

Masculinity and Gender Based Violence in Rwanda

Experiences and perceptions
of men and women



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Preface

The Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC) in collaboration with The Rwanda Men Engage Network is pleased to present this report which shows the results of the first national household survey ever done in Rwanda on perceptions about masculinity and gender based violence. The study, conducted from January –June 2010, examined the roots of gender based violence in relation to perceptions about masculinity within Rwandan society. This quantitative and qualitative research explored the experiences and opinions of both men and women on the way men are supposed to act and behave according to the socio cultural norms and values in Rwanda.

The quantitative instrument was adapted from IMAGES (the International Men and Gender Equality Survey), a multi-country survey with women and men on attitudes toward gender equality, as well as behaviors and attitudes related to sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health, gender-based violence, fatherhood; men's attitudes toward women and toward gender equality; and men's attitudes toward various policies related to gender equality.

IMAGES is coordinated by the International Center for Research on Women and Promundo, and was developed in partnership with Center for Gender Studies, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway; Colégio de Mexico, Mexico, D.F.; the Medical Research Council, Pretoria, South Africa; CulturaSalud, Santiago, Chile; Partners for Prevention: A UN Joint Programme for Ending Violence Against Women in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand; CESI, Zagreb, Croatia; and Rwamrec, Rwanda. As of 2010, IMAGES had been applied in Brazil, Mexico, India, Croatia, Chile, South Africa (as part of a separate study on men, health and violence coordinated by MRC), in addition to Rwanda.

The overall goal of IMAGES is to add to our understanding of men's behaviors and attitudes – and changes in those attitudes and behaviors – to inform, drive and monitor policy development to promote gender equality by engaging men and women in such policies. The IMAGES questionnaire builds on existing instruments, heavily drawing on the "Questionnaire on Gender Equality and Quality of Life" developed by the Norwegian Ministry of Gender Equality and Children Affairs, along with items for the WHO multi-country study on violence against women, and the Gender Equitable Man (GEM) Scale, developed by Population Council and Promundo, and by surveys on sexual violence and physical violence against women carried out the Medical Research Council in South Africa.

The analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data focuses on identification of particular aspects in society that contribute to violent behaviour towards women and girls and negative perceptions about masculinity. This study explores the prevailing opinions about manhood in Rwanda and examines how these perceptions, constructed and transmitted in the current society, are related to gender based violence.

The study, presented in this report, shows how different factors in Rwandan society play a key role in 'making men' and explains how these factors contribute to the fact that many men use violence towards their female partners. The findings provide important implications for the development of new strategies to tackle violence against women with the involvement of men and boys.

The report includes four parts: the first part describes the problem of GBV in Rwanda and links the study to other international studies about GBV and masculinity. The second part explains the methodology and research process. The third section presents the main results. The last part of the report concludes with recommendations for the development of programs that contribute to bridging the identified gaps on perceptions about gender and masculinity in daily life of men and women in Rwanda facing gender based violence.

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Thanks goes to the local authorities in 30 Districts in Rwanda. Their collaboration was essential to facilitate the data collection. We are thankful to the great data processing work done by Ajay Singh and Dr. A. Nugter. Their expertise was an incredible value for this study. We also wish to thank the following individuals for their review and critical feedback in improving the report: Gary Barker, Manuel Contreras, Steven Botkin, James Arana and Phil Vernon (design cover page). Special thanks to Marie Françoise Umulinga and Jean de Dieu Kayiranga from UNDP for their superb support and commitment to the success of this study.

Special thanks go to Henny Slegh and Augustin Kimonyo, the consultants who led this research study and wrote the report. Finally, this report would not have been possible without women and men who dedicated their time and commitment for sharing the information and time in completing this study.

Fidèle Rutayisire

Chairman RWAMREC

Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CLADHO	Rwandan Collective of Leagues and Associations for the Defense of Human Rights
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EDPRS	Economic Development Poverty Reduction Strategy
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEM scale	Gender Equitable Men scale
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
IMAGES	International Men and Gender equality Survey
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government,Community Development and Social Affairs
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NWC	National Women's Councils
PSI	Population Services International
RWAMREC	Rwandan Men's Resource Centre
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RWF	Rwandan Franc
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNIFEM	United Nations development fund for Women
VAW	Violence Against Women
WHO	World Health Organisation

Section I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context and justification

Over the last 20 years, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) has been increasingly recognized as a serious global health, human rights, and development issue. A growing body of research confirms that GBV has significant consequences, especially for girls and women's physical, sexual, and mental health, as well as implications for the health and well-being of families and communities (Heise et al, 1999, Guedes, 2004). Like many other countries Rwanda has ratified international instruments addressing women's rights and expressed a commitment to address GBV among other forms of violence for every Rwandan to live a secure life, enjoying his/her rights which is conducive for sustainable development.

The international relevant instruments that Rwanda has ratified include but are not limited to:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1980;
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995
- The Optional Protocol to the African Charter of Human and People's Rights to Women's Rights in Africa approved and ratified through the Presidential Order n° 11/01 of 24 June 2004 (O.G. n° special of 24 June 2004).

To translate this international commitment into action, the Rwandan government has developed national instruments and put in place mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of these instruments. Gender, under which falls GBV, is considered as a crosscutting issue that should be taken into consideration for all development sectors for national planning. The following sections discuss relevant national instruments and associated mechanisms.

1.1.1 National Instruments

a) National Constitution

The Rwandan National Constitution of June 2003, as amended to date, provides for higher levels of representation to previously marginalized groups such as women, youth and people living with disabilities. This constitutional framework provides quotas (at least 30%) for women in decision making organs which have resulted in an unprecedented number of women getting elected or appointed to decision making positions at all levels of the

Rwandan government. The constitution reinforces the principles of gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and men, and provides a very strong platform for gender mainstreaming in all sectors.

b) Vision 2020

Vision 2020 is a long-term development framework that highlights the aspirations of Rwandan populations from 2000 to 2020. As Rwanda's development road map, it situates human development as one of the main pillars of the nation's development. The Vision 2020 highlights gender equality as a crosscutting issue, thus offering a vehicle for addressing gender related issues including GBV. This is materialized through the National Gender Policy, meant to act as one of the tools to translate the Vision 2020 into action, which is giving guidance for equality of opportunities between women and men, boys and girls in every sector.

c) Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS)

The Economic Development Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) underscores gender as a crosscutting issue for attaining its goal of achieving equity of voice, participation, and accessibility to services in every sector. Social protection and universal access to justice, including enactment and implementation of gender responsive laws can draw on EDPRS through effective implementation of its key programmes: "growth for export and employment", "Vision 2020 Umurenge" and "Governance". Addressing GBV is strongly connected with these programs, as this is recognized to have great potential to change the existing gender inequalities in Rwandan society.

d) National Gender Policy

The National Gender Policy was developed as a means to translate the crosscutting nature of gender, as highlighted both in the Vision 2020 and EDPRS, into action across all development sectors. The policy places an emphasis on capacity building, gender mainstreaming and women empowerment as key approaches to promote gender equality in the country. Gender based violence is one of the key gender issues that National Gender Policy and various programs in the country are addressing.

e) The National Decentralisation Policy

The National Decentralization policy underlines the commitment of the Rwandan government to empower its people to determine their destiny. The implementation of decentralized structures down to the lowest level of *Umudugudu* is a strategic approach for ensuring that national gender policy, which highlights GBV as a serious threat to human rights and sustainable development, is effectively addressed throughout the planning cycle, and that a sense of community ownership by the different social group is enhanced. It is through this grass roots implementation of the national gender policy, that the population has an excellent opportunity to address gender related issues including GBV.

f) National legislation

In addition to the Constitution of 4 June 2003 (O.G. special of 04/06/2003), the Rwandese legislation covers a range of legal materials including but not limited to:

- The Law N° 22/99 of 12/11/1999 to supplement Book one of the Civil Code and to institute Part Five regarding matrimonial regimes, liberalities and successions (O.G. n° 22 of 15/11/1999);
- The Organic Law No 08/2005 determining the use and management of land in Rwanda (O.G No 18 of 15/09/2005);
- The Law n° 59/2008 of 10th September 2008 providing legal sanctions against Gender-Based Violence perpetrators.

1.1.2 National Mechanisms

To ensure effective implementation of these instruments, important mechanisms have been put in place. They include but are not limited to:

a) The Ministry in charge of Gender and Family Promotion

The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, leading the national machinery created to promote gender equality throughout the country, is responsible for the formulation, dissemination and popularisation of the National Gender Policy both at national and international levels. The Ministry is also in charge of advocacy, mobilization of resources and coordination for effective implementation of the National Gender Policy. Under its mandate, the Ministry ensures that GBV related programs are given the attention they deserve.

b) The Ministry of Defense and National Police

The Ministry of Defense and the National Police have established GBV Desks to address GBV related issues. The establishment of free telephone hot lines (with strong support of telecommunication companies) to facilitate communication within the Ministry of Health, National Police and Ministry of Defence has contributed to significant improvement in addressing GBV. The *Isange* One Stop Centre hosted within the National Police Hospital is giving a holistic response to GBV survivors.

c) The National Women's Councils (NWC)

These structures were set up by the Government to co-ordinate the functioning of Women's Councils from grassroots to the national level. The Women's Councils constitute a critical forum to empower women for their effective participation in the national development and more visibility in the life of the Nation. To empower its members, NWC invests in various forms of activities including advocacy and lobby for change in women's status. GBV related issues are given first priorities.

d) The Gender Monitoring Office

The role of the Gender Monitoring Office is to monitor progress towards gender equality. During its short existence, the Gender Monitoring Office has already conducted a study on GBV impact assessment to serve as a basis for setting standards aimed at addressing the various forms of GBV experienced in the country.

e) Districts and Sectors

The Decentralisation policy provided local governments with roles formerly played by central government. Among them is promoting gender equality and addressing GBV. The latter is being addressed at *Umudugudu* (Village) level with guidance from *Akagali* (Cell) and *Umurenge* (Sector). GBV clubs, composed of at least 20 persons, are functioning at each *Umudugudu* (village) level.

f) Civil society

The Civil Society organisations are primarily concerned by the implementation of the National Gender Policy. Concrete actions have been taken to address GBV both at the level of prevention and response.

g) Development partners

United Nations agencies and international organisations are also playing a vital role in addressing GBV through their technical and financial support to the various implementing partners operating in the country.

Achievements

On top of the various gender sensitive laws promulgated, several GBV related programs have been implemented by different stakeholders. Examples are the creation of Anti-GBV clubs in schools and universities, establishment of GBV Committees at Village level, *Malayika Mulinzi* (Guardian Angel) Initiative, *Ijisho ry'Umuranyi* (The Eye of a Neighbour) Initiative and GBV Week in the Justice Sector. Thanks to these initiatives, reports of GBV cases have increased and people are gaining the confidence to openly discuss GBV issues.

Although Rwanda has registered tremendous achievements in addressing GBV, there are still daunting challenges. So far the various interventions have been placing emphasis on women's safety and empowerment. More recently, some have been recommending a primary prevention approach through the involvement of men in addressing GBV, since the majority of perpetrators are men. However, a systematic approach to tackling the root causes of the problem has not been given the attention it deserves. Thus, more efforts are needed in identifying the root causes of GBV. It is in this context that this first-of-its-kind study on masculinity and its link with GBV has been conducted to explore the extent to which boys socialization is associated with the violence they subject to women when they become adults.

1.1.3 Country Profile

a) Geographical location

Rwanda is located in the part of Central Africa that is usually known as the "Great Lakes Region". It shares borders with Tanzania in the East, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west, Uganda in the north and with Burundi in the south. Rwanda is part of the Eastern African Community.

It is situated at a latitude between 11° and 3° south and at 29° and 31° longitude East, at 1,200 km from the Indian Ocean and at 2,000 km from the Atlantic Ocean. It has a tropical mountainous climate with two unequal rainy seasons alternating with a short dry season and a long dry season. Its particularly mountainous topography has led Rwanda to be known as the "Land of a Thousand Hills".

The population is estimated to be around 8,128,553 million, including 3,879,448 men representing 47.7% of the population, and 4,249,105 women representing 52.2%, distributed on a surface area of 26,338 sq km, (the population density is at 336 inhabitants per sq km, 1,000 sq km covered by Lake Kivu being included in the breakdown). The population residing in urban areas represents 16.69% of the total population and consists of 728,052 men, (53.5%), and 634,260 women, (46.5%)¹.

b) Key development indicators

- Population:	8 814 253 (52% women, 42% men) ²
- Total fertility rate:	6.0 ³
- Population under 25 years:	67% ⁴
- Adult literacy:	64.8% ⁵
- Poverty line:	56.9% ⁶
- Infant mortality rate (under 5):	85 per 1,000 live births ⁷
- Maternal mortality rate:	750 per 100, 000 live births ⁸
- Urban population:	19.3% ⁹
- Annual population growth rate:	2.5% ¹⁰
- GDP per capita:	USD 2.3 ¹¹
- Population aged 65 and above:	2.5% ¹²

¹ The General Census of Population and Housing, Preliminary Report, February 2002.

