

Quick guide to Transforming Masculinities

An evidence-based approach to transforming harmful gender and social norms, and to promote positive masculinities and gender equality.

Why we need to address sexual and gender-based violence

One in every three women and girls will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. That is 1 billion women and girls in our world today. Violence against women and girls happens in every country and in every sphere and strata of society in various forms, such as rape, physical abuse, harassment and discrimination. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) deprives women and girls of a life of dignity which is why ending it is critical. Statistically, the majority of perpetrators of SGBV are men and boys; our work specifically addresses the understanding and behaviour of individual men and boys as well as the social norms that lead to male violence against women and girls. It is important to note that men and boys also experience SGBV. Therefore, our goal is to shift harmful social norms and behaviours which accept any SGBV, in order to end violence for both men and women so that everyone can thrive free from abuse and violence.

Our approach

A significant majority of the global population are affiliated to a religious tradition or faith beliefs.* Belief systems influence and shape social norms, including gender norms on roles and values, and can have a negative or positive impact on achieving gender equality. Faith leaders (who, globally, are predominantly male) and certain

interpretations of scriptural texts can play an influential role in reinforcing patriarchal norms, dominant forms of masculinity and rigid gender roles and responsibilities that are harmful to both men and women, boys and girls. These interpretations perpetuate and sustain gender inequality, and are often even used to justify violence, and shame survivors of SGBV. The aim of the Transforming Masculinities approach, however, is to work towards gender equality through a gender transformative model, founded on the inherent equitable principles and sacred texts of Christianity and other world faiths that value the flourishing of all human beings.

As a faith-based organisation our experience has been that faith leaders and faith traditions can be equally powerful agents for positive change in addressing SGBV. While it is important to challenge existing gender roles directly, our approach is to question the values that underpin those gender-ascribed roles, and the values, power and status assigned based on people's gender identities. Our approach promotes positive models for being men and women, for leadership, for restoring relationships and for promoting gender equality in every sphere of society. Transforming Masculinities aims to promote change in individual behaviours and social norms on gender, masculinities and SGBV. We strongly believe that this will lead to systemic changes in social, political and economic structures that will build a society that lives out the values of gender equality and is free of SGBV in all forms.

Key components

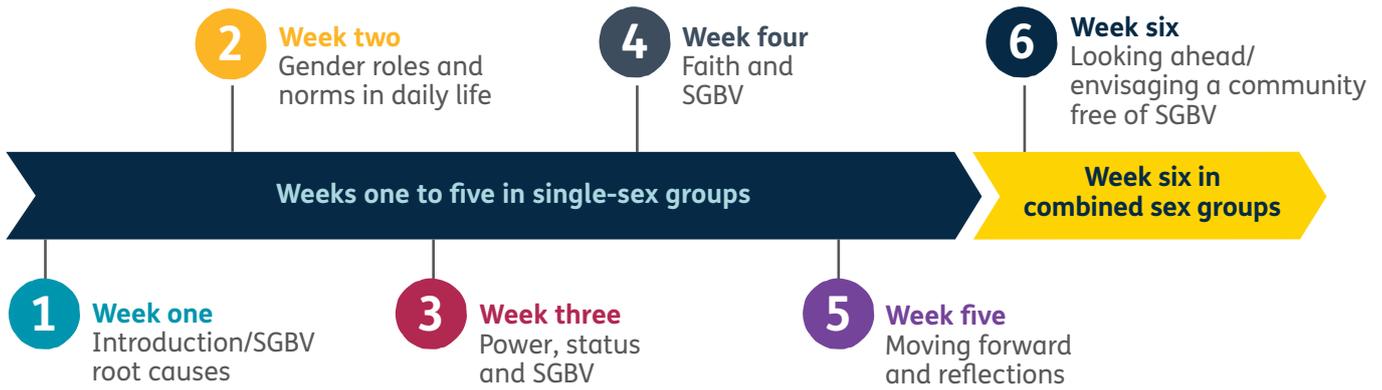
The Transforming Masculinities process works with both men and women through workshops or structured small group discussions, which draw on scriptural reflections on gender equality and positive masculinities. Themes include understanding SGBV and how it affects everyone, addressing unequal power and privilege, and discussing positive masculinities.



Community Action Groups (CAGs) are another effective way to involve and engage with stakeholders from local communities in order to provide support and address issues related to survivors of SGBV within their context. Each group typically has 15 volunteer members with representatives from local government, police, medical professionals, faith leaders and project staff. CAG members support survivors through referrals and they take the lead on advocacy at the community level in favour of gender equality and positive masculinity.



Community dialogues run for six weeks and follow key themes in the order described below:



Male-only sessions are led by male Gender Champions and female-only sessions by female Gender Champions.

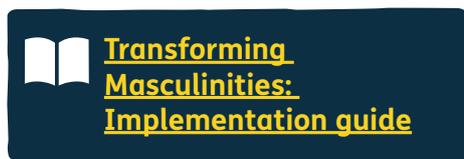
The Transforming Masculinities curriculum and process have been designed and developed based on the evidence from our research. Distinctive aspects of the approach are:

- It is structured to accompany men and women in a process of identifying and unlearning harmful norms that impact their lives.
- It brings the discussions on gender, masculinities and SGBV within the context of participants' faith and culture, and aims to address underlying beliefs rather than to prescribe behaviour.
- It engages both faith leaders and faith community members through discussion and activities with practical application. Faith leaders are integral participants; they are not only gatekeepers.
- It involves group learning and a safe space for dialogues with single-sex groups for men and women separately and then joint sharing in the mixed group discussion.
- It promotes accountable practices at all levels (participants, facilitators, church leadership and related staff).
- It is designed to integrate easily into church activities including marriage counselling and men and women's small discussion groups.

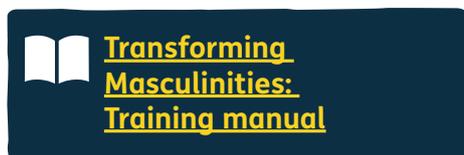
Communities free from violence and abuse

SGBV is not purely a women's issue; it is a gender issue that requires work on gender justice and the equality of individuals, rather than solely a focus on women's empowerment. Our hope is to see men and boys on a journey of transformation that will lead to them living and promoting a lifestyle of positive masculinities and gender equality. This will significantly improve the lives of both men and women, their relationships and the wellbeing of their families. We desire to see both women and men living with dignity, being equally valued and able to live free of violence and abuse.

The Key Resources for the biblical reflections on the topics of SGBV, gender equality and positive masculinities are:



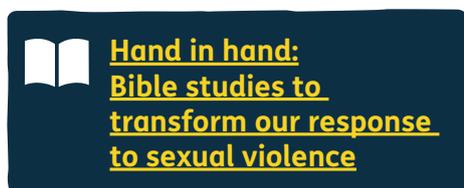
A step by step guide for project leaders on how to implement **Transforming Masculinities** projects.



Training manual used for faith leader workshops and to train Gender Champions. Used by trainers who have been trained by Tearfund



Guide used by Gender Champions to facilitate the community dialogue group discussions.



Resource provided to faith leaders regarding healthy gender relationships, as a support in delivering sermons, sharing testimonies and counselling couples.

Resources are written from a Christian faith perspective with adaptations available for Muslim faith communities.

**Pew Research Centre (April 2015) The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections 2010-2050*

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