 on respecting others and valuing peace.
- After about five minutes, invite the participants to share their views on this, relating it to the stories they have shared.
- Conclude by saying that this is not how God intended people to live. SGBV does not glorify God: it affects the entire community and increases people's suffering. And this is not acceptable; it must change. This is why we need to talk about this issue as many women and girls are suffering in silence. There are also men who experience violence, even sexual violence by other men, and they also suffer in silence because of stigma and shame.
- What do your laws say about this?
 - Talk about specific laws from your country on rape and domestic violence.
 - Discuss what the punishment is for violating these laws.
 - If participants are not aware of the specific laws, share this information with them. But encourage them to find out about the laws, policies and rights related to SGBV for themselves.
- Conclude by saying that SGBV is not just against our faith, but also against the law of our country: it is a criminal offence. It is evident that this is causing great suffering; this is why we are here to discuss this issue. This is why we invite you to commit to the next five weeks of this process, and to the process of transformation.



Part 2: What are some of the root causes of SGBV?

(about 60 minutes)

Start the session by explaining why it is important to understand the root causes of SGBV.

- If you do not know the root causes, then it is difficult to understand the issue, prevent it or respond to it.
- Just like going to the doctor when you are sick, symptoms are different from the cause. For example: Your fever (symptom) can be due to an infection (cause) but you cannot cure the infection by giving medicine for the fever.
- Ask the group to split into pairs (groups of two) and discuss what they think are the consequences of SGBV.
- Bring the group back together and ask them to share their ideas on consequences. You can draw a tree on the ground or on paper, if available, and list the different consequences of SGBV where the tree branches and leaves are. Examples: death, disease, stigma, mental health issues, economic challenges, disabilities etc...
- The reasons it is important to understand the consequences include:
 - being able to differentiate between causes and consequences
 - understanding that the consequences of SGBV are not just physical or sexual: SGBV affects every aspect of a person's life, their families and societies as a whole
 - helping us to reflect individually on how SGBV affects us personally, in ways other than just physical ones.
- Now ask them to get back in pairs and consider the root causes of SGBV.
 - Help them think deeper than just 'cultural', or 'women's dress' or 'alcohol': ask them questions to help them get to the root of the issue.
 - If someone says: 'It is how women dress,' follow up with a question: 'If women dressed differently, would they not be affected by SGBV? And how do women in _____ [insert relevant village name] dress? And how is that leading to SGBV?'
 - If they mention alcohol, ask them: 'If people stopped drinking, would that end SGBV? Do all people who drink alcohol beat their partners, rape them etc?'
 - As a facilitator, it is important that you help them really understand how inequality and gender power imbalances lead to SGBV, and how these elements are embedded in our day-to-day life, our cultures, our way of interpreting scriptures etc.

- Help participants understand that there are factors that are not causes, but that encourage or foster SGBV, eg conflict (due to a breakdown of law and order, increased corruption, hindrance to infrastructure development such as roads, hospitals etc). This increases people's vulnerability, and creates a space for impunity.
- Likewise, alcohol is a factor that impairs a person's thinking, and this can then combine with preexisting harmful attitudes to contribute to someone using power to beat or rape their partner or someone else in their community.

Conclusion

We need to transform our own attitudes, behaviours and knowledge on this subject, to work with men and boys to tackle the issue, and to address harmful notions of masculinities. Women can also play a critical role in perpetuating these harmful notions of gender and masculinities. They teach their children from a small age the different values placed on them: if you are a boy, then you are superior; if you are a girl, then you are worthless. This needs to change.

Most of the time, perpetrators of SGBV are men, so what does it say about men? It is important to change this narrative, and work towards a community where men are working along with women to end SGBV, starting from their own lives, their families and then in the communities.

It is important that women are aware of the different ways that SGBV affects their own lives, and understand the reason for women to be involved in the response.

It is important that our place of worship breaks the silence on SGBV, and we can work in partnership with them to address this issue.

Conclude the session by emphasising the need for them to be committed to this process for the next five weeks, and remind them of the time and venue for the next session. Close in prayer.

Homework for the group

How has SGBV affected your life or someone you know? What has your experience of this been? Have you used violence on others?



WEEK 2: GENDER ROLES AND NORMS IN DAILY LIFE

Welcome the participants to the session and thank them for their commitment to their process. Ask how everyone is feeling, and how their week was and give some time for responses (maybe 5–10 minutes for a few people to share).

Start the session with prayer. (Please invite participants to open in prayer. Be inclusive so that people of other faiths/denominations do not feel left out. You can alternate the people praying through the upcoming sessions.) Invite them to share reflections on their homework. Prompt people if they hesitate, emphasising that this is a safe space and a space for learning.

Part 1: Gender, gender roles and relations/relationships

(about 45 minutes)

Suggested steps

- Introduce the session to the participants. This session is about exploring our gender identities. It is about being a man or woman and how gender identities affect our relationships, lives and interactions with people.
 - Divide the group in two, and ask them to sit in their groups.
 - Ask the groups to take time to reflect on the following questions. Group 1: 'What do you like about being a man? What do you not you like about being a man?' and Group 2: 'What do you like about how women are? What do you not like about how they are?'
 - The exercise is to help them reflect and discuss the attributes and characteristics of being a man or woman, and the privileges and power that they have or do not have.
 - After 10 minutes' discussion, invite the groups to share their thoughts with everyone.
- Conclude the session by saying that, as men and women, we both enjoy privileges and power associated with our genders. However, being a woman is usually equated with being weak, vulnerable and less important than men, leading to harmful practices and violence at home and in the communities. And as men, we are considered superior and are awarded power and control over women in our lives. Men generally have the freedom to do whatever they want and don't take part in domestic work or childcare.