² Les Indicateurs de Développement du Rwanda, UNDP, 2005

³ Op cit, pp 246

⁴ Op cit, pp13

⁵ Op cit

⁶ Enquête Démographique et de Sante, pp219

⁷ Op cit, pp 219

⁸ Op cit, pp219

⁹ Human Development Report, pp 246

¹⁰ Op cit

¹¹ Enquête Démographique et de Sante, pp 219

- Physicians per 100, 000 people: 5¹³
- Population using improved water: 74%¹⁴
- Population using electricity: 5%¹⁵

c) Historical background

Since its independence on July 1, 1962 Rwanda has been experiencing a cycle of violence caused by wars that have been affecting both men and women. Thus, Rwandan men and women suffered the wars in 1959, 1964, 1973 which culminated into the 1994 genocide of Tutsi. Not only did the genocide claim millions of human lives but also it devastated the country leaving the social fabric in shambles. The post-genocide government was faced with a serious challenge of reconstructing the country both socially and materially. Rehabilitation of the country covered several aspects including addressing the trauma and other manifestations of violence that millions of people were subjected to.

The socio-economic take off was very difficult but after the emergency phase, the Rwandan Government with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) as ruling party put in place policies and other planning tools and mechanism for effective implementation of development strategies. Progressively the country, with the support from international partners, experienced positive development both socially and economically. The implementation of the National Gender Policy made it possible to include gender related issues and GBV in the development process.

However, some cultural norms, values and practices sustaining masculinity and femininity are still prevailing that contribute to gender inequalities and hamper efforts to address GBV. The social construction of masculinity and femininity is understood as one root cause of gender inequality and GBV. This serious challenge is accompanied by poverty and consequences of wars.

1.2 The problem of GBV in Rwanda

Like in many other countries, gender based violence is a sad reality in Rwanda. Reports have revealed rape of children and adults, beaten and injured women, and murder¹⁶. Out of the 30 districts of the country, Gasabo District ranked first followed by Nyarugenge and Kicukiro as the districts most experiencing violence.

This adds to the fact that more than one-third of women (31 percent) in Rwanda have suffered from physical violence since the age of 15 years¹⁷. In 19 percent of the cases, women had suffered from acts of violence within the last 12 months. In 47 percent of the

¹² Op cit, pp 246

¹³ Op cit, pp 250

¹⁴ Op cit, pp 254

¹⁵ Les indicateurs de Développement, 2005,, pp13

¹⁶ National Police Annual Report on Violence, 2008

¹⁷ Demographic Health Survey, NISR, 2008

cases, the perpetrator of these acts of violence was the husband or partner. Numbers of rape cases in 2005 as were revealed by the national police records¹⁸ showed that averagely 8 women/girl-children were raped everyday in Rwanda with approximately 80% of the victims under 18 years old. It is worth noting that many cases go unreported due to strong cultural beliefs some of which reinforce or perpetuate violence against women and children. Examples of GBV include early forced marriages, sexual abuse, infanticide, physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, harassment or intimidation, neglecting and abandoning a child, just to name a few¹⁹.

Four main forms of GBV were identified in Rwanda. They include sexual violence, physical violence, economic violence and psychological violence²⁰. The report of GBV mapping in Rwanda (2008) indicated the following perceptions among the informants about the main causes of GBV: consumption and abuse of alcohol, poverty, sexual obsession, jealousy, witchcraft, polygamy, wrong interpretation of gender, ignorance, prostitution, vengeance and provocative clothing. Apart from these perceived causes of GBV, structural causes including patriarchy and culture are highlighted as key components.

1.3 Previous studies on gender based violence (GBV) and masculinity

Gender based violence is a form of violence that has been recognized worldwide as a serious abuse of human rights affecting the health of women, children and men involved. Since the first international conference on violence against women in 1995 in Beijing, many studies have been produced that demonstrated the high prevalence of this form of abuse, as well as its devastating psychological, social and economic consequences for entire families. (Herman 1993, WHO 2002, Diaz 2001, Van der Kolk 2000, Kumar 2001).

Several studies indicate that violence against women performed by a husband or intimate male partner is the most common form of gender based violence. A multi country study of women's health and domestic violence across ten counties showed that a quarter of all women had been physically or sexually assaulted at least once by the age of 15 years. The same study indicated that between 16% and 50% of the women referred the (ex)husband, intimate male partner or male relative as the perpetrator (WHO 2005).

For many years, studies have been focussed on women as victims of gender based violence in order to develop strategies that may protect women against this form of abuse. The inequality in power relations between men and women is considered as an important factor that leads to conflict and violence against women. Gender inequality is based on ideologies of control and power of men over women that shape everyday reality and social relations (Farmer 1996, Scheper-Hughes 1992). The promotion of gender equality, women rights and the empowerment of women has become a main target in development countries to tackle the abuse of violence against women and improve women's health as well as their

¹⁸ Publication by the Rwanda National Police on www.rnp.gov.rw

¹⁹ Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), MINECOFIN, 2005.

²⁰ GBV Mapping in Rwanda, 2008.,MIGEPROF/UNFPA, 2008

economic role in development. However, prevailing gender norms in societies are not easy to change without the involvement of the other half of gender: the men. Growing emphasis on the role of men using violence against women have resulted in an increased number of studies examining masculinity. (Silberschmidt 2001, ICRW 2002, Barker 2008).

Masculinity (and femininity) is considered as a socially constructed identity. The roles of men and women in any particular society are based on perceptions that are shaped in the context of that society (Barker 2008). In contrast to biological differences between sexes as determined by nature, gender differences of masculinity and femininity are constructed in social relations. The social construction of masculinity reflects how a man sees himself as a male in relation towards others and how women perceive men. In a patriarchal society men are supposed to dominate women while women are supposed to be submissive. The norms and values in a patriarchal society will be embodied in men's and women's daily lives as "naturally" correct and just. The power of men over women is ingrained in all aspects of life and considered as normal.

The most disturbing expression of male power is the use of violence against women. The power inequality between men and women is expressed in sexual relations as well as perceptions about male sexuality. The sexual experience of men is often associated with manhood and may be viewed by men and boys as displays of sexual competence or accomplishment, rather than acts of intimacy (Nzioka 2001). As stated by Barker "men continue to be praised for their sexual prowess and their sexual desire is often believed to be impulsive and uncontrollable. At the same time, women are often expected to be demure, restrained in their sexual experiences and desires" (Barker 2008: pp 4).

The dominance of men in sexual relations with women is expressed in control and restraint of women's autonomy in practices of sexuality while men expand their own sexual liberty (Silva 2007). However, not all men become violent and abusive and not all women become violated in life. There exist many different forms of masculinities which vary within and across time, space and cultures (Connell 1995). Previous studies on masculinity perceptions and violence against women have indicated that particular factors may be involved in creating environments that encourage violent behaviour of men towards women and thus the construction of negative masculinity perceptions.

The following factors are used as indicators for the presented study:

(1) The gender norms that affirm 'a real man' as somebody who controls and dominates his submissive wife easily lead to violence between partners. Also the norm that 'real men need more sex' may result in more violent behaviour since the frequencies of sexual relations and the use of forced sex may be considered as an affirmation of male's identity instead of an abuse of women's integrity (Barker 2008).

(2) The influence of violence during childhood as well as witnessing violence between parents is seen as an indicator that may result in violent behaviour of men. The studies also

indicated that girls that witnessed violence will have higher risks to get involved into violent relationships as an adult (Vander Kolk 2000).

(3) A study on gender, conflict and development highlights that gender based violence may increase in post conflict societies as a result of shattered male ego's as well as militarised masculinity identities. "Men left war with either an eroded sense of manhood or the option of a militarized masculine identity with the attendant legitimization of violence and killing as a way of maintaining a sense of power and control" (Bouta et al 2005, quoting Sideris 2000). The traumatic experiences of male combatants during and after the conflicts, the loss of jobs, shelter, family and properties may be transformed into domestic violence as a continuation of small wars in the private sphere.

(4) Finally, the rapid changes in post conflict societies are regularly mentioned as possible roots for increasing gender based violence (WHO 2002, Bouta 2005). The fact that women played a role in the war or were compelled to lead the household on their own has contributed to empowerment of women in Mozambique (Berg and Gundersun, 1991). This had a considerable influence on the gender relations after the civil war, as men perceived these changes as undermining their traditional role as head of the family. A research on the integration of women's rights in a Mozambican community demonstrated the resistance of men towards policies that promoted gender equality. They felt threatened by weakening of power and undermining of traditional norms and social values that contributed to increase of circles of violence at individual and community levels (Slegh 2009).

Thus, tackling the problems of violence against women and promote gender equality demands the involvement of both men and women. The present study examined how masculinity norms of power and control are linked to violent behaviour towards women in Rwanda. The results show different factors in Rwandan society that may have contributed to the construction of negative masculinity perceptions. This report can help to identify strategies that address the problems of gender based violence through the involvement of men and boys.

1.4 Definitions and Key concepts related to masculinity and gender based violence

Gender is understood as the social construction of the differences between men and women. Gender differences are defined by socially ascribed assumptions and not by biologically determined differences between men and women. Gender includes masculinity (male roles) and femininity (female roles).

Gender equality refers to equality in rights, opportunities and responsibilities for women, men, girls and boys. Equal rights refers to equality of rights under the law, equality of opportunities refers to equality in access to work, land, education, health and other recourses that enable opportunities. Equal responsibilities refer to equality in tasks and contributions to the development of society.

Masculinity is defined as the perceptions of men and women about the role of men in society. The perceptions are social expectations and not determined by biological characteristics.

Gender based violence is violence involving men and women, in which the female is usually the victim and which is derived from unequal relationships between men and women. The term "gender based" refers to the roots of violence in gender inequality. The violence is directed specifically against the woman because she is a woman or affects women disproportionately. Gender inequality is often tolerated by law, institutions, and community norms and is considered as a form of GBV. In this report the term refers to the most common types: physical, psychological, economic and sexual intimate partner violence against women committed by men. Economic violence is narrowly interwoven with psychological violence.

Violence against women is a form of GBV and is defined in this report as any manifestation of "physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family and in the general community, including battering, sexual abuse of children and women, dowry-related violence, rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non spousal violence and violence related to exploitation" (WHO 2000).

Types of violence against women

The types of violence in this study include the following acts and behaviours:

Physical violence: slapping, beating with or without an object, threatening with a weapon, attempts to strangle or murder, locking a person in or preventing a person going out, etc.

Psychological violence: controlling the outings and the relationships, imposing specific behaviour, despising, undermining the value of a person, denigrating a person, bullying, isolating a person, threatening, blackmailing, insulting etc.

Sexual violence: forcing someone to engage in sexual activity against their will, rape, imposing unwanted sexual practices and touching, etc.

Economic violence: controlling women's income or preventing someone from having access to recourses, refusing to share the income or means that are needed to meet basic needs of food, cloths, housing, etc.,.

1.5 Problem statement

In Rwanda it is believed that the major causes of violence against women originate from the low status that is socially assigned to women in all aspects of life, which includes the norms that men hold about the acceptability of violence against women and the acceptability of violence as a way to resolve conflicts (domestic and otherwise). The norms and values that accompany these perceptions are transmitted from generation to generation through certain aspects of cultural norms and traditions. Several studies have indicated that gender-based violence in Rwanda is in the first place committed by men and inflicted to women and

girls (DHS 2005). The same study indicated that early half of all cases of violence against women are caused by partners. The significant stigma and discrimination that accompany victims of violence limits the ability of the Rwandan society to effectively address the problem of gender based violence. Rwandan government and other actors have made significant efforts to address gender based violence, and more efforts are needed to overcome persisting social norms that are inherent to a patriarchal society like Rwanda. In order to develop strategies that tackle the roots of gender inequality and gender based violence, a better understanding is needed about the role of men in the problems mentioned above. The following research question has been studied: **What is the relation between perceptions of masculinity and the problem of gender based violence committed by men towards women?**

The sub questions:

- How do men see their male role in relation to partners and women? How do women see the role of males in society?
- What aspects of Rwandese society may fuel negative perceptions of masculinity that justify violence against women?

The research objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the major aspects and manifestations of masculinity in Rwandan society in order to get a better understanding of the links of perceptions on masculinity and gender based violence. The objective of these findings is to develop more effective strategies for the prevention of violence against women and promotion of gender equality through the involvement of men and boys. The study explored (1) how men perceive themselves as men and how women and children perceive men in terms of power relations at family and community level. (2) The negative aspects in the masculinity perception that fuel violence and gender inequality are identified. (3) The attitudes of men towards gender roles and their preparedness to adopt gender equality norms are examined and linked to current problems of violence against women. (4) The findings suggest recommendations including the involvement of men and boys to promote positive masculinity and stop violence against women.

