



# Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa:

## Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict, and Violence

Gary Barker  
Christine Ricardo

CPR

## Summary Findings

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Gender is increasingly used as an analytical framework in program and policy development for youth in Africa, but in most cases gender refers almost exclusively to the disadvantages that women and girls face. Given the extent of gender inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa, an almost exclusive focus on women and girls has been appropriate. However, a gender perspective and gender mainstreaming have too often ignored the gender of men and boys. The aim of this paper is to explore what a gender perspective means when applied to young men in Africa focusing on conflict, violence and HIV/AIDS. It explores the construction of manhoods in Africa and argues for the application of a more sophisticated gender analysis that also includes men and youth.

The authors carried out an extensive literature review, identified promising programs applying a gender perspective to work with young men, carried out 50 informant interviews with staff working with young men in Botswana, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda, and 23 focus group discussions and interviews with young men in Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda.

A gendered analysis of young men must take into account the plurality of masculinities in Africa. Versions of manhood in Africa are socially constructed, fluid over time and in different settings, and plural. The key requirement to attain manhood in Africa is achieving some level of financial independence, employment or income, and subsequently starting a family. Older men also have a role in holding power over younger men and thus in defining manhood in Africa. Initiation practices or rites of passage are important factors in the socialization of boys and men throughout the region. For young men in Africa, as for young men worldwide, sexual experience is frequently associated with initiation into adulthood and achieving a socially recognized manhood.

There are a handful of important program examples that explicitly include discussions of gender socialization in their work with young men. Some key operating principles emerge from the various experiences in working with young men in a gender-specific context, including: (i) explicit discussions of masculinities in educational activities; (ii) creation of enabling environments in which individual and group-level changes are supported by changes in social norms and in institutions; (iii) broader alliance-

building; and (iv) the incorporation of the multiple needs of young men.

Key challenges include: (i) the need for better impact evaluation; (ii) the scope for scaling up and engaging the public sector; and (iii) the need for documentation, dissemination and technical exchange on program experiences and lessons learned.

Throughout the report, the authors make references to alternative, non-violent versions of manhood and to elements of traditional socialization in Africa that promote non-violence, and more gender-equitable attitudes on the part of young men, and to forms of socialization and social control that reduce the vulnerabilities of young men and reduce violence. Included in this section are examples of young men whose stories represent ways in which young men can question and counter prevailing norms.

These stories and the emerging literature point to some of the following protective factors that promote gender equality, health-seeking or health-protective behaviors and non-violence: (i) a high degree of self-reflection and space to rehearse new behaviors; (ii) having witnessed the impact of violence on their own families and constructed a positive lesson out of these experiences; (iii) tapping into men's sense of responsibility and positive engagement as fathers; (iv) rites of passage and traditions that have served as positive forms of social control, and which have incorporated new information and ideals; (v) family members that model more equitable or non-violent behaviors; (vi) employment and school enrollment in the case of some forms of violence and conflict; and (vii) community mobilization around the vulnerabilities of young men.

Changing gender norms is slow, and it is made even slower by the fact that those who make program and policy decisions often have their own deep-seated biases about gender and are frequently resistant to question those. Efforts to question the sexual behavior of men in the African context, for example, have sometimes run into resistance by national level leaders who perceive that African men themselves are being "bashed" or maligned. The challenge to promote changes in gender norms is to tap into voices of change and pathways to change that exist in the context of Africa. Ultimately it will be the voices of these young men and adult men, and women, who will promote the necessary individual, community and social changes.

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Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction  
Social Development Department  
The World Bank  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20433

Fax: 202-522-3247

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E-mail: [cpr@worldbank.org](mailto:cpr@worldbank.org)



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## Foreword

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Although today it is generally acknowledged that efforts to engender development processes require more than a focus on women but also a focus on men, especially on how men construct their sense of identity and the definition of what it means to be a man, it is still the case that most analytical and operational work on gender tends to focus on women and girls. This is clearly appropriate since women and girls suffer disproportionately from gender inequality and its many manifestations. However, as argued in this paper, a truly gendered development process needs to factor in the roles of men and boys. Gender mainstreaming requires a comprehensive focus on gender in all its complexities, including a focus on men, not marginalizing it as a women's issue. It is the attitudes of men, after all, that constitute the main obstacles to greater gender equality. If we are to promote greater gender balance in development we must understand the socialization of men and especially young men. As this paper shows, the socialization of men and the construction of the male sense of identity, are fluid and changing, and they can be renegotiated and redefined.