Part 2: Gender boxes: Act like a woman/Act like a man*(about 60–75 minutes)*

Thank the participants for their honest reflections in the previous session. Tell them that you want to unpack how gender norms/roles affect our lives, so they understand how this is critical in the discussion of SGBV.

- Divide the group in two, and tell one group that they will discuss 'acting/being like a man' and the other group will discuss 'acting/being like a woman'. Distribute coloured sticky notes or flash cards to the groups: ask them to write down their examples and stick them on the flipchart in the relevant column.
- Ask Group 1 to discuss and answer the following three questions:
 - Give examples of messages that men/boys are given when they are told to 'Act like a man/boy'. (*Tough, not emotional, decision-maker, protector, provider, adviser, the person who disciplines, can have multiple partners, should not ask for help, controls the finances and the women in the house etc.*)
 - Where (eg home, schools etc) and from whom do these messages come?
 - How are these messages given, sent or conveyed (eg sermons, TV/radio, school etc)?
- Ask Group 2 to discuss the following three questions:
 - Give examples of messages that women/girls are given when they are told to 'Act like a woman/girl'. (*A woman cannot lead, she has to give birth to many children, if she can't, then she is dishonourable or not valued, she must not speak too much, she has to be submissive and obedient, be faithful etc.*)
 - Where and from whom do these messages come?
 - How are these messages given, sent or conveyed?
- Ask the groups to share the main discussion points. (They can do this verbally or even act it out as a group.)
- Now ask the participants the following questions:
 - What happens to men/boys and women/girls who do not conform to these ways? (*Beaten, raped, shamed, stigmatised, harassed and coerced to do things they do not want to, etc.*)
 - How are men and women kept within these boxes? What strategies/tools/actions are used?
 - Are there men and women who do not conform to these messages? How do they do that?
 - Are there messages here that are harmful to men and women? (Refer to what happens when they do not conform to messages.)
 - Are there specific consequences for women and girls who do not conform?

- Now ask both groups to reflect on how women and girls might feel when they experience these harmful actions/words because they do not conform or when they are forced to conform.
- You can also ask about how men and boys feel when forced to conform to these 'boxes'? And what role do women play in forcing boys/men to conform to these roles? What do we do when men/boys step outside of these boxes?
- Ask the participants to share their thoughts. Conclude by saying we can now begin to see how society creates very different rules for the behaviour of men and women. Explain that these rules are sometimes called 'gender norms' because they define what is 'normal' for men and women to think, feel and act. Explain that these rules restrict the lives of both women and men by keeping men in their 'Act like a man' box and women in their 'Act like a woman' box.
- When these roles are limited, controlling and rigid, men and women are both harmed because their autonomy is taken away. These assigned roles of men and women create pressure when it is difficult to follow them, and often lead to different forms of violence inflicted on the one who does not conform.
- As we discussed, these rules/norms are created by the society we live in, our communities, our leaders. We are the ones who are part of these communities contributing to these norms. If we are to change harmful characteristics and attributes, we must take action: we can start this process of change, collectively and individually, in our homes, churches and communities so that we can live a life without violence.
- We need to address these gender dynamics if we are to prevent SGBV.

Homework for the group

Reflect on what you are currently doing that might be harmful to others and how you are contributing to shaping these norms. How can you change that?





WEEK 3: POWER, STATUS AND SGBV

Welcome the participants to the session and thank them for their commitment to their process. Ask how everyone is feeling, and how their week was and give some time for responses (5 to 10 minutes for a few people to share).

Then, start the session with prayer. (Please invite participants to open in prayer. Be inclusive so that people of other faiths/denominations do not feel left out. You can alternate the people praying through the upcoming sessions.)

Invite the group to share reflections on their homework. Prompt people if they hesitate, emphasising that this is a safe space and a space for learning.

Now explain to them that you are going to look at how gender inequality and unequal power and status lead to harmful practices and violence.

Part 1: Power and status

(suggested time: 45 minutes)

Suggested steps

- Start the session by playing a game: ask participants if they are familiar with 'playing cards'.
- Take the pack of playing cards out, and ask them to tell you the hierarchy of the cards, or the order. (For example: the Joker is the highest-value card, then the Ace, King/Queen/Jack, 10, 9 etc). Reconfirm the order to make sure there is consensus in the group.
- Take a mix of high-value and low-value playing cards, exactly the same number of cards as the number of participants. Display the cards, explaining the value of each card according to what was agreed by the group.
- Now ask them to stand together in a circle, and shuffle the cards. Hand each participant a card facing down, so they do not know the card they have. After everyone has received a card, explain the rules of the game:
 - Each person's card has a value as discussed as a group, and everyone knows which card is of high or low value.
 - When given the command, each person has to hold their cards to their foreheads for others to see but they cannot see it.
 - Instruct the group to interact with each other based on the value of the card, treating those with high-value cards with respect, and those with the low-value cards without respect.
 - Give them about five minutes to interact: observe and assist with the activity so that they engage fully.
 - Stop the game and bring them back into a circle. Ask for feedback on how they felt. Now ask them to look at their cards.
 - Ask those holding high-value cards, how they felt in response to the way people treated them with respect. Take responses from all the participants in this group if possible.
 - Now ask the people holding the low-value cards how they felt about how they were treated. Give time for responses from everyone.