2.1 The research team

The study was coordinated by RWAMREC Management and was carried out by two consultants, one international lead consultant and one local key researcher. In early March 2010 the researchers have given a six day training to a group of 72 data collectors with technical assistance of an ICRW researcher from India. The data collectors, who have been selected by RWAMREC Management, were in the field to collect the data in the last two weeks of March 2010.

2.2 Research field and sampling

The study was conducted among men and women between 18-60 years old at a national level and covered all provinces of the country. The study sites in districts and villages were selected by cluster sampling exercised by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. The study design has been approved by the same institute. For selection of the households within the villages a multi stage sampling was applied. The sample was stratified in such a way that it would include 2/3 men and 1/3 women from different age groups. The sample selection at village (umudugudu) level was at random following a counting system. The sample included houses with different distances from the main road and village centre. The following selection procedures have been followed:

Every **umudugudu** is divided in three main areas:

- A. The centre
- B. The area 10 minutes from the centre
- C. The remote area: more than 30 minutes from the centre



All five provinces are represented, with a slight difference in numbers of completed questionnaires. The differences in numbers of completed questionnaires are related to bad weather conditions that made it difficult to reach some of the selected villages in northern

and western province. The relatively lower sample in Kigali province is related to the fact that the survey has been carried out during day time and the data collectors had more difficulties to find people at home, since most people were at work.

Table 1: Completed questionnaires per province

Province	Districts	Proportion of total sample
Eastern province	Bugesera, Gatsibo, Kayonza, Kirehe, Ngoma, Nyagatare, Rwamagana	24.3%
Kigali	Gasabo, Kicukiro, Nyarugenge	11.0%
Northern province	Burera, Gakenke, Gicumbi, Musanze, Rulindo	19.2%
Southern province	Huye, Gisagara, Kamonyi, Muhanga, Nyamagabe, Nyaruguru, Nyanza, Ruhango	25.0%
Western province	Karongi, Ngororero, Nyabihu, Nyamasheke, Rubavu, Rusizi, Rutsiro	19.8%

2.3 Research methods

Data collection

The study applied a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The quantitative data have been collected in a survey carried out by 72 trained data collectors. The survey is an adapted version of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) as designed by the International Centre for Women Research (ICRW) in Washington DC, USA, Promundo in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and partners listed in the preface. The Rwandan version is shorter than the original survey and includes aspects that shaped the current Rwandan context, (e.g. the recent history of genocide and specific socio-cultural practices).

The questionnaires include closed questions, separated in five main topics: demographic data, experiences with violence, gender attitudes and dynamics in households, social cultural norms, and masculinity perceptions. The questions have been divided in different sections: for men and women, for men only and for women only. The women have been interviewed by female data collectors, while male data collectors conducted the interviews with men. In total we received 3612 completed questionnaires, 2301 by men and 1311 by women.

The qualitative data were collected by two key researchers in five focus group discussions and ten in-depth interviews with key informants. Two focus group discussions took place in two umudugudu's (villages), with representatives of that umudugudu. Two other focus group discussions were held with women affected by gender based violence and women working with victims of gender based violence. The fifth focus group discussion was held with the twelve field team leaders of data collectors. All procedures on ethical

considerations have been followed and all survey interviews and focus group discussions were carried out with written or oral consents of the participants.

Data analysis

The quantitative data were processed and analyzed through SPSS (computer software) and the qualitative data through content analysis. Findings from analysis of quantitative data were matched or compared with findings from qualitative data either to validate or to invalidate associations from the various crosstabs. Besides, the quantitative and qualitative findings allowed a holistic understanding of the dynamics that play a role in the way men and women relate to each other.

2.4 Scope and limitations of the study

The study focuses on gender based violence as a form of violence against women committed by men. Although men also can be victims of violence committed by their female partners, such experiences are not a part of this study. The questions in the survey explored male's involvement in violence against women and women's experiences as victims of acts of violence committed by intimate partners.

The available time to conduct the study was constrained by budget considerations. The data collectors had to be trained within six days in the application of the survey instrument as well as in awareness- raising in gender issues. Some of the questions include sensitive issues about experiences with sexual violence as victims or perpetrators. The responses may be biased as people don't like to talk about the dark sides of human behaviour. We conducted two focus group discussions on the topic 'violence and sexuality' to get a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics that play a role in the way women see men's role. The large sample of 3612 interviews validates the findings.

Another limitation of the study is related to the field work in remote areas. Due to relatively short preparation time and communication problems, some community leaders were not well informed and thus needed explanations before allowing access to their villages. After the appropriate documents had been received from district authorities the survey was accepted. The rainy season influenced the survey, as some villages were difficult to reach. The data collectors in the city of Kigali found more difficulties in finding people at home as is visible in the number of completed questionnaires in Kigali. Nevertheless, the field teams managed to carry out the planned number of interviews as is demonstrated by the total number of completed forms. The teams got a warm welcome in almost all villages. Most interviewed people expressed their gratitude that RWAMREC had sent data collectors who listened to their stories and opinions regarding gender based violence and the new gender policies. They considered the survey as a sign of hope that they will get support to solve the problems with violence in their homes.

Section III

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The questions in the survey are divided in five main topics and have been analysed accordingly. The findings are presented in the same sequence in this chapter.

- Profile of the participants
- Exposure to violence (childhood and adulthood)
- Gender relations: socio-economic differences, power relations and gender attitudes
- Socio-cultural norms and values
- Masculinity perceptions: the role of men in society

3.1. Profile participants

We have received 3612 completed questionnaires: 2301 by men and 1311 by women. The mean age of female participants is 35 years and the mean age of male participants is 37 years. The age groups are represented in the graphic below:

Graphic 2: Age groups of participants

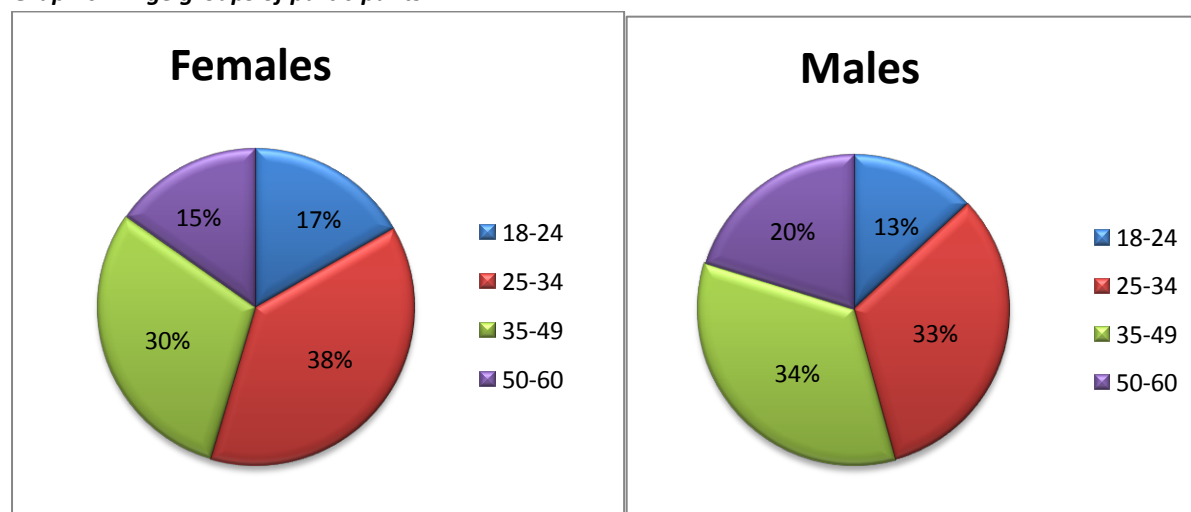


Table 3 presents an overview of the profile of the participants regarding their maternal status, religion, employment and educational levels. The demographic data show the differences between men and women regarding their socio-economic situation. The majority of women in the study earn less than half of the income of men and almost three times as many women earn less than 200 RWF a day, based on five working days a week.

Table 3: Characteristics of the study participants

Background characteristics	Women n=1311	Men n=2301
Marital status		
Legally married	53.2%	67.3%
Living with partner	19.6%	11.5%
widow	11.0%	1.4%
No stable partner	11.0%	11.5%
Divorced/separated	5.1%	1.8%
Single/ never married	11.0%	17.9%
Religion		
Catholic	45.2%	51.8%
Protestant/Anglican	38.3%	30.9%
Adventist	10.5%	10.0%
Muslim	3.1%	5.2%
other	2.9%	2.0%
Education level		
Primary school	30.0%	35.3%
Primary school grade 4	28.1%	29.0%
No school	24.4%	17.6%
Secondary school	5.6%	5.5%
Incomplete sec. school	7.9%	8.1%
Vocational school	3.0%	3.3%
Incomplete degree/diploma	0.9%	0.7%
B degree and higher	0.1%	0.4%
Employment		
Work for money	89.6%	95.6%
Average income monthly	12.409 RWF	24.870 RWF
Income less than 4000 RWF	44.5%	17.7%

3.2. Exposure and involvement with violence

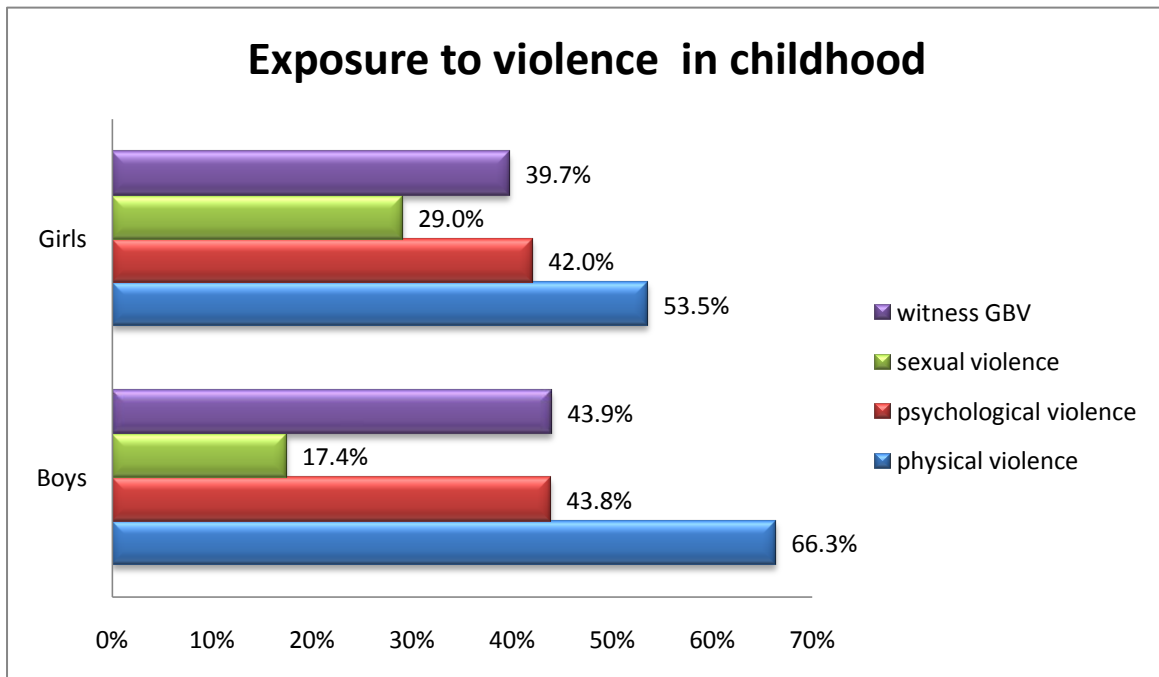
The data reveal that most participants have been involved with violence in different stages in life, as victims, bystanders and/or perpetrators. The findings regarding experiences with violence are presented in three different sections: childhood violence, partner violence and war/genocide related violence.