In Africa, the association of masculinity with violence and risky behavior has important implications for the efforts of development agencies and governments to reduce violence, vulnerability to civil conflict and the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This paper focuses on the construction of masculinity in Africa, drawing specific implications for conflict, violence and HIV/AIDS.

The paper is the result of collaboration between the Social Development Group of ESSD in the Africa Region and the Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit in the Social Development Department of the ESSD anchor. The main objective of the research is to build a stronger and more nuanced understanding of the role of men and boys in the perpetuation of violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS in the region and the kinds of program interventions that can support alternative versions of manhood. This work is also part of a broader effort to gain a better understanding of gender mainstreaming by exploring the value added of looking at issues affecting adult and young men through a gender lens. We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Government of Norway which funded this study through the GENFUND and the Trust Fund for ESSD.

Gary Barker is Executive Director and Christine Ricardo is Senior Program Assistant, the Gender and Health Initiative, at the Instituto Promundo in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Promundo is a Brazilian NGO that works internationally to promote gender equality and child and youth development. Promundo carries out program development and research, and provides technical assistance related to the socialization of young men, health promotion, HIV/AIDS prevention and violence prevention in Latin America, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. For more information, see: [www.promundo.org.br](http://www.promundo.org.br)

Maria Correia  
Lead Social Development Specialist  
Africa Region

Ian Bannon  
Manager  
Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction

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Gary Barker  
Christine Ricardo



## Executive Summary

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### Overview

Gender is increasingly being used as a framework for analysis and program development in youth and social development, HIV/AIDS and conflict in Africa. Gender has often referred to the disadvantages that women and girls face; given gender inequalities in the region, this has been necessary. However, a gender perspective has too often ignored the gender of men and boys. Accordingly, this report explores the constructions of manhood in Africa and the implications for conflict and post-conflict recovery, and HIV/AIDS. This paper argues for applying a more sophisticated gender analysis related to conflict and to HIV/AIDS to examine how men and women, and boys and girls, are made vulnerable by rigid notions of manhood and gender hierarchies. The paper's central question is: What does a gender perspective mean when applied to young men in sub-Saharan Africa as related to conflict and HIV/AIDS?

The authors: (i) reviewed literature on men and masculinities, conflict and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa; (ii) consulted with colleague organizations to identify promising program examples that apply a gender perspective to work with young men; (iii) carried out 50 key informant interviews with staff at organizations working with young men in Botswana, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda; and (iv) carried out 23 focus group discussions and interviews with young men in Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda.

### Socialization of Boys and Men in Sub-Saharan Africa

***A gender analysis of young men must take into account the plurality of masculinities in sub-Saharan Africa.*** Versions of manhood in Africa are: (i) socially constructed; (ii) fluid over time and in different settings; and (iii) plural. There is no typical young man in sub-Saharan Africa and no single African version of manhood. There are numerous African masculinities, urban and rural and changing historically, including versions of manhood associated with war, or being warriors and others associated with farming or cattle-herding. There are indigenous definitions and versions of manhood, defined by tribal and ethnic group practices, and newer versions of manhood shaped by Islam and Christianity, and by Western influences, including the global media.

***The chief mandate or social requirement for achieving manhood in Africa is achieving some level of financial independence, employment or income, and subsequently starting a family.*** In much of Africa—where bride-price is commonplace—marriage and family formation are directly tied to having income and/or property. Literature reviewed and formative research carried out by the authors confirm that men's social recognition, and their sense of manhood, suffers when they lack work. Young men who do not achieve a sense of socially respected manhood may be more likely to engage in violence, whether in ethnic clashes in Nigeria, in conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, or in gang-related activity in townships in South Africa.

***Achieving manhood in the African context often depends on an older man—one who holds more power—deciding when a young man is able to achieve socially recognized manhood.*** This issue of the “big man” and of older men in general holding power over younger men is a widespread and defining aspect of manhood in Africa. It manifests itself in numerous contexts in contemporary Africa and is a recurring point of discussion throughout the report, particularly in relation to conflict settings in the region, as well as HIV/AIDS vulnerability.