- Follow up by asking: Are people in our communities treated like this? In our homes? How are people in our communities valued less? In our homes? How does it feel when people treat you badly?
- Ask everyone if they had any choice in the cards they received. And who decided on the value?
- Conclude by saying that we have no control over what we are born as (woman or man), and these roles and rules are assigned to us by our society, which we also contribute to creating. However, we are the ones responsible for treating groups of people like they have no value, worth or dignity, and that is harmful. Usually we see this happen to women: they are treated as if they have no worth to society, and sometimes even men are treated like this, especially if they are unemployed or have a disability. And usually it is men who treat women as if they are of no worth in their families and communities. They use this power to dominate and control women and also resort to the use of violence to get what they want or prove their power. This is not healthy and it is not acceptable. We are the ones who must change this: it must start with us, as we are the ones who contribute to shaping these norms and roles, especially when they are harmful to people and our communities.

Part 2: Persons and things

(suggested time: 60–90 minutes)

Turn the discussion towards the question of how power imbalances can lead to violence. This discussion is important so that the group can sense how power imbalance in our societies can make people vulnerable, create a culture of impunity and enable violence to take place, and even cause us to normalise, internalise and justify violence. (You may need to explain what it means for us to internalise beliefs. An individual internalises beliefs, attitudes, perspectives or values from a wider group without questioning and without realising he or she is being shaped by them.)

Suggested steps

- Explain that you are going to lead them in an activity that will help them understand this discussion a bit better, and learn from experience.
 - Divide the group into three, with a minimum of three people per group. If you do not have enough participants, it is okay to just have one person in the third group, but it is important to have equal members in Groups 1 and 2.
 - Ask members of Groups 1 and 2 to face each other, so they are paired up with someone from the opposite group. Ask Group 3 to stand on the side and observe.
 - Now tell Group 1 that they are 'persons', so like any person they have a voice, they have rights, they can do whatever they like, and more importantly they have power over their partner from Group 2.
 - Tell Group 2 that they are 'things' or 'objects', and that they have no power, voice or rights. They have to do what the 'person' commands and cannot refuse.
 - Tell Group 3 that they are observers, and ask them to observe the interaction between 'persons' and 'things'.
 - Now tell them they have three minutes, and the 'persons' can do whatever they want with the 'things' or 'objects'. After three minutes, ask them to switch roles with their partners and keep the same rules.
- Finally, ask the groups to go back to their places and use the questions below to facilitate a discussion.
 - How did your 'person' treat you? How did you feel? Did you feel powerless? Why or why not? How did you treat your 'thing'? How did it feel to treat someone this way? Did it make you feel powerful? Why or why not?
 - Why did the 'things' obey the instructions given by the 'persons'? Were there 'things' or 'persons' who resisted the exercise?
 - In your daily lives, do others treat you like 'things'? Who? Why? In your daily lives, do you treat others like 'things'? Who? Why?



- For the 'observers': How did you feel not doing anything? Did you feel like interfering with what was happening? If so, what do you think you could have done?
- If you had been given the chance to choose between the three groups, which would you have chosen to be in and why?
- Why do people treat each other like this?
- In your communities, do you as men usually belong to one of these three groups? Which group? Do women usually belong to one of these three groups? Which group? Why do you think this is?
- What can we do to make sure that different groups such as men and women live in an equitable world where they can enjoy the same opportunities, equal treatment and equal rights?
- Point out the controlling, dominant and sometimes violent ways the 'persons' treated 'things'. Ask them why they acted in such ways. Were they asked in the instructions to behave in a harmful way?
- When the roles were reversed, did you see a pattern? What was it? *(When 'things' take on the role of the 'person' after experiencing what they did, they usually tend to remodel the behaviour and are sometimes even more harmful.)*
- We also can see how our children remodel some of these behaviours: boys learn how to be a man by seeing and hearing how men behave, and girls learn how to be a woman in the same way. They learn that one is more dominant and powerful over the other, and sadly that they may have no voice to contest this. Usually they internalise this as the norm and perpetuate it themselves.
- Women also can internalise and remodel harmful behaviours when power shifts within the home or community, and likewise women also tend to internalise the notion that they are 'weak', 'subordinate' and 'have no voice'. This makes them vulnerable and puts them at risk.
- Mention specifically how power and gender roles are used to justify marital rape. The belief that 'a husband is entitled to his wife's body' is so internalised that most people do not even acknowledge it as rape.
- Point out that even men who are not violent do nothing to intervene, or engage their peers, just like the 'observers'. This is mainly because this use of power is considered acceptable behaviour and the unwritten rules in our communities hold us back from speaking out when we see something that is not right. Yet, as people of faith, our scriptures tell us to speak out against injustice.
- Ask them to continue to reflect on the dynamic link between power and violence, and between gender inequality and violence.

Homework for the group

Reflect on the following: how do you use the power and privilege that is associated with being a man in your day-to-day life, your relationships and in the life of your community? How can this be changed? What would life look like if everyone were treated equally? What can you do when you are in the position of an 'observer'?