3.2.1 Childhood experiences

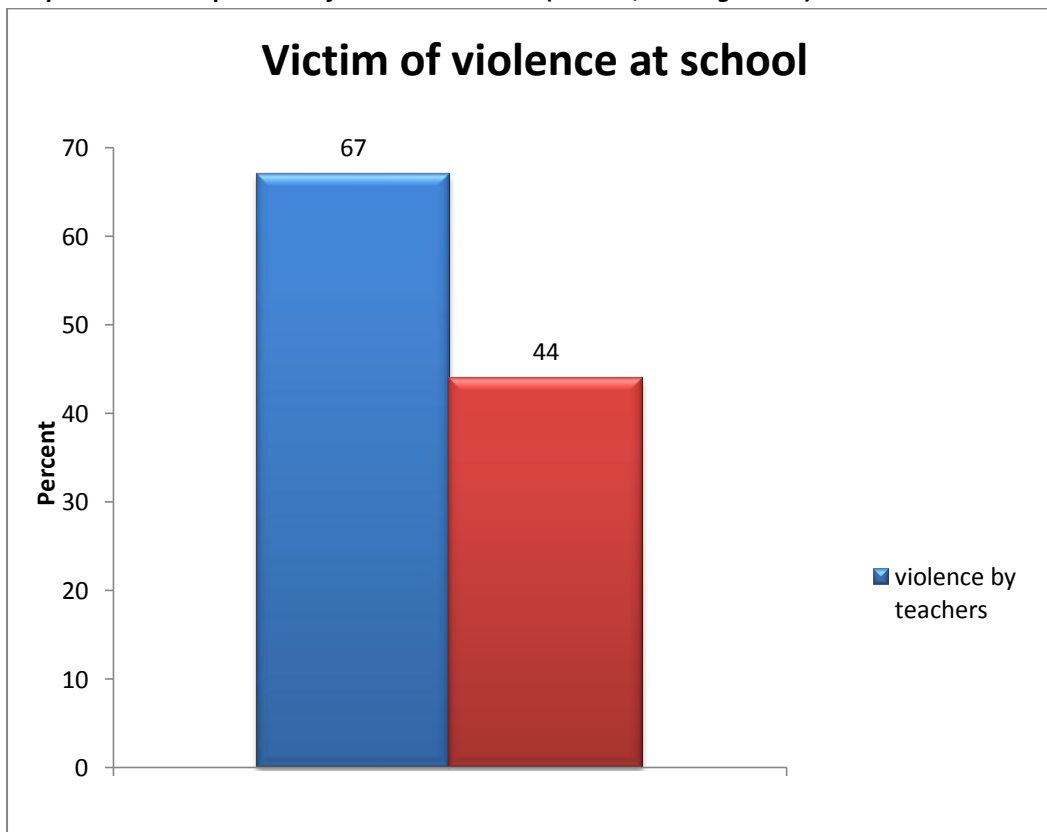
The questions in the survey explored the experiences during childhood at home, in school and in the neighbourhood. The results show a high rate of violence exposure among all participants during childhood. More than half of all men and women reported acts of physical, psychological or sexual violence committed by parents, peers or teachers. Graphic 4 shows the different forms of violence that participants have experienced when they were children. Witnessing violence between parents is considered as a form of exposure to violence. The results show that 17.4% of males have experienced forms of sexual violence when they were a child. Sexual abuse is mostly considered as a problem that affects female victims, but these findings indicate that a significant number of men experienced sexual abuse.

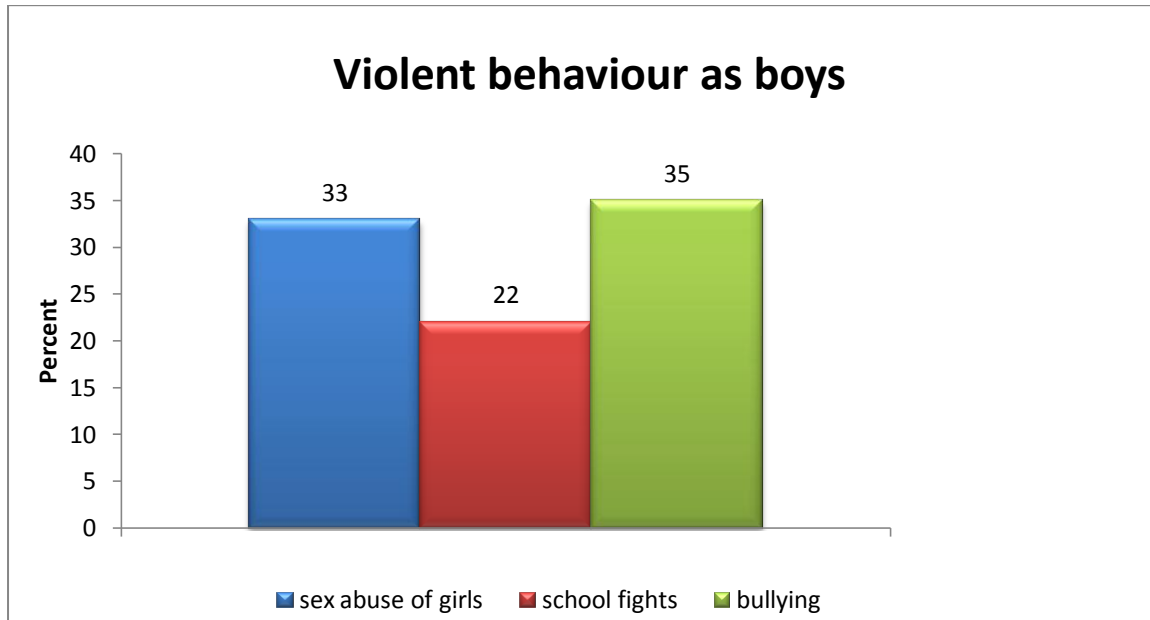
The acts of violence took also place in school and neighbourhood. Especially the abuse of power by teachers in using violence towards children is very high (67.3%). The results show differences in violence experienced by boys and girls but both sexes have significantly suffered at young age of violence and power abuses by adults. Boys reported exposure to a significant higher rate of physical violence than girls, which may be explained by more harsh education methods for boys used by parents and care takers. The percentages of male participants in the survey, that indicated to have suffered from teasing and violence committed by teachers in school, are presented in graphic 5.

Graphic 4: Types of violence experienced as a child
 (women n=1302: missing n=9, men n=2220: missing n= 81)



Graphic 5: Male experience of violence at school (n=2000; missing n=301)



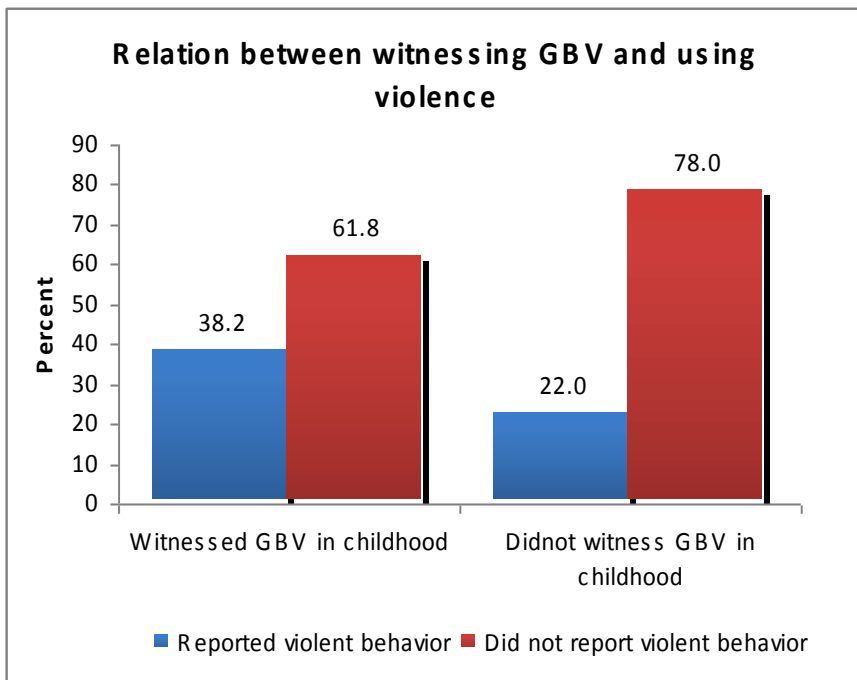
Graphic 6: Reported Violent behaviour of men when they were in school (n=1951: missing n= 350)

The survey also included questions about violent behaviour of males when they were a boy (see graphic 6). The results show a strikingly high rate of boys having sexually abused a girl when they were still in school. According to the answers by male participants one of every three boys has once forced a girl to have sex when they were teenagers. This number corresponds with the number of women that reported to be sexually abused as a girl. The figures show that not all men and women have responded the questions about their experiences with violence in childhood. The number of missing among men is higher than women, indicating that men may have more difficulties in disclosing their experiences with violence.

Influence of witnessing father beating mother on violence towards women by men

Comparative analysis showed that men who witnessed GBV as a child tend to become more often perpetrators of GBV than men that never witnessed GBV as a child. The percentage of men that has witnessed their father beating mother is 44.9% and from this group of men 38.2% ($p < 0.05$) has become violent towards partners as an adult. Men who never witnessed their father beating mother have less chance to become violent as an adult than men who saw mother being beaten. The percentage among this group is 22.0 (see Graphic 7 below). The difference of 16.8% indicates the impact of witnessing GBV as a child on behaviour in adulthood. Children learn from seeing and tend to repeat negative and violent behaviour in their own life.

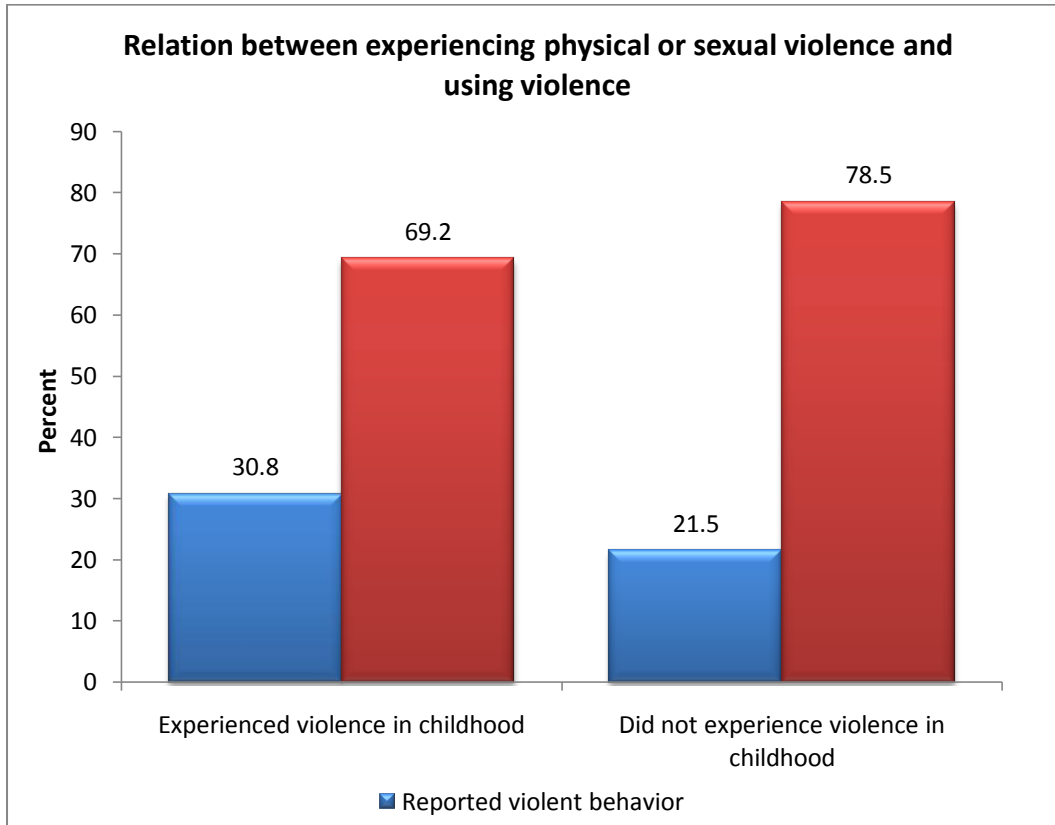
Graphic 7: Men reported more violent in partner relations when they witnessed GBV during childhood ($p < 0.05$) ($n = 1994$)



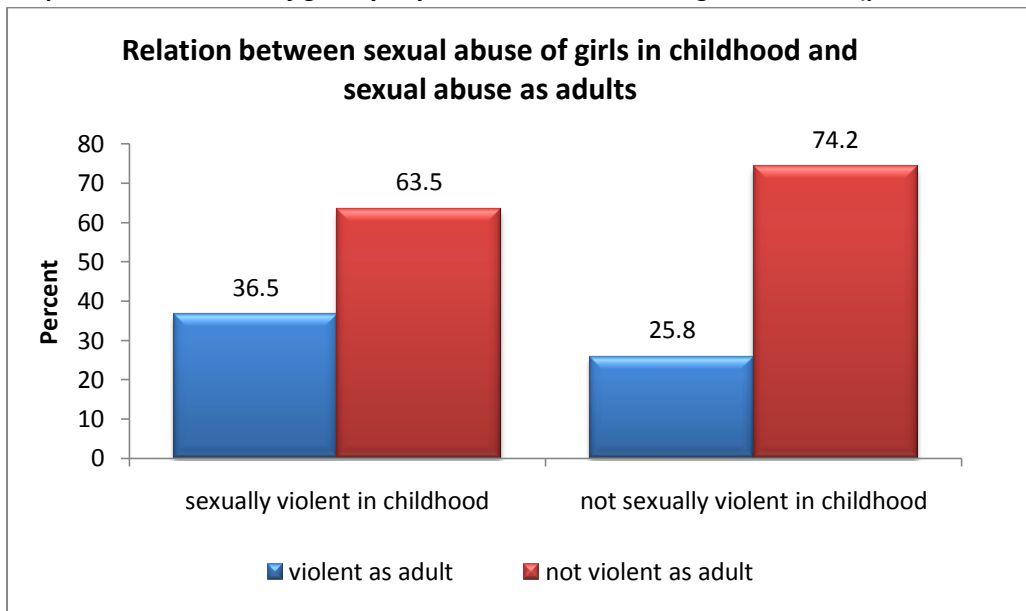
Influence of sexual or physical childhood experiences on male's violence against women

The comparative analysis showed that men who experienced physical or sexual violence in childhood have more chance to become violent against their partners. The percentage of men that experienced violence as a child and used violence against a partner is 30.8 %, while the group that became violent without these childhood experiences is 21.5% (Graphic 8). Graphic 9 shows the relation between sexual abusive behaviour of boys and violent behaviour against partners: 36.5% of males, who forced girls to sexual relations when they were in school, also inflicted violence against partners in adulthood. The percentage of males that are violent towards women while never having forced girls to sex as a boy is 25.8%. The difference of 10.7% between the two groups indicates that the use of forced sex by males at young age increases the likeliness of violent behaviour towards women as adults. The high incidence of sexual abuse by boys may indicate that forcing a girl to have sex is part of the socialisation process of boys towards manhood in daily life.