***Initiation practices, or rites of passage, some of which include male circumcision, are important factors in the socialization of boys and men throughout the region.*** While it is difficult to make overall generalizations about the various rites of passage in Africa, it is clear that they may simultaneously

reinforce strict sex segregation and gender inequalities, while also serving as a form of positive social control in some settings. There are a few examples of program interventions working with rites of passage programs to incorporate messages related to safer sex, violence prevention and gender equality.

***For young men in sub-Saharan Africa, as for many young men worldwide, sexual experience is frequently associated with initiation into manhood and achieving a socially recognized manhood.*** Prevailing norms about sexuality and manhood suggest that young men should be knowledgeable, aggressive, and experienced regarding sexuality and reproductive health issues. Young men often have a disproportionate share of the power and voice in sexual and intimate relationships with women.

***Throughout Africa, there continues to be widespread denial, stigmatization and condemnation of homosexuality.*** Nonetheless, male-to-male sex is more common than assumed and some young men may have sexual experiences with other men, while not considering themselves to be homosexual.

***Violence and coercion, including verbal threats and forced sex, are common features of young people's sexual relationships in sub-Saharan Africa.*** There is a range of perceptions and definitions among young men of what qualifies as violence against women and many young men may view violence against women as a socially sanctioned extension of male authority to the private realm. This internalization of violence against women as a norm also occurs among young women, who sometimes interpret violence as an indicator that a man is emotionally invested in a relationship.

***The socialization of young men in Africa must be studied within the context of social change, urbanization and political upheaval, including civil unrest and in some countries, the lack of functioning national-level social institutions.*** Urbanization and the expansion of formal education, and the increased enrollment of girls in public education, are leading to changes in gender roles. Various studies and research carried out for this report confirm that many young men simultaneously hold traditional and rigid views about gender alongside newer ideas about women's equality.

### **Young Men, Conflict and Violence in sub-Saharan Africa**

***Young men historically have been combatants in armed conflicts in the region—in many gender analyses of conflict, the fact that the vast majority of child soldiers are boys is seen as so commonplace that it needs no comment.*** Nonetheless, a growing number of accounts of young men's participation in conflict settings have made an association between masculinities, or the socialization of boys into rigid gender norms, and violence and conflict. Various accounts, and research carried out for this study, affirmed that the lack of employment which provides both income and social recognition is linked to young men's participation in armed conflicts.

***In some settings, young men's participation in conflict and use of violence become ways to obtain empowerment, or essentially a means to achieving and wielding power, for young men who perceive no other way to achieve it.*** Young men may also find camaraderie with male peers in some armed insurgency groups, and in some cases, male role models or surrogate fathers, and substitute families.

***The extreme examples of violence and brutality in some conflict areas in the region must be understood as learned behaviors.*** This violent behavior is reinforced by social structures at the community level, and sometimes at the family level and is learned by modeling, reinforcement, shame, overt threats and coercion. Insurgency groups often choose the youngest sons and boys, who are more likely to feel a sense of powerlessness and to be the most susceptible, malleable and traumatized by these experiences. Drugs and alcohol are often used in this indoctrination, as a way to "lose control" and to carry out acts of brutality, mirroring in some ways traditional gendered rites of passage.

***There has been relatively little attention to young men recruited into rural militias and conventional armies in the region, through coercion or voluntarily.*** While the degree of trauma and coercion involved in young men's participation in militias and conventional armies may be far less than that found in some insurgency groups in the region, these young men may require as much assistance to reintegrate into civilian life as those involved in insurgency groups.

***There has also been little attention and research on young men who live in areas where rebel groups have recruited, but who find ways out or are able to stay out.*** There has been significant discussion of the means that armed groups use to recruit and coerce young men, but nearly absent is any reflection about indigenous sources of strength which keep young men out of conflict. Examples from Mozambique and Sierra Leone suggest that some families and communities have been able to mobilize or organize themselves in ways that reduce young men's involvement in conflict.

***Young men are affected by and react in gender-specific ways to conflict, such as in their increased likelihood for migration (in comparison to women and older men) and in returning to civilian life.*** Although there has been a wide range of program responses for former combatants in much of the region, many of these are exclusively for ex-combatants. Male and female youth who were affected by violence but not directly involved as combatants, are sometimes excluded.