WEEK 4: FAITH AND SGBV

This week, we are going to explore further what our scriptures say about gender, gender equality and SGBV. As people of faith, we need to learn and apply the word of God in our daily lives.

Start the session with prayer. (Please invite participants to open in prayer. Be inclusive so that people of other faiths/denominations do not feel left out. You can alternate the people praying through the upcoming sessions.)

Part 1: Gender equality and faith

(suggested time: 60 minutes)

Since we have been discussing gender, the power imbalances between genders and gender inequality, let's look at how our scriptures describe how we were created.

Suggested steps

- Invite someone from the group to read aloud Genesis 1:26–28 from a Bible or from p36 at the back of this publication (but if they are unable to read, you can read it aloud).²
 - Read the passage a couple of times, slowly spelling out key sections (Let us... in our own image, etc.).
 - Give them a couple of minutes and ask them to reflect on the passage.
 - Now divide them into three groups, and ask them to reflect on the following thoughts as a group:
 - What are your initial thoughts when you hear the scriptures?
 - What does it mean for man and woman to be created in God's image? Does it mean both are equal? Does it mean one is more powerful, more important than the other?
 - Are we as men and women dominating each other? Is this what God said to Adam and Eve in creation (Genesis 1:28)?
 - If God created man and woman in God's image, as equals but with different gifts, skills and roles, where did inequality come from? What caused the relationships between man and woman to break and to become harmful?
- Can this relationship be restored? Can the harmful elements of being a man or woman, the power imbalance, the inequality be changed if we aspire to live the way we were created to be?
- Emphasise that at creation men and women were created in the image of God, the Trinity: equal in power and worth but with different roles, responsibilities, skills etc.
- After creation, God tells both Adam and Eve to be blessed, and to rule over the creation, not over each other as we see in relationships in our current context. God did not create Adam to be superior to Eve, or vice versa.
- Sin separated us from God, and from each other. It is only after the Fall that we see God giving Adam commands about his roles, and likewise Eve (Genesis 3:14–19, see p36). So we see that this inequality and power imbalance are a result of sin, and not God's intention at creation. So we must work towards restoring this broken image, because we can see how this is leading to harmful and violent behaviours that are affecting people, especially women and girls.
- Also read Galatians 3:28 in this context (see p37) to make the point that in God we are all the same, God's children. 'There is no male nor female, we are all one in Christ.'
- Can we imagine what we (men and women) would be like if we lived according to God's intention for us, if we treated each other as people created in the image of God the Trinity? (As facilitator, you should take notes on the feedback on this particular point, so that you can remind the participants in the following week's discussion.)



² Include scriptures from the Qur'an if there are Islamic participants in the group.

Part 2: Relationships

(suggested time: 60 minutes)

As we have looked at God's intention for man and woman in the last part, understanding what it means to be created in the image of God, it is important to look at our own relationships and reflect on the teachings of the scriptures. We know that in our day-to-day lives we have used scriptures to shape our relationships. Based on our experiences we know some scriptures have been interpreted to support harmful practices. So it is important to reflect on these scriptures that we hear often and to understand them in the context of God's creation and the creation of man and woman in the image of God.



Suggested steps

- Lead the group in a reflection on scriptures commonly used when talking about relationships from Ephesians 5:21–33 (see p37). Read these passages slowly so the group can understand them properly, in order to reflect on them later.
- Divide the group into two groups, and ask the groups to reflect on these two aspects of the passage.
 - Group 1: What does it mean for a wife to submit to her husband? Is this an act of love? Or should it be forced? How does the church submit to Christ?
 - Group 2: What does it mean for a man to love his wife as Christ loved the church? Is this reflected in the way you love your wife today?
 - Give them five minutes to reflect and discuss as a group, and then another five minutes to share their thoughts with the rest of the group.
- If we are to love one another just as Christ loved us, should we not give what we expect to receive – love and respect – and be uplifting, gracious, life-giving, promoting others' interests first, supporting, serving etc? Where are we going wrong? Why is this act of submission used to support marital rape? Is this what Paul is talking about?

- Is not our act of submission to Jesus an act of love? Then why is submission referred to as an act of defeat or inferiority? Why is it associated with the submission of the world which, if not done voluntarily, must be demanded, forced and achieved at whatever cost? If we are to love our wives as Christ loved the church and gave his life for her, should it not mean that we give up ourselves, our desires, our needs, privileges and entitlements for the betterment, happiness and well-being of others, including our wives? Are we doing this? What is preventing us from doing this?
- Is it not about creating the space for women to enjoy life in abundance, to make decisions over their lives, their economy, bodies and reproductive health?
- Salvation is for all, and a life of abundance is for all (John 10:10, see p36), both for women and men. Seeing what has been described as the roles of women and men, it is clear that women often experience a life without dignity, not a life of abundance. Being controlled, beaten, raped, humiliated and treated as inferior does not look like abundance. This is not acceptable: it is not the gospel and it must change.
- If we call ourselves Christians, Jesus Christ is our ultimate model and we want to be more like him. Even in these passages we see that he is the model for relationships. He treated others with respect, dignity and love. He treated women as his equals, he spoke against injustice, he was humble, he was a servant leader and he gave of himself to those he loved. It is important for us to reflect on whether these characteristics and attributes are reflected in our lives and relationships. If they are not, what can we do to work towards Christ-centered relationships?
- As men, what must we do to live in this way? How can we love like Christ? How can this be shown in our relationships, and in the way we treat our wives, our daughters and the women in our community?
- Gender equality is not impossible to achieve: it is not a Western concept. It is God's intention, in his creation, for us to share, love, live a life in companionship with each other and with God. Violence does not please God, and it is not acceptable for us as people of faith to use violence or experience it.
- We need to change the way we think, but we also need to change what we model to our children, our daughters and sons. We teach them from a small age that they have different value, but this is not how God created them. If our children see the way we act and behave, they will model themselves on us. But can we change the way we are and break this cycle?
- As men of God, can we change and work towards being more like Christ? Can we work with women and treat them as equals as Christ did? And work together to end SGBV?