Graphic 8: Male childhood violence experiences increase the risk to become violent towards women. ($p < 0.05$; $n = 2301$)



Graphic 9: Sexual abuse of girls by boys is related to violence against women ($p < 0.05$; $n = 2301$)



Based on these findings we conclude that the abuse of power by teachers, peers and parents shows children a negative modelling in dealing with power differences. They learn in a very early stage of life that power is abused through violent acts. Punishment and power abuse seem to be commonly used strategies to claim respect and children copy this behaviour in their own life. These examples may contribute to violence among children, where boys dominate over girls.

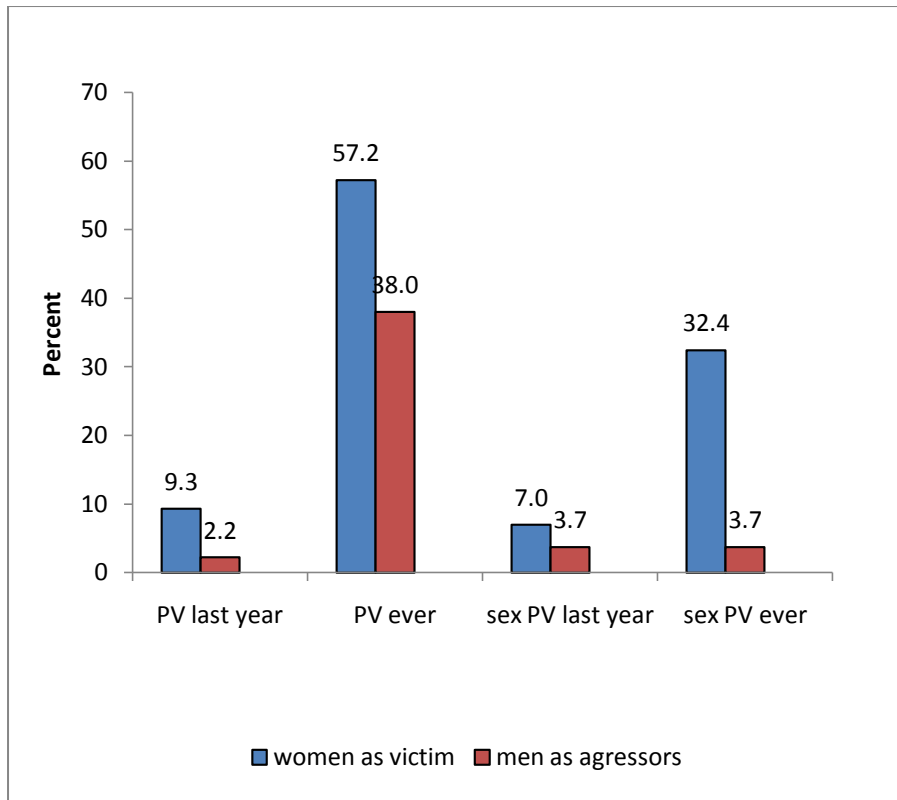
3.2.2. Gender based violence by partners

More than half of all women (57.2%) responded to have experienced forms of gender based violence committed by a partner. The most common types of partner violence are slapping (30.3%) and forced sex (32.4%). Punching, pushing, throwing things and hitting with objects are types of violence that are reported by between 21% and 16% of the women, while 3.7% of women indicated to be threatened with a weapon. The answers by men do not correspond to these outcomes. Only 38.0% of men say that they have ever used partner violence. A small minority of 3.7% of men indicate ever having forced partners to have sex, while 32.4% of women responded to be forced by partners.

Table 10: Distribution of reported prevalence violence by men and women

Partner violence	As reported by women as victim (n=1311)	As reported by men as perpetrator (n=2301)
last year	9.3%	2.2%
ever	57.2%	38.0%
Forced partner sex		
last year	7.0%	3.7%
Ever	32.4%	3.7%

The difference in answers of men and women is illustrated in graphic 11. The apparent contradiction may be related to the fact that men are not aware of any harm in slapping or forcing their female partners to have sex or they are less likely to be completely honest about their own abusive behaviours. These explanations are confirmed by other findings that men need more sex and have the right on having sex with their partners whenever they want. Slapping is considered as a natural way of men to control and correct their wife's disrespect. In one of the focus group discussions a man said: *"A man should tolerate a wife's bad behaviour two times, but then he has to react and beat her. This may change the behaviour of his wife."*

Graphic 11: Percent distribution of reported partner violence by men and women

Frequencies of violence in different districts

The responses of men that use violence against their partners have been analysed at the level of the different provinces and districts. The data show that acts of violence against women occur in all regions of the country with some differences in frequencies as illustrated in table 12. The first column shows the frequencies of acts of violence against women (VAW) committed by men. The highest prevalence is in Kigali province, Kicukiro district (46%). The frequencies in the other two urban districts of Kigali city do not differ very much from districts in rural areas. Rural districts like Gakenke and Bugesara show frequencies of 40%.

The second column shows the percentages of men that have ever committed rape. These results have to be read in the context of the genocide in Rwanda (it is estimated that 250,000 to 500,000 women and girls were raped in genocide). The data show that rape has occurred in almost all districts.

Table 12: VAW and rape by men per district

	VAW by men(n=2301)	Rape committed	Number of participants
Kigali city			
Gasabo	33.3%	13.9%	36
Kicukiro	47.6%	28.6%	42
Nyungenge	20.5%	8.3%	44
Southern Province			
Gisagara	32.0%	0%	75
Huye	27.7%	3.1%	65
Kamonyi	31.9%	11.6%	69
Muhanga	24.4%	16.7%	78
Nyamagabe	27.9%	6.6%	34
Nyaruguru	36.5%	8.3%	96
Nyanza	17.1%	3.9%	76
Ruhango	15.3%	14.1%	85
Northern Province			
Burera	31.8%	6.1%	66
Gakenke	40.0%	12.9%	85
Gicumbi	30.5%	5.1%	59
Rulindo	27.4%	11.9%	84
Western province			
Karongi	34.4%	9.8%	82
Ngororero	27.7%	9.6%	83
Nyabihu	31.2%	19.5%	77
Nyamasheke	22.4%	1.9%	107
Rubavo	27.2%	14.8%	81
Rusizi	23.7%	8.1%	135
Rutsiro	28.6%	2.6%	77
Eastern Province			
Bugesera	40,3%	12,5%	72
Gatsibo	15,3%	6,8%	59
Kayonza	26,1%	5,8%	69
Kirehe	25,5%	3,6%	55
Ngoma	26,0%	13,7%	73
Nyagatare	31,7%	3,2%	63
Rwamagana	28,3%	10,4%	106

Opinions and perceptions about violence against women in partner relations

70% of both men and women agree with statements on acceptance and tolerance of partner violence. "Women have to accept and keep silent about the maltreatments in order to keep the family together". A woman in the focus group explained how she deals with pain caused by partner violence: "When I am beaten up by my husband, I feel like a watch that has stopped. I lose time as I faint away. But at a certain moment, like a watch that

starts running again, I come back and I say: my husband is right, I should respect him." Apparently, this woman managed to delete her feelings of injustice and pain, which helps her to stand the violence and to keep her family together.

Some data indicate that men may feel ashamed about their acts and deny their responsibility in committing harm to their wives. The fact that only 38% of men admitted to having been violent towards a partner may be related to their reluctance to disclose violent behaviour to the interviewer. In the focus group discussions one man explained: *"Rwandan men are not great in saying what they did wrong, they prefer to lie and keep their truth inside."* Also the data collectors observed some discrepancies when they visited different houses in the same village. It happened regularly that a male participant declared never having used violence while other participants in the same village referred to him as somebody who used violence against his wife.

The discussions in all focus groups revealed a moral rejection of the use of violence in general. However, men and women confirmed that in specific cases the use of violence against women is justified. According to men and women in the mixed focus groups 'immoral behaviour' of women is the cause of all trouble and demands male interventions, as head of family, with punishment. In focus groups with only women all participants spoke out against violence without any exceptions that may justify the acts, but they explained that acceptance of partner violence is a way to survive.

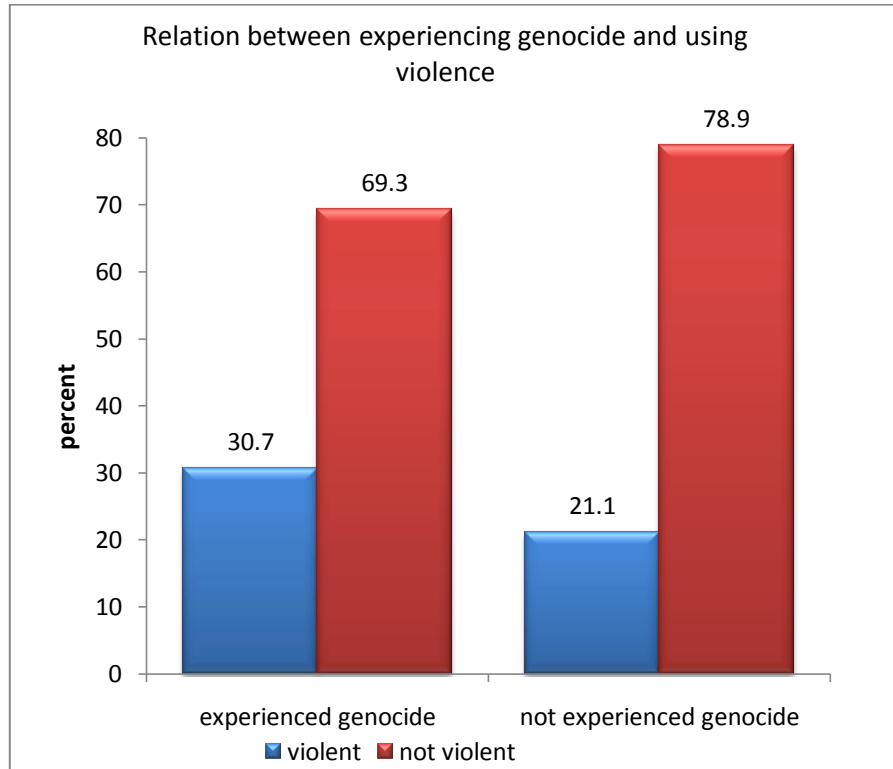
We conclude that violence against women in partner relations is based on deeply ingrained perceptions in society about gender inequality. Although women agree with their submissive role, they do consider the beatings and forced sex as harmful and violent acts. Men seem to be less aware of the harm and injustice of their acts and justify their behaviour with their male role in the family. The self perceptions of men are strongly associated with power and control over women.

3.2.3 Exposure to war/genocide violence

Graphic 13 illustrates the relation between experiences during genocide and the use of violence against women after the conflict. The cross analyses indicate that men that went through war and /or genocide tend to become violent against partners more frequently than men that did not have these experiences.

Most participants (80%) in the study have passed through experiences of war related to violence and the genocide against Tutsi in 1994. To protect the integrity and safety of all participants we have not explored the details of their experiences. However, the knowledge about the facts of the enormous violence that took possession of the country in 1994 may suggest that nearly all participants have witnessed and experienced forms of violence that

Graphic 13: Relation between experiencing war/genocide and violence against women by men. ($p < 0.05$) (n=2301)



have affected them seriously. The violence and destruction during genocide has caused immense suffering and loss. These experiences have affected people's perceptions about humanity and about themselves. One male informant explained: *"My eyes have witnessed things that should remain out of scope of human experiences, but now the images are inside me and many of us, that changed the way we see the world."*

The violent experiences caused traumatic stress that is visible in the way people deal with loss of relatives and friends, but also in the way they deal with loss of trust in humanity. Participants in the focus group discussions indirectly referred to the influence of these internal conflicts several times: *"Sometimes men have inside conflicts. It is as if somebody knocks at the door and suddenly the door opens and the violence enters."*

In the context of this research, it is important to realize how the traumatic loss may have influenced and affected the self-esteem and self-perceptions of men, who are traditionally considered as defenders of the country and their families. Therefore, we cannot neglect the impact of the exposure of this type of violence on men's violent behaviour. Further research would be needed to explore the relation between those experiences and the coping strategies of men and women to regulate aggression, frustration and anger as well as the control over fear and vulnerability.

3.3 Gender equality in gender relations

3.3.1 Socio- economic differences: income and education

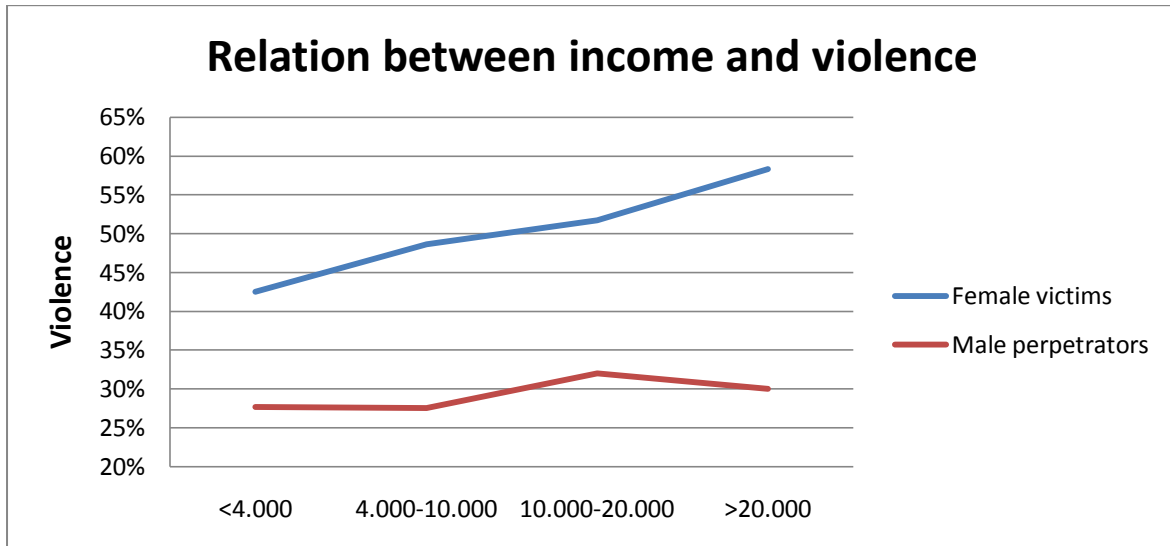
The findings showed inequality between genders in socio-economic conditions. Most men and women gain money with both formal and informal work activities, but the mean income per month of women (12.409 RWF) is half of the mean income of men (24.870 RWF). Of all female participants 44.5% earn less than 4000 RWF per month, while 17 % of men earn less than 4000 RWF. The striking differences in socio-economic conditions between genders also reveal the role of poverty and dependency of women to men in partner relationships.

The findings from the field confirm that poverty and lack of means to run the household and family have a considerable impact on partner relations. A community member in the focus group explained the roots of conflict caused by poverty: *"Poverty provokes conflict. In a family with many children, the children have needs. The woman pressures the husband to bring means that will benefit the children, but the husband has no work and means to provide this support. He may make his wife to shut her mouth by beating her."* Another female participant responded: *"Where do I have to go when I bring my husband to prison? I still have to bring him food while he is not bringing anything to the house. I better keep silent about the problems in the house."*

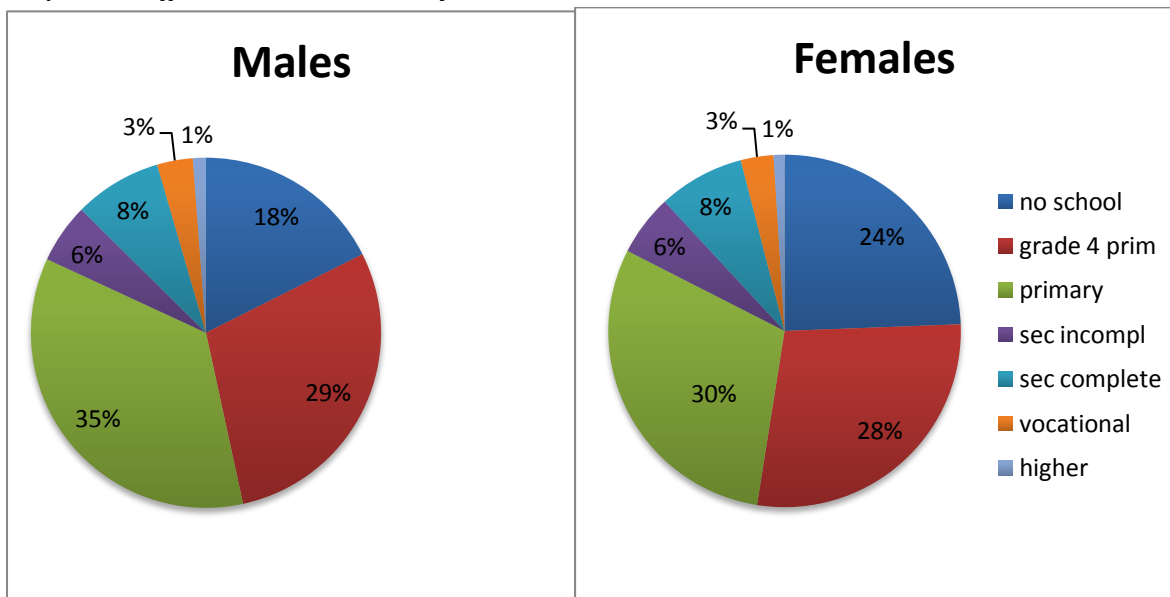
The refusal of male partners to share their income with women, as well as the control of male partners over their wife's income, are considered as economic violence and a form of gender based violence. In cross analysis between violence and income levels we found that violence against women tends to intensify when women's income increases. On the other hand, we did not find a relation between the income of men and their use of violence, implying that men committing violence are present in every income level. The difference is illustrated in graphic 14 and reflects the answers of women that have become victim of violence and men who responded to have used violence against women. The blue line shows that women with more income also are more often exposed to violence of partners. These findings reflect the impact of deep ingrained perceptions about power relations between genders and the struggling of men to deal with changing gender roles in society.

The inequality between opportunities of men and women is demonstrated by slight differences in education levels. The percentage of women with lower levels of education or no schooling at all is higher than that for the men. These data have to be read in the context of the countries' recent history. All participants are older than 18 year, with a mean age of 36 years that implicates that the period before, during and after genocide may have seriously impacted their schooling opportunities. However, more than half of all male and female respondents of the survey confirmed that men should earn more and have higher education than women.

Graphic 14: Women with higher income are more exposed to GBV ($p < 0.05$)



Graphic 15: Different education levels of men and women

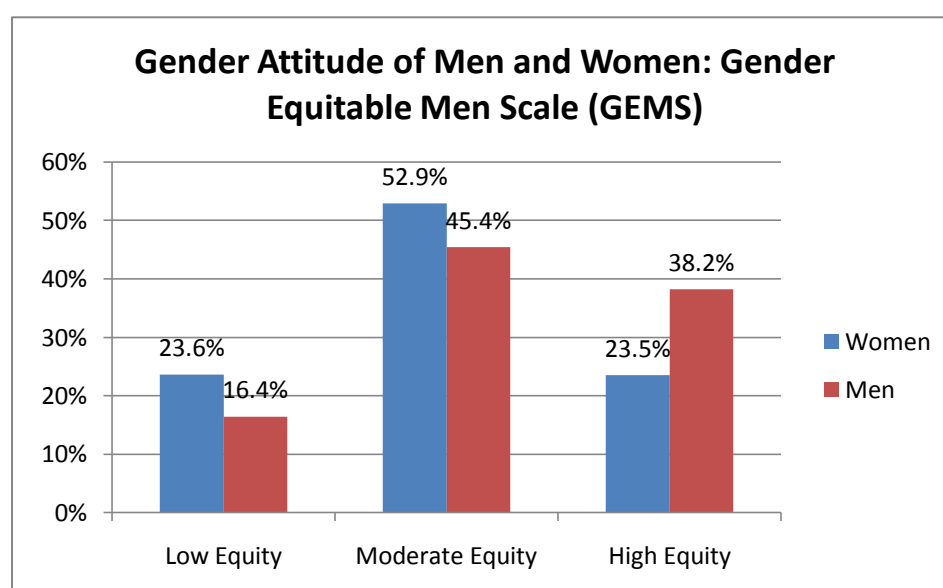


3.3.2 Perceptions and attitudes: gender roles and equality

The questionnaire includes a set of questions that compare the support of men and women to gender equitable norms. These questions are part of the GEM scale (Gender Equitable Men scale) that is developed to measure support to norms of gender equality. The GEM scale includes statements about gender roles in society and the relations between men and women. The results show that men scored higher than women, which means that men give higher support to gender equitable norms (graphics 16 and 17). Men seem to perceive themselves as more equal in relation to women than women validate the relation with men.

Table 16: GEMS statements

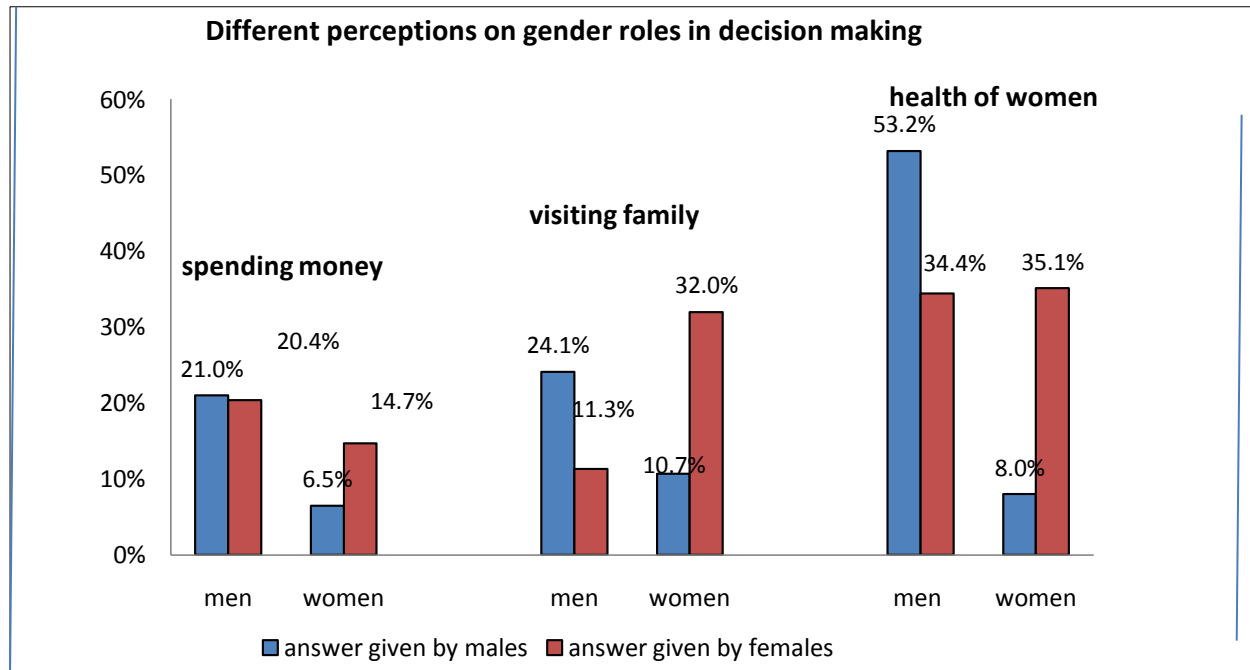
GEMS ITEMS	Men N=2301	Women N=1311
	Totally Agree	Totally Agree
Gender Roles		
A woman's most important role is to take care of her home	72.8%	81.8%
Changing diapers, giving kids a bath, feeding the kids are mother's responsibilities	44.2%	78.3%
It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant	31.6%	50.6%
A man should have the final word about decision in his home	52.8%	65.0%
A wife has to respect her husband and accept everything	45.4%	53.5%
Woman should be lower educated than man	12.4%	7.7%
Masculinities		
Men are always ready to have sex	38.9%	63.4%
To be a man you need to be tough	14.3%	13.8%
Men should be embarrassed if they are unable to get an erection	51.0%	48.0%
A man is less of man if he earns less than his wife	21.2%	14.0%
Violence		
A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together	43.7%	54.4%
A wife who earns more than her husband provokes violent	32.0%	28.0%
Gendered social practices		
A woman who does not prepare her body does not respect	16.4%	17.0%
A woman who did not do <i>gukuna</i> can never give pleasure to her husband	30.2%	37.9%

Graphic 17: Gender attitudes in GEMS

The findings contradict answers given by men to questions about their role in decision making in the household regarding spending money, spending family time and decisions

about the health of women and children. In opposite to the perspective of men, who see themselves as the main decision makers, women's answers point out that women make more decisions than men think that their female partners do. These contradictions in opinions about decision making are illustrated in graphic 18.

Graphic 18: different perceptions on decision making



3.3.3 Power relations: gender inequality and sexual relations

Opposite perceptions about partner relations between men and women are demonstrated in the way both genders value their sexual relations: men are more satisfied with the quality and frequency of sexual relation than women. Almost 90% of men are satisfied with the sexual relations against only 60% of women. We can surmise that many men are content with current unequal balance of power in domestic relations. These differences may be explained by other findings, being that women experience violence and sexual force in their relations more often than men say to have committed.

The dissimilarity in experiences of women and men could be explained by different factors. In the first place men may be not aware of the impact of their behaviour on women regarding the use of violence and abuse of power. The GBV related campaigns and gender policies may have reached more women than men. Women recognize that acts of beating and forced sex are forms of violence. Another factor may be related to the fact that men do not like to disclose their responsibility in acts of abuse and violence. Some men may present themselves as more gender friendly than found in the reality of daily life. Women experience their husband's acts and behaviour as harmful and show discontent about the quality of the partner relations. Nevertheless, they still consider men as the head of family

who should dominate over women. The table 19 below reflects the opinions of men and women about power relations and shows that the power is at the male's side. The percentages show the answers of men and women that partially and fully agreed with combination of statements about violence and power differences.

Table 19: Power differences between men and women

Power relations and sexual relations	Women's answers n=1311	Men's answers n=2301
Men always are ready to have sex and don't talk about it but just do it	95.6%	82.5%
Wife has to be submissive (accept everything)	53.5%	45.5%
Violence against women is needed to control a wife and women sometimes deserve to be beaten.	70.6%	59.4%
Women should prepare her body (gukuna) to respect the husband and give him pleasure	53.1%	45.8%
Men have to earn more than women and women that earn more will provoke violence.	50.8%	57.4%

The perceptions about the power differences and the role of men are obviously determined by social expectations of the male role as "head of family". These expectations confirm masculinity perceptions that men have to dominate and control women as well the perception that sexual relations have to be controlled and dominated by the needs (and nature) of men.

Changing power relations and responses to change

The prevailing perceptions about gender relations in a society are shaped over generations, but many societies, including Rwanda, have gone through many changes in the last two decades. The promotion of gender equality policies in Rwanda has resulted in the adoption of a law against gender based violence. The survey included questions about the knowledge and opinions of this new law. The findings illustrate that the changes have reached almost all participants, as is illustrated in reactions to the new policies. In the context of this study we see the responses from the participants as an indicator of reactions to change in power relations promoted in gender policies.

Most participants (85%) are informed about the new gender policy of the Rwanda government that addresses promotion of gender equality through the property law as well as through the law against gender based violence. However, their opinion about the law against violence is predominantly negative. Almost all men and women consider this law as too harsh for men (95%). Just a very small percentage (men: 3.6% and women: 5.1%) see the law as helpful for women.

These findings have been discussed in two focus group discussions. A male representative of the community states: "The government made a law that only protects women and takes

away the power of men. Women feel empowered because she has the law at her side." Many participants share the idea that women have interpreted the law in a wrong way and that this contributes to conflicts between partners. A female community representative of social affairs explained her opinion: *"The new law protects the rights of women. But Rwandan women interpreted the law badly. They think that these laws take away our habits and they think that they are equal to men. The equality in sharing tasks and responsibilities has resulted in losing our values. This is the source of violence."*

The loss of values is found in a perceived lack of respect of women to the husband, using provoking language and leaving the house without the permission of the husband and neglecting her household duties. According to the informants, women's behaviour provokes violence of the husband. Women are seen as the main source of trouble. Several men and women in the groups declare that the law has contributed to an increase of violence against men. The study has no data about the evidence of violence against men, but qualitative data show fears and rumours about violent women. These opinions are illustrated by a statement of a pastor: *"Before, women had no rights on nothing. But now, with the new law, she has right on everything. There are women who profit from this by violating men, because they think that they are liberated to do everything they want with the husband. The women can kill the men, so men are afraid now. The government has to take measures to protect the men."*

A female participant continues: *"Now women go immediately to the police. The reinforcement of women gives them the courage to beat their husbands."* All participants in two groups agreed with the fact that the law fuels conflicts at a household level due to such changes in power relations. Obviously, nobody considered the law against gender based violence as applicable for men. A male community leader: *"I understand the law well. But no man will bring his complaints to the police and tell him that his wife beats him. The police will laugh and make jokes about them. They say: How is it possible that you, a man, can be beaten up by a woman?"*

Table 20 provides the data of the incidence of violence against women in the districts and the opinions about the GBV law in the same districts as indicated by men. The findings show that, despite the high incidences of violence against women, the opinions about the law are predominantly negative.

Table 20: Percentage of men reporting Violence against women and knowledge and perception about a GBV law by different Geographical locations of Rwanda

District	VAW n=2301	RAPE (lastyear) n=2301	KNOWLEGDE ABOUT GBV LAW n=2301	GBV law makes it too easy for women to bring a violence charge to police (n=2301)
Kigali city				
Gasabo	33,3%	11,1%	91,7%	80,6%
Kicukiro	47,6%	9,5%	95,1%	92,7%
Nyungenge	20,5%	9,1%	88,6%	79,5%
Southern Province				
Gisagara	32,0%	0%	68,0%	60,8%
Huye	27,7%	1,5%	74,1%	74,1%
Kamonyi	31,9%	5,8%	76,8%	82,6%
Muhanga	24,4%	14,1%	76,3%	75,0%
Nyamagabe	27,9%	4,9%	95,1%	89,3%
Nyaruguru	36,5%	8,3%	88,6%	79,5%
Nyanza	17,1%	3,9%	71,6%	71,6%
Ruhango	15,3%	11,8%	51,9%	67,6%
Northern Province				
Burera	31,8%	4,5%	93,8%	87,9%
Gakenke	40,0%	8,2%	89,4%	81,7%
Gicumbi	30,5%	1,7%	91,5%	88,1%
Musanze	40,0%	12,5%	83,8%	76,3%
Rulindo	27,4%	6,0%	89,3%	79,3%
Western province				
Karongi	34,4%	8,5%	100%	92,7%
Ngororero	27,7%	8,4%	69,9%	72,3%
Nyabihu	31,2%	14,3%	86,8%	73,0%
Nyamasheke	22,4%	1,9%	75,7%	86,0%
Rubavo	27,2%	13,6%	74,1%	68,4%
Rusizi	23,7%	5,2%	84,4%	83,0%
Rutsiro	28,6%	2,6%	98,7%	93,5%
Eastern Province				
Bugesera	40,3%	11,1%	87,5%	87,5%
Gatsibo	15,3%	1,7%	91,5%	83,1%
Kayonza	26,1%	5,8%	78,3%	80,9%
Kirehe	25,5%	3,6%	80,0%	83,6%
Ngoma	26,0%	9,6%	84,9%	78,1%
Nyagatare	31,7%	1,6%	76,2%	77,8%
Rwamagana	28,3%	8,5%	81,0%	71,7%

The survey included questions that explored the knowledge but also the opinions about the GBV law. Most men (65.2%) think that the law is not protecting women enough for GBV and 31.1% of males think that the law will increase stigma of women that suffer from GBV. The overall data show that not only men but also women see the law as problematic. Among all interviewed women 72.6% consider the GBV law as 'not protective enough' and 39.6% sees the law as a measure that increases stigmatization and suffering of women exposed to GBV.

The dynamics of response to implementation of gender policies are likely to cause conflicts and/or tensions between genders when the policies are not well understood. The data do not show significant differences between rural areas and the urban areas since nearly all participants' responses are the same. Thus, the information about gender policies has reached many people, although the interpretations may be different.

Key informants of gender policy makers in the government recognize the reactions from the field. They explain the reactions as rebalancing powers, because men want women to bring money, but they do not want women to take over power. However, most policy makers think that these kinds of reactions only represent a small minority of the population that did not understand the law in a proper way. In addition, gender specialists working in NGO's tend to see the application of gender policies as positive.

Most informants see the reactions of men as a positive sign, as men start to realise that they have no natural powers but privileges and power that is constructed in society. Some of the NGO representatives think that a more strict and harsh punishment for men will help to stop the use of violence against women, while others recognise that more actions are needed at grass roots levels. Listening to the opinions and experiences from the participants in this study, we conclude that the dynamic of responses at community and household levels have to be taken seriously. The many positive efforts to implement gender policies show unexpected dynamics at grass root levels that demand attention in the design of future programs to tackle violence against women.

3.4 Socio-cultural norms and values

Norms and values are constructed and transmitted in a particular society. These norms and values are passed over to generations and will change and adapt in an ongoing process within the culture. Cultures are never static entities and but will always change over time. The transmission of norms and values over generations takes place in families, churches, educational institutions etc. The socio-cultural practices regarding family life and marriage have been traditionally important in the transmission of norms and values. The survey included some questions about traditional socio-cultural practices in order to see in how far certain traditional norms and values are still being transmitted.

3.4.1 Socio-cultural practices

A study (MIGEPROF/UNFPA, 2002) in the beliefs, attitudes and socio cultural practices in Rwanda demonstrated that the socio-cultural practices of Dowry, Gukuna, Rapt and Kweza are still practiced in the country. The MIGEPROF/ UNFPA report mentioned that most people encourage the paying of bride wealth that is considered as protection of the family honour. The practice of Gukuna (lengthening of female smaller lips) is still practiced by a majority of women. The practice of Rapt (taking a girl by force to marry) and the practice of Kweza (women obliged to have sexual intercourse with a male relative from the in-law family after the death of her husband as unavoidable step in the process of closing the mourning period) are becoming more rare, but still identified in some rural districts.

The results in our research data confirm these findings and show that 89.7% women and 25.8% of men practiced one or more of mentioned practices. More than half of the participants consider the social cultural practices as important in their life.

Table 21: Practice and opinions about socio-cultural practices

Socio-cultural practices	men	women
Practiced in life	25.8%	89.7%
Important	51.9%	66.0 %
Should be abolished	9.6%	28.7%
No opinion	38.5%	5.3%

The table shows that women are more outspoken in their opinions than men. Almost one third of the women think the practices should be abolished, while only 9.6% of men are of this opinion. These differences may be an indication that women suffer from negative and harm full consequences of these practices.

The opinions about Gukuna, were discussed in female focus groups. Although most women practiced this, they consider it mainly as an act of respect towards the husband since the preparation of her body gives him more sexual pleasure. Discussions revealed that no preparation is planned for young boys to work on their body for sexual pleasure of their future wives. The other practices have not been explored in focus groups, but the conclusions of the MIGEPROF/UNFPA report definitely show that the practices are based on unequal gender relations that include harmful elements.

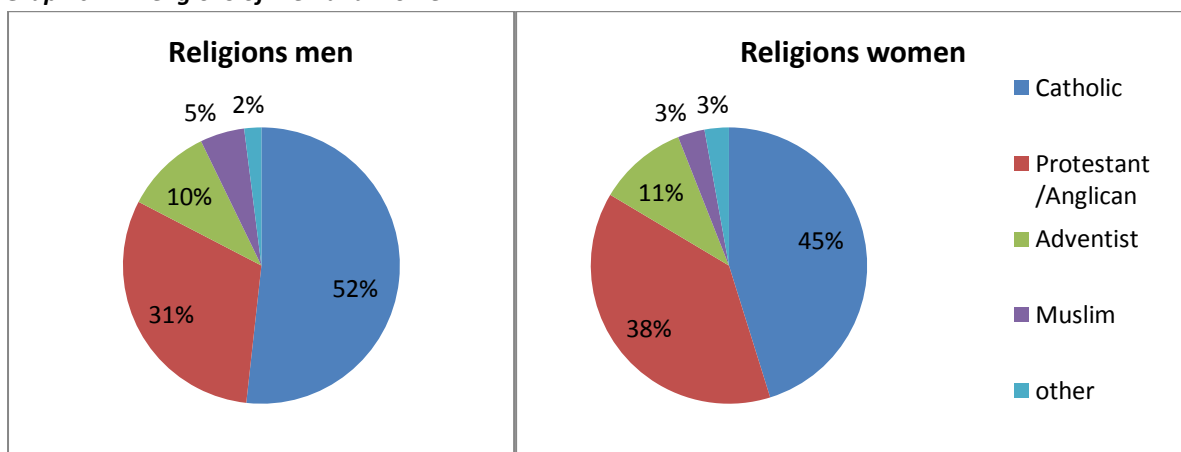
3.4.2 Religions

Churches are important institutions in transmission and construction of social norms and values. Rwanda is a country with many different churches and almost all people go to a church. Graphic 22 shows that almost all Rwandans consider themselves as religious.

Nearly all participants regularly visit a church or a mosque. Most participants are Catholics, Anglicans or Protestants. A smaller number are Muslims or Adventists. The social norms and values transmitted by religions have a considerable impact on the prevailing moral attitudes and opinions about 'doing good and wrong' as well as perceptions about gender relations. In the focus group discussions we found several illustrations of perceptions that derive from interpretations of the Bible. A male community leader: *"The Bible says that women cannot be the same as men because they are made of the bone of Adam. They are made to complete the men."*

In all focus group discussions, we heard similar statements that were used to justify gender inequality and explain gender roles as made by nature and God, and not socially constructed in society. Thus, the gender roles taught by churches and/or socio-cultural practices play an important role in construction of masculinity perceptions.

Graphic 22: Religions of men and women



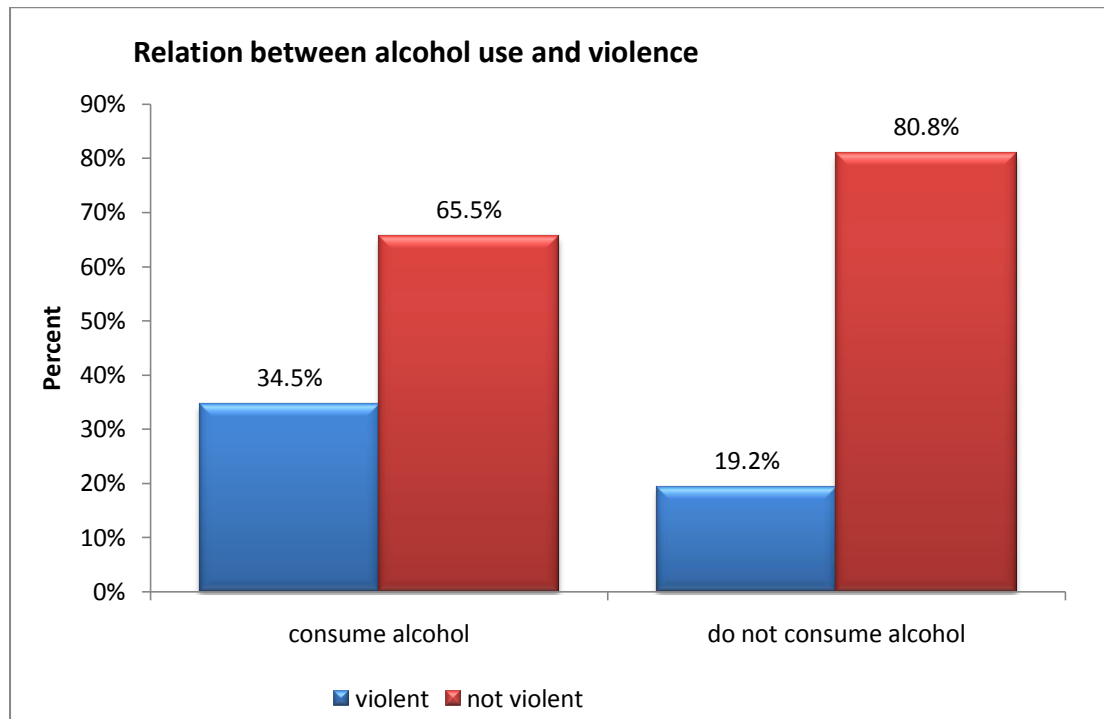
Risk behaviour and alcohol consumption

The transmission of social values and norms takes place in formal and informal institutions as described above. In how far these values and norms are practiced in daily life is reflected in people's actions. For the purpose of this study, we examined male risks behaviour in sexual practices and substance abuse. Many people see alcohol and drugs abuse as an important cause of violence. In addition, sex with sexworkers or other 'girl friends' is often seen as the main source of conflicts. The data showed that 15.0% of male respondents sometimes or often have sex with a sex worker. The exchange of sex for goods takes place in 18.2% of all male respondents. More than half of all males consume alcohol, especially in the age group above 35 years old (70%), but only 16.7% say they drink more than three times a week. The comparative analysis indicated that consumption of alcohol is correlated with violent behaviour of men towards women.

In summary, we assume that the risk behaviours play a role in violence against women. However, the abuse of alcohol has to be seen as one of the causes that can lead to violent

acts towards women, due to loss of control induced by alcohol. The fact that the violence is directed towards women is related to the roots of gender based violence in unequal power relations. Therefore, the high prevalence rates of gender based violence cannot be ascribed to high alcohol consumption only, but have to be considered as an expression of power inequality between men and women.

Graphic 23: Alcohol consumption in relation to violence against women ($p < 0.05$; $n = 2216$)



3.5 Masculinity perceptions in Rwandan society

3.5.1 *Roots of negative masculinity*

The stereotypes of masculinity perceptions that consider men as defenders of their country and family honour, procreators of life and protectors of the family can be easily identified in Rwanda. The data show that almost all participants agree that men need to be tough, need more sex and are always ready for it. They are the head of the family. As defined by the Bible and nature, their role as protectors and bosses of the family will automatically give them the right to control and dominate their wife. Subsequently, this task implicates that women have to be submissive and accept their female roles as complementary to men.

Gender based violence is part of normal life and although everybody agrees that violence against women does not belong to Rwandan culture, the acts of beating and forced sex are considered as warnings and punishments of women who do not fulfil their role in a proper way. The cultural values and norms as transmitted by traditions still dominate the prevailing

perceptions and are opposite to new policies and the modernization of society. The changes in society after the genocide and the introduction of a gender policy which promotes gender equality are perceived as undermining the role of men and giving power to women.

3.5.2 Roots of positive masculinity

The willingness of male participants to contribute to the study show that men are positively motivated to be involved in solving the problems they face in daily life with spouses. They like to tell their side of the problems and give their suggestions on how to improve their partner relations. One informant explained: *"My responsibility is to look after my wife not as an object but as a human being. I want to be her model and even when she provokes my anger, I have to show her that I can control my anger. She will be proud of me as a husband who is capable to control anger and she will also control hers."*

Men seem to be aware of the immorality of violent behaviour, although they may have some problems reflecting on their own acts. The answers also show that most men will intervene when they witness a case of violence against women, confirming their awareness that violence is immoral and unjust. The earlier mentioned factors of exposure to violence in life and the immense experiences of powerlessness and vulnerability should be taken into consideration in the way men handle feelings of frustration and insecurity caused by negatively affected self-esteem.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

- Positive masculinity of Rwandan men may be undermined by men's involvement with violence in childhood and during conflict.
- The rapid changes in society after the genocide resulted in new roles and perspectives for women. Men's masculinity perceptions as defenders and leaders of families are affected by changes. The social expectations of male's role as heads of family, defenders of country and procreators of life contradicts with the daily reality where women run households, earn money and got rights, confirmed by new laws and gender policies.
- The process of modernization in society is encouraged by progressive gender policies of Rwandan government. However, the process of change goes along with power imbalances in gender relations at grass roots levels and within households. Transmission of socio cultural norms and values by schools, churches and socio-cultural practices in families are less accelerated in the process of modernization of society and may fuel conflicts at household level.

The findings show that the roles of men and women are defined by power differences between genders. The role of women as care takers of children, cooks and cleaners in the house go along with submissiveness towards the control and dominance of the men. Men are seen as the head of families with privileged positions in sexual relations and economic opportunities. Nevertheless, the changes in society have created new realities for women and men. Many women became head in the households after losing their partners during the genocide or due to the fact that husbands spend many years in prison. Men had to face their loss of power, due to experiences in genocide and war, as well as changes in gender policies.

The progressive gender policies of the government and many efforts of other actors to promote gender equality have a visible impact on the opinions and experiences of Rwandan men and women. Nevertheless, the new realities and policies have not resulted in linear changes on people's perceptions towards progressive gender equality. The process of change takes place with resistance, power imbalances and conflicts at a household level. Men cannot be assumed to understand the purpose of gender equality policies, particularly men who perceive themselves as struggling in finding socially and economically a place in life, unless they are engaged in the process. In order to guide this process of changing power relations and prevent an increase of gender based violence, men and boys, women and girls, should be actively involved. The process of change demands a public space where traditional perceptions can be discussed, evaluated and modified. The churches, community structures, as well as formal education institutions have an important role to play in opening space for new perspectives on gender relations. The public services have an important role

to facilitate support and care for families struggling with conflicts. The criminalization of abuse and violence has to remain one basic response to gender based violence, but interventions that encourage people to change their minds and attitudes by dialogue, education and support may have a considerable impact on creating peace in mind and peace at home.

Recommendations

The study revealed how the impact of men's exposure to violence that affected their self esteem and masculinity perceptions and in particular their subsequent use of violence against female partners. Further studies into the impact of exposure and involvement of violence on male's perceptions on masculinity are needed to get a better understanding of their violent behaviour towards women.

Based on the findings that show the gap between changes in society and the socio cultural norms and values in society, a bottom up strategy is indicated. Community based programs and the practical implementation of policies at the local level have to support and guide men and women into changing attitudes, involving the health, education, justice, and economical development sectors.

Awareness trainings, psychosocial support programs and campaigns have to be developed with a special focus on male environments like the police and army. The promotion of positive masculinity and involvement of men and boys in changing attitudes towards women should connect to positive identity construction and include positive messages. The following strategies could be taken into consideration:

Health

- ✓ Community based psycho-social support programs that mediate in conflicts at home between partners with a focus on victim care, safety network building, and trainings from a gender equal perspective (e.g.: good neighbours model from Mozambique shows that changes in coping styles of women have a positive impact on men's attitudes towards GBV (Sleggh 2009).
- ✓ Trainings for health professionals in identification of problems caused by GBV and mediation skills that include promotion of equitable views on masculinity.
- ✓ Health promotion campaigns to highlight the symptoms and signs of gender based violence and promote ways of non-violent conflict resolution. The campaigns should also disseminate information on specific places where people (families, men and women) can go to find psycho- social support and guidance to find alternative ways in coping with conflicts. The messages should include hope and address men's responsibilities and capabilities to change. These approaches may target cases of conflicts in a preventive stage, which do not have to be resolved at police offices.
- ✓ Increase numbers of men serving as health educators and providers

Education

The high violence prevalence in childhood demands serious interventions in schools. Moreover, also families and churches are important socialization sites of informal education that have to be addressed.

Schools: primary up till secondary school

- ✓ School programs that help children to reflect on gender roles and discuss experiences at home and in schools.
- ✓ Putting in place gender sensitive sanitation facilities.
- ✓ Psycho-social support programs for children.
- ✓ Training for teachers in role modelling of positive masculinity and femininity.
- ✓ Creating teachers and parents committees bringing together parents, teachers, students and stakeholders to address issues of gender and GBV.
- ✓ Increased numbers of men engaged in gender awareness education.
- ✓ Teacher training in non-violent child guidance and policies that hold teachers accountable when they use violence.

Churches, Families and communities

- ✓ Training of church leaders and establishment of church related programs that promote and guide process of change in perceptions about gender equality. The churches have an important role to play in the eradication of gender based violence through statements they could make that reject the use of violence against women.
- ✓ Training of community leaders and promotion campaigns at community levels that tackle aspects and practices that include violation of women's rights.
- ✓ Implementation of community based psycho-social support groups that give a semi public space to problems that men and women face in daily life. The model of community based sociotherapy (Byumba and Nyamata) provides men and women a safe environment to discuss the problems and find solutions together. The disclosure of problems in the community groups resulted in increased social cohesion in communities and prevents isolation and stigmatisation of victims and (ex)-perpetrators (Richters et al 2010).

Socio-economic and justice sector

Work

Acknowledgement of social distress of men caused by unemployment and other traumatic experiences needs to be integrated in strategies that aim to involve men in promoting gender equality. Men should be actively involved in the promotion of women's rights on work and good education. Positive female and male leadership, at work, school, in churches and at home have to be demonstrated and highlighted in campaigns, TV spots and radio messages. Access to work and income of women have to be encouraged while economic violence has to be explained as injustice towards women. Men acting as role models could be used to bring these messages across.

Justice

- ✓ Explanations of the GBV law in publications on TV and radio that includes positive messages.
- ✓ Dissemination of the laws at grass roots levels by social activists trained in the communities. These activists could use accessible methods like theatre role plays at strategic places in the communities and give space for debate. Other accessible methods like the dissemination of cartoons, open debates on radio and TV can be used to tackle mistrust in understandings about the law.
- ✓ Training police, army and legal professionals in psychological aspects of GBV
- ✓ Creating networks of public services between police, health, social affairs and psycho-social support organisations in order to make support for victims and families affected by GBV accessible at community levels.

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