***Other forms of violence are prevalent in Africa, and also clearly linked to masculinities; these include gang activity, vigilante groups and ethnic-based conflicts as in the case of Nigeria.*** Interviews and analyses of young men involved in criminal activities in South Africa find that an array of factors are associated with their participation in violence, including family conflict and violence, the inability of families to provide social control and constructive guidance, and socialization into violent versions of manhood associated with attaining quick financial rewards. Analysis of ethnic-related violence in the region finds that young men's involvement in such conflicts interacts with salient versions of manhood, easy access to arms, historical ethnic rivalries, brutal police response and lack of access to employment.

***Several analyses have sought to make an association between the large population of young men relative to the overall population and conflict.*** The links between a large youth cohort and conflict are too complex to be generalized, and in any conflict setting in the region, it is only a minority of young men who are involved. Various issues clearly interact to produce violence, including socially relevant versions of manhood and the inability of national governments and societies to provide opportunities for young people. Applying a demographic determinism to young men is an oversimplification that is not supported by the body of research in the region, and ultimately stigmatizes African young men.

### **Young Men and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa**

***In sub-Saharan Africa, there are nearly 10 million young men and women, ages 15-24, living with HIV/AIDS, of which more than 75 percent are women, reflecting a worldwide feminization of the epidemic.*** The unequal balance of social power between young men and women, combined with the patterns of risk behaviors among young men, suggests a responsibility and potential for young men to play a key role in shaping the future of the epidemic. While there are still gaps in research, there is a growing literature on male sexuality throughout the region.

***Various studies have affirmed that gender role norms are among the strongest underlying social factors that influence sexual behaviors.*** Norms related to masculinity and sexuality, such as those which espouse male sexual needs as uncontrollable, multiple partners as evidence of sexual prowess, and dominance over women (physical and sexual), can place young men and young women at high risk of HIV infection.

***On average, young women in Africa form partnerships with men five to ten years older whereas young men have relationships with women of similar age or slightly younger.*** This pattern means that women are likely to be infected by HIV at younger ages than men, and that young men's risk of HIV increases as they get older and have more partners. Young men in Africa have an average five-year window between their sexual debut and marriage. This window is usually linked to a higher number of partners than young women, which when combined with inconsistent condom use means that both men and their female partners are made more vulnerable.

***Despite relatively high levels of awareness in most parts of the region there continues to be low levels of safer sex, particularly for girls, and misconceptions about preventive behaviors, including condom use, and the disease itself.*** In some cases, young men report the conflicting pressures they experience, between their knowledge (about HIV/AIDS and safer sex behavior) and their behavior, or between what they say they should do and what they actually do.

***Young men's use of condoms is still always or frequently much lower than desired and lower than reported knowledge about condoms and HIV/AIDS would suggest; it often varies according to the reported nature of the partner or relationship (e.g., occasional partner, regular partner, or sex worker).*** Outreach and educational efforts need to take into account the multiple and complex perspectives on condom use as well as an analysis of how situational realities determine knowledge, understanding and practice of various prevention methods.

***Throughout the region, only a small number of young men seek HIV testing and various studies, including this one, confirm that women are more likely than men to seek testing and to disclose their HIV status.*** This is likely due to limited access to health services as well the common perceptions among young men that clinics are "female" spaces, and that "real men" do not get sick. While there is little research on young men living with HIV in the region, some reports suggest that there are few sources of support for these young men and that both adult and young men are less likely than women to care for their health in general and are reluctant to reveal their HIV status.

### **Program Approaches Applying a Gender-Perspective to Working with Young Men**

***While relatively small in number, there are a handful of important program examples that explicitly include discussions of gender socialization in their work with young men.*** Examples include the Men As Partners Program in South Africa, Stepping Stones in Uganda and South Africa, and Conscientizing Male Adolescents in Nigeria, described in this report.

***Some key operating principles emerge from the various experiences in working with young men in a gender-specific context,*** including: (i) explicit discussions of manhood/masculinities in educational activities; (ii) creation of enabling environments in which individual and group-level changes are supported by changes in social norms and in institutions; (iii) broader alliance-building; and (iv) the incorporation of the multiple needs of young men.

***Furthermore, as more programs in the area of HIV/AIDS and post-conflict reintegration and violence prevention seek to include this more comprehensive gender approach to young men, there are also a number of challenges to consider,*** including: (i) the need for better impact evaluation; (ii) the challenge of scaling up and engaging the public sector; and (iii) the need for documentation, dissemination and technical exchange on program experiences and lessons learned.