Homework for the group

Reflect on the Genesis 1:26–28 passage, and how your life would be if it were the way it was intended to be in creation. What can you do to restore this image within yourself, in your relationships and in your community? As a man, how can you restore relationships so they are as God intended them to be at creation, modelling equality not superiority?

WEEK 5: MOVING FORWARD BY REFLECTING ON THE PAST

This is the final week for this group, and it is important to reflect on what has been discussed so far through this process. But most importantly it is crucial that we ponder how this can be related to participants' own lives, their experiences and their hopes, so they can move towards a life free of violence. After this week, this group will meet with the women's group, which has been going through a similar process. This is an important occasion to be able to dialogue with the women, so that the men can share their thoughts and reflections and so that together both groups can imagine a community free of violence.

Start the session with prayer. (Please invite participants to open in prayer. Be inclusive so that people of other faiths/denominations do not feel left out. You can alternate the people praying through the upcoming sessions.)

Part 1: Looking back...

(suggested time: 60 minutes)

You are going to lead the men in an activity that prompts them to reflect on their lives. As you ask them questions, pay careful attention to the responses so that you can facilitate a meaningful discussion.

Suggested steps

- Tell the group that you are going to take them back in time, to their childhood, and start reflecting on what their experiences of growing up were like. For this, everyone needs to be honest with themselves and others. If anyone does not feel comfortable sharing, that is fine, but people should know that this is a safe space.
- Invite them to sit in a circle, with you sitting outside of the circle. Ask the following questions:
 - What is the most difficult thing about being a man/boy in... [insert the country or community name as appropriate]?
 - What do you remember about growing up as a boy in... [insert the country or community name as appropriate]?
 - What did you like about being a boy?
 - What did you not like? What was difficult about being a boy?
 - What do you want to tell women that will help them better understand men?
 - What do you find difficult to understand about women?
 - How can you better support women's empowerment?
 - How can you be better allies for women?
 - Who are some positive female influences in your life? Why are they positive?
- Note down significant answers so you can share them with the women's group too during the Week 6 session.
- Sometimes the expectations on men/boys are also difficult; these norms are harmful to both men and women. There are women who have helped you become the man you are today, and this is an important reason why you must work with women in ending SGBV.
- We also need men to start changing their behaviours, for violent men to denounce violence, for silent men to start speaking up against violence, and for faith leaders and communities to speak out against SGBV. This needs to start now. And this group is an important part of this work in this particular community.
- We as men can support survivors of SGBV, and not contribute to their stigma by blaming or shaming them. They are not at fault. They need support, not stigma. And as we have learnt in this process, stigma is not acceptable. Stigma will further silence women and make it difficult for them to go on with life and access the services they need (health and legal); it will also help perpetrators commit violence with impunity.
- Explain to the group that you will look again at some of their responses so they can agree as a group what they want to tell the women's group when they meet for the Week 6 session.
- Conclude this session by saying that it is important to have dialogue and to share what you have experienced and your thoughts in order to create change and make an impact. Creating safe spaces is important, so that people can share their experiences safely. Everyone here has been impacted in some way or another because of unequal gender roles and by the notion that women are unimportant. We have been taught that men are superior and more important, by our parents, our churches and our communities. Yet, as we have discussed, this is not how God intended it to be. This is a result of sin, and so we need to work towards restoration.

Part 2: Jesus as the model for being a man

(suggested time: 30 minutes)

This session will reflect on the discussions on gender and gender roles from Week 2, and explore an alternative to some of the characteristics and attributes listed previously. If we become aware of what must be changed, then we must also know what we should change to. This session will focus on the aspirations of the group in imagining an alternative, where violence is not acceptable.

Suggested steps

- Invite the participants to come back together as a group. Tell them that you are all going to imagine an ideal community, a different way of being women and men.
- Divide the groups into two: ask the groups to discuss the following in their groups and report back to everyone:
 - Group 1: If you are to be a man/boy as God intended in his creation, what kind of a man will that be? What are his characteristics and attributes? (Examples: They will not be violent, will be involved in household work and childcare, will not be abusive or dominant over women etc.)
 - Group 2: If Jesus were a model for men, what would that look like today? (Examples: he was a servant leader, he interacted with humility, he cared for the hurt, he spoke against injustice, he shared his feelings, he cooked for his disciples and washed their feet, he never stigmatised the vulnerable and he never used his power to hurt or harm people.)
- After the groups have shared their feedback, read out some of the key aspects again. And tell them that all this is possible if we commit to working towards change, and by the grace of God. We need to unlearn many things, the harmful things we have been taught, both men and women.



Part 3: Dear women...

(suggested time: 30 minutes)

It is almost the end of the five weeks, and you have come to the last session for this part of the process. It is important that the men communicate a clear message to the women when you meet them as a group during the sixth session. Facilitate a session with this men's group to finalise this message. It is important that this is clear, honest and reflective of a context where men have hurt women for a long time.

Suggested steps

- Explain to the group that they are going to finalise their message to the women's group, so that they can share it with them when they meet the following week. While many women's experiences with men haven't been positive, there have been men who have journeyed with women as allies in speaking out against SGBV.
- The message has to include personal reflections on the men's own behaviour, how they have interacted with the women in their lives. There should be no preaching, or accusations or demands for change. There should be acknowledgment of the harm and the need to change, which is important for restoration and moving forward. They also should make use of the safe space to share their own challenges in fulfilling their roles, their own experiences of violence and trauma, and the need for support from women in this journey towards restored relationships as God intended.
- Ask the group to discuss the following, and share their feedback:
 - What do you want to say to women? You have heard in the sessions so far that men have hurt women for so long: what do you have to say to them?
 - What do you want to say about most men using violence?
 - What do you want women to hear about men's own struggles and challenges? How can you encourage dialogue?
 - What do you want to change in your own lives, to be more like Christ? How will you work with women?
 - How will you be better husbands, sons, fathers and leaders? How will you work towards ending SGBV?
- As they take time and respond to these questions, take notes on the feedback. Make sense of the responses, summarising them into a couple of paragraphs that can be read out to the women. Read the summary out to the men and get their approval for it to be shared during the final week.
- Ask the group: who will be comfortable in sharing this message with the women? And then finalise the message.
- Explain to them the importance of dialogue as an important part of engagement for change. We all need to commit to this process. Even though it is predominantly women who are victimised, there are so many ways women too can change so that harmful ideologies, victim-blaming and harmful practices are not promoted or taught.
- Even though men are usually the perpetrators, they have also been victims of violence. It is important to share their vulnerabilities. It is also important to acknowledge that harmful practices, the misuse of power and violence against women are not acceptable.

Closing the single-sex group sessions

(suggested time: 15 minutes)

You have come to the end of the time as a group, and should take time to reflect on the journey as a group. Invite participants to reflect on their own personal journey over the last five weeks. Give them time to think about the following:

- What has been good/positive about this journey?
- What has changed? How has this impacted our lives and relationships?
- What was difficult about this process? What is more difficult to change?

Invite people to share their reflections to these questions with the group. After everyone has shared, conclude the session.

Suggested steps

- Take time to thank them for their faithful participation in this process. Invite them to continue to be involved in their local churches and communities in preventing and responding to SGBV.
- Survivors need our support. Encourage them to continue to support survivors, not stigmatise them.
- Changing behaviour is difficult. So we must continue to reflect on our own lives, continue to engage with others. Ask them to think about how they can continue these discussions on their own, and in their own churches. And suggest that they can agree with their church/men's group to continue these sessions.
- Explain the importance of the last session with the women, and encourage them all to participate in it.
- Remind them that they all were created in God's image, and valued by God. And they should never ever forget that.
- Now in conclusion invite someone from the group to pray and commit everyone's lives to God.
- Thank them once again, and share details about the time and place for the final session.



THE FACILITATED SESSIONS: FINAL SESSION FOR WOMEN AND MEN



WEEK 6: LOOKING AHEAD, WORKING TOWARDS A WORLD FREE OF VIOLENCE TOGETHER

This is the final session for the groups who have been meeting during the last five weeks, coming together for one final discussion before moving on to applying the learning in their lives and in communities. This is a special occasion as this is the first time men and women will be able to dialogue together.

The two facilitators of these groups must meet in advance to discuss key points, feed back and plan for this joint session. The most important aspect of this session is that this has to be a safe space for honest conversations to take place. The facilitators also need to agree on how they co-facilitate the final session, both taking equal leadership in this process.

This is also a 'graduation' for this group and a celebration of joint hopes for a better future for all. So, if your supervisors see fit, it would be good to have some refreshments to mark the occasion. It will also be good to have pledge cards for participants to sign and take home (see p34).

It is important to emphasise that this is not the end of the process, as real transformation takes time. In fact, this is just the beginning of a new phase in life where they reflect what has been discussed, learnt and unlearnt. It is the start of a life in which they aspire to promote gender equality, and for men to promote positive models of masculinities, as Jesus did.

Part 1: Messages from the men

(suggested time: 30 minutes/ facilitated by the male facilitator)

After the introduction to the final session, it is time for the men's group to share their message with the women. The male facilitator needs to facilitate this process.

Suggested steps

- Invite the men to come to the front of the group, so that they can face the women's group. Explain to the women about the process the men have gone through over the five weeks, and how this message was developed by the men: this message comes from a place of reflection, acknowledgement and honesty, and this is just the beginning of moving ahead together. Emphasise that the men in this group are committed and willing to be held accountable for their actions and behaviour, and this is the beginning of the journey towards transformation and companionship, and restoring relationships so they are as God intended in creation.
- After you have given context and an introduction to the message,

introduce the man who is going to read the message. Ask him to read the message slowly so everyone understands. The message should not take more than five minutes.

- After the representative of the men's group has read their message, ask the women's group whether they have any feedback/reactions/comments. Remind them that this is a safe space for all, so there is no room for judgement, blame or accusation. Give about five minutes for this process: take a few responses and invite the female facilitator to get involved in facilitating them.
- To conclude this session, ask the female facilitator to pray for the men and commit their lives into God's hands, as they embark on this new journey of faith, conviction and accountability towards a Christ-centred life.
- Thank the men for their honesty and commitment to this process.



Part 2: Messages from the women

(Suggested time: 30 minutes/facilitated by the female facilitator)

Suggested steps

- Invite the women to come to the front of the group, so that they can face the men's group. Explain to the men the process the women have gone through in the last five weeks, and how this message was developed: this message is based on their collective experiences, honesty and willingness to work together, and this is just the beginning of moving ahead together. These women have been brave to share their experiences, therefore invite the men to open their hearts to hear what is being said, and to reflect. This is an important part of moving forward because without acknowledging the truth it is impossible to work on restoration.
- After you have given context and an introduction to the message, introduce the woman who is going to read the women's message. Ask her to read the message slowly so everyone understands. The message should not take longer than five minutes.
- After the women's group representative has read their message, ask the men's group whether they have any feedback/reactions/comments. Remind them that this is a safe space for all, so there is no room for judgement, blame or accusation. Give about five minutes for this process: take a few responses, and invite the male facilitator to get involved in facilitating the responses. It is important that the men who listen to this understand how SGBV impacts women's lives, and these women are an integral part of their lives, their families and communities. This should be also an encouragement/motivation for the men to work towards bettering themselves and their community.
- To conclude this session, ask the male facilitator to pray for the women and commit their lives into God's hands, as they embark on this new journey towards a life of abundance and joy, free from violence – a journey of trust and rebuilding broken relationships at every level.
- Thank the women for their honesty and commitment to this process.

Part 3: Fun learning activity

(suggested time: 15 minutes)

Note: If you are running this programme in a context where there are sensitivities around men and women being in close contact, please pair people up with others of the same gender.

Suggested steps

- The group forms a tight circle. Everyone sticks his or her hands into the centre. With one hand, everyone grabs the hand of another person. Then, using the other hand, grab a hand of someone different. The object of the game is to get untangled without letting go. By climbing, crawling and wriggling around, participants can create one large open circle or, sometimes, two unconnected ones. If they are totally stuck, you can tell them they can chose to undo one link, and then reconnect once that person has turned around, and see if that works.
- This energiser is fun and creates a nice physical bond between participants. It also subtly communicates the idea of working together to accomplish a task, symbolising the journey ahead.
- You can conclude by saying that, no matter how complex or difficult situations are, if we work together, communicate and support one another, we can find a solution.
- Give them all a round of applause.

Part 4: An ideal community

(suggested time: 45–60 minutes)

This session is important: this is where the group can imagine together a world free of violence, not just using their hearts, but also their heads. If they cannot imagine something better, then they will have nothing to work towards, no goal or purpose. It is important to give them that vision, and also help them see the possibilities.

Both facilitators should lead this session and agree beforehand which steps each one will facilitate. The participants can sit in a circle, with the facilitators at the centre of it. When one facilitator is asking the questions, the other needs to take notes about the responses. For this final session, it will be good to invite the local leaders and/or pastors to participate as observers and then later join in the celebrations.

This part has been developed in a church context, but it can be adapted for a Muslim group or a mixed group.

Suggested steps

- Tell the participants that you are going to take them on a journey, a journey towards an ideal community that is very different from the one they live in now. Ask them to close their eyes for a few minutes, and clear their minds.
 - Tell them that, when you start narrating, they need to imagine what you are saying, and to reflect on it in silence. Tell them that later they will share what they imagined and what they felt or experienced.
 - **Narration:** When you wake up tomorrow, you find you are living in a community in which there is no violence against women and girls. All members of this community enjoy a life of abundance – as individuals, in their relationships and in their community. This is a community where women and girls are safe and respected and can aspire to be anything they want. They have no worries about violence happening to them, their daughters or mothers, their friends or sisters. Gender inequality, harmful masculinities and violence against men and women, boys and girls, have all ended. Their relationship with God and with one another has been fully restored.
 - **(Pause for ten seconds):** Imagine life in this community: What activities are women doing in this community? Where do they go? What do they wear? What do they do in church? In their house?
 - **(Pause for ten seconds):** How are women treated? What is a woman's relationship with her husband, her father, her brother and her children?
 - **(Pause for ten seconds):** How do men act in this community? What kind of qualities do they have? How do men treat women? What kind of fathers are they? What kind of husbands are they?
 - How do you feel about being a part of this community? Embrace that feeling and let it sink in.
 - Make sure you give participants enough time between the statements to reflect and absorb what has been said. Now ask them to open their eyes slowly.
- It will be helpful to take notes of the responses during the following discussion.
- Ask them to think of one word that represents what they feel about life in this community. Start with the women and then move to the men.
 - **Ask the women the following questions:** What did it feel like to be a woman in this community? Ask them to be as specific and detailed as possible. What did being a man look like in this community?
 - Follow up by asking the men for their responses to what the women said. Ask them if anything they said was unexpected.
 - **Now ask the men similar questions:** What did it feel like to be a man in this community? Ask them to be as specific and detailed as possible. What did being a woman look like in this community?
 - Follow up by asking the women for their responses to what the men said. Ask them if anything they said was unexpected.
 - Divide the participants into groups of three or four and ask them to discuss the following questions and present back to the larger group. Give 15 minutes (maximum 20 minutes) for the discussion. Take notes on people's responses.
 - What would need to change in order for this 'ideal community' to become a reality?
 - How would men act in this world without SGBV?
 - What kind of qualities would they have?
 - How would they treat women?
 - How would the women live? How would they act? What kind of roles would they have in their homes, churches, schools and community?
 - What would be the challenges involved in achieving this? What would we do to overcome these challenges?
 - After the responses, summarise their feedback from your notes. Then ask them to brainstorm the following in their respective groups, and share two key points for each question.
 - What will you do as an individual to work towards this ideal community, starting from now?
 - What will you do as a group to work towards this ideal community, starting from now?
 - Finally, conclude by saying that, to build such a community, we will all have to work together. In particular, we will need to change harmful practices linked to the negative masculinities and gender inequalities that we teach our boys and girls, and the ways in which we raise our sons and daughters. We are all responsible for this change and we all have a role to play in transforming masculinities, promoting positive models for being a man or a boy, and for creating a safe space and a life of dignity for women and girls in our homes, churches, schools and community.

Concluding session: pledge, prayer and celebration

(suggested time: 30–45 minutes)

This is the closing session, a 'graduation' from the community dialogues which will lead on to the more active work in their communities. As facilitators, you could have arranged with your supervisors to have some refreshments laid on and invited the local community and faith leaders (not too many!) to participate. (Preferably, this would be a small group of people who have already gone through the workshops, so they understand and support this process.) Bring or print pledge cards, two for each person. The idea is that a person can sign both cards, give one back to you and take one home as a reminder of their commitment to personal transformation and collective commitment to ending SGBV.

Explain to the group that you have come to the end of this process, and it has been a great journey for all involved. Thank them for their commitment and encourage them to continue to be committed as this is just the beginning of the journey. Encourage them to hold one another accountable for their words, actions and behaviour. Stress that they have a responsibility towards God, each other and their community, and to survivors of SGBV.

Invite a couple of participants from each group (men's and women's) to share their thoughts and feedback on this process very briefly (two minutes each).

Now explain to them that they are all going to read their pledge cards together. In this way, they will commit to working on their own attitudes and actions, and in their communities, to end SGBV and to promote positive masculinities (as Jesus modelled) and gender equality (according to God's plan in creation).

This pledge has been developed for use in a Christian context, but could be adapted for a Muslim or mixed-faith group.

Facilitator 1 reads the following text, one sentence at a time, asking all the participants to repeat after he/she has spoken. After the reading, ask participants to sign the pledge cards and give one back to you at the end of the session. Make sure you collect them.

Pledge:

I commit to promoting positive masculinities, and gender equality in my life, home, workplace, church and community. *(REPEAT)*

I commit to model it in my personal and professional relationships, in all spaces and spheres of my life. *(REPEAT)*

I commit not to use violence, violent behaviours or words to hurt myself or others in my community. *(REPEAT)*

I commit not to blame victims of SGBV, not to shame or stigmatise them *(REPEAT)*

but to offer my support and my love to help them on their journey of healing and restoration. *(REPEAT)*

I commit to work with my local church to work towards a community free of SGBV. *(REPEAT)*

I commit to model gender equality in my words, relationships, day-to-day life, so that I can be a role model for the younger generation. *(REPEAT)*

I believe that God the Trinity created us equal in God's image. *(REPEAT)*

I believe that sin broke this image, and put enmity between God and me, and between men and women. *(REPEAT)*

I believe that through Jesus I was redeemed and restored. *(REPEAT)*

To this restoration I commit my life, to work together for a better life for all. *(REPEAT)*

This is my commitment to my family, my church, my community, my faith and myself. *(REPEAT)*

And by the grace of God I will do all that I can to keep my commitment. *(REPEAT)*

This prayer has been written for use in a Christian context, but a different prayer could be written for a Muslim or mixed-faith group.

Facilitator 2 reads the prayer, and asks participants to repeat it after him/her. When the prayer is finished, invite the church leader to pray and bless the whole group.

Prayer:

We pray and ask for wisdom, grace and strength from Christ Jesus, *(REPEAT)*

who is our ultimate model, helper, healer and friend. *(REPEAT)*

We believe that in and through Jesus all things are possible *(REPEAT)*

if we believe and commit ourselves to this process of transformation. *(REPEAT)*

We commit ourselves in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. *(REPEAT)*

Thank them again for their time and commitment. Wish them all the best as they embark on this next stage of the journey. Encourage them to connect with and get involved with what their church and community are doing to respond to SGBV.

Finally, invite them to celebrate with you and share some refreshments.

BIBLE PASSAGES

Genesis 1:26–28

- 26 Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'
- 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
- 28 God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'

Genesis 3:14–19

- 14 So the Lord God said to the snake, 'Because you have done this,
'Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.'
- 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.'
- 16 To the woman he said, 'I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labour you will give birth to children.
Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.'

- 17 To Adam he said, 'Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, "You must not eat from it,"
'Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.
It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.
By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.'

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

1 Corinthians 12:12–27

- 12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ And so the body is not made up of one part but of many.
- 15 Now if the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

- 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.
- 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 5:21–33

- 21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- 22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.
- 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church – ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' ³² This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

NOTES



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