## **Pathways to Change and Protective Factors that Promote Gender Equality, Non-Violence and Health-Seeking**

*Throughout the report, the authors make references to alternative, non-violent versions of manhood and to elements of traditional socialization in Africa that promote non-violence, and more gender-equitable attitudes on the part of young men, and to forms of socialization and social control that reduce the vulnerabilities of young men and reduce violence.* Included in this section are examples of young men whose stories represent ways in which young men can question and counter prevailing norms.

*These stories and the emerging literature point to some of the following protective factors that promote gender equality, health-seeking or health-protective behaviors and non-violence:* (i) a high degree of self-reflection and space to rehearse new behaviors; (ii) having witnessed the impact of violence on their own families and constructed a positive lesson out of these experiences; (iii) tapping into men's sense of responsibility and positive engagement as fathers; (iv) rites of passage and traditions that have served as positive forms of social control, and which have incorporated new information and ideals; (v) family members that model more equitable or non-violent behaviors; (vi) employment and school enrollment in the case of some forms of violence and conflict; and (vii) community mobilization around the vulnerabilities of young men.

Changing gender norms is slow, and it is made even slower by the fact that those who make program and policy decisions often have their own deep-seated biases about gender and are frequently resistant to question those. Efforts to question the sexual behavior of men in the African context, for example, have sometimes run into resistance by national level leaders who perceive that African men themselves are being “bashed” or maligned. The challenge to promote changes in gender norms is to tap into voices of change and pathways to change that exist in the context of Africa. Ultimately it will be the voices of these young men and adult men, and women, who will promote the necessary individual, community and social changes.

# YOUNG MEN AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR HIV/AIDS, CONFLICT, AND VIOLENCE

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## I. OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Gender is increasingly being used as a framework for analysis and program development related to youth development and social development in general, and HIV/AIDS and conflict in the Africa region. In most such analyses, gender refers specifically and often exclusively to the disadvantages that women and girls face; given the extent of gender inequalities in the region, this has been necessary. However, a gender perspective and gender mainstreaming have too often ignored the gender of men and boys.

Two of the most pressing social issues in Africa—conflict and post-conflict recovery, and HIV/AIDS—are directly related to how masculinities are socially constructed. Nonetheless, most gender analyses of conflict in the Africa region focus on how sexual violence is used against women and girls, or on the relatively small number of women and girls involved as combatants. Such reports generally conclude that those who use weapons are usually men, mostly young men, and those who suffer and survive the consequences of violence and conflict are women and girls (International Alert, nd). Similarly, in analyses of HIV/AIDS in Africa, most reports focus on how women are made vulnerable by the sexual behavior of men, often using an overly simplistic dichotomy that men always hold power in sexual relationships, and that women are always powerless. To be sure, too many women and girls have been made vulnerable by the behavior of men and boys in conflict settings and in sexual relationships. However, in the development literature in general, and in many policy pronouncements related to gender, African men, young and old, are presented in simplistic and overtly negative terms, or their gender is simply ignored. As White states, reviewing literature on men in Africa:

In the gender and development literature, men appear very little, often as hazy background figures. ‘Good girl/bad boy’ stereotypes present women as resourceful and caring mothers, with men as relatively autonomous individualists, putting their own desires for drink or cigarettes before the family’s needs. (White 1997:16)

In most gender analyses in Africa, the full dimensions of gender, including gender hierarchies that subjugate some groups of men, particularly young men, are seldom discussed. This paper argues for applying a more sophisticated gender analysis related to conflict and to HIV/AIDS that requires us to understand how men and women, and boys and girls, are made vulnerable by rigid notions of manhood and gender hierarchies. Specifically, this paper seeks to answer two key questions: What does a gender perspective mean when applied to young men in sub-Saharan Africa? Looking specifically at the issues of conflict and HIV/AIDS, what are the program, policy and research implications of looking at the gender-specific realities and vulnerabilities of young men?

A growing number of researchers, program staff, international development organizations and government officials are coming to see boys and men as complex gendered subjects, who are part of constructing and reconstructing both rigid and changing views about manhood.<sup>1</sup> These accounts confirm

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<sup>1</sup> In recent years, there has been increasing attention to how boys are socialized and to the specific needs and risks to health and development that boys and young men face, as well as to the need to engage boys and men in promoting gender equality. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing provided a foundation for engaging men—including young men—in efforts to improve the status of women. Similarly, UNAIDS focused its 2000-01 World AIDS Campaign on men and boys, recognizing that their behavior puts themselves and their partners at risk of HIV infection. In addition, in 1998, the World Health Organization’s Adolescent and Child Health and Development

that men and boys are simultaneously made vulnerable by rigid social norms of masculinity, while also making women and girls vulnerable.

Nonetheless, we must begin with the caveat that the gender-specific needs and vulnerabilities of African young men and young women have not been given adequate attention in policies, program development and research. Too many gender analyses merely focus on the percentage of men or boys versus women or girls in a given category, or facing a specific need. Calling attention to the vulnerabilities of young men in terms of HIV/AIDS, conflict and violence, does not imply that the needs of young women in these same settings have been met.

We also start with an affirmation of the plurality of young men and their realities in the region. Discussions of young men must include, among others:

- rural-based young men in Botswana, historically responsible for herding cattle, more likely to drop out of school than their sisters;
- out-of-school young men in northern Nigeria, unable to marry because they are out of work, and sometimes participating in ethnic violence;
- young men in townships in newly democratic South Africa; and
- young men abducted to serve as combatants by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda, or living in camps for internally displaced persons.

This list could go on for pages. Discussions must include those young men who are part of cultural groups that have rites of passage to manhood—often accompanied by male circumcision—as well as young men who have migrated to cities and may have less contact with their villages of origin. The range of cultural and local contextual realities implies that generalizations about young men and about masculinities in Africa should be made with caution.

Similarly, in conflict settings, while the focus has often been on young men as combatants, we must recognize the multiple roles and conditions of young men in such settings. This list should include not only young men who have been combatants, but must also incorporate young men who are survivors and victims of violence, young men displaced by conflict, young men orphaned due to conflict, young men who are brothers or husbands of women who have been sexually abused during conflict, and young men who have been forced to carry out sexual violence, among others. As Ruddick states: “In all wars, on any side, there are men frightened and running, fighting reluctantly and eager to get home, or even courageously resisting their orders to kill.” (Ruddick 1998:218) Frequently, however, such men are left out of our analyses.

African young men are often stigmatized, and seen as criminals, delinquents or potential or actual troublemakers or predators. The language used to refer to young men—particularly low income, urban-based young men—in the African context is often pejorative. In Sierra Leone, they are called “rarray boys” (footloose youth), a pejorative term for low income youth, or a rebellious youth culture. In Nigeria, they may be referred to as *jaguda* (crook) boys, or more recently as “area boys.” In East Africa, they may be called *bayaye* (rogue people) (Abdullah 1998). Less pejorative is the term “young lions” used in South Africa to refer to those young men in the ANC who were eager to use violence to overthrow the apartheid regime; these young men are simultaneously revered for their role in overthrowing apartheid, while also seen as being out of control and quick to use violence (Marks 1992). In Uganda, a national law against “defilement” makes it a criminal offense, punishable by imprisonment, for a young man to have sexual

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division began a multi-year research and training initiative on the health and psychosocial needs of adolescent boys, carrying out a survey of programs and a literature review on health and development of adolescent boys. UNFPA has also examined the connection between masculinities and sexual and reproductive health outcomes, and UNESCO has looked at the association between masculinities and violence.

relations with a young woman under the age of 18. In discussions with young men and staff, presented later, young men perceive that the law frequently stigmatizes them as sexual predators.

The long-standing use of these pejorative terms points to the historical existence of a group of marginalized young men, often urban-based and mostly out-of-school, who are seen as potentially dangerous. Politicians and employers use them as hired thugs and menial labor. They are, for example, the young men bused in and paid to participate in clashes between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, or recruited by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone. But it is important to affirm that most low income young men in sub-Saharan Africa are not involved in conflicts or armed violence—they are instead often presumed guilty simply by being young, unemployed, out-of-school, poor and male.

Numerous recent articles have in effect blamed the large cohort of young men as being one of the main factors associated with conflict. Young men are, to be sure, on the front line of nearly every major conflict in the region, but this is nearly always a minority of young men. These sweeping generalizations that young men and the “youth bulge” are the cause of conflict create self-fulfilling prophecies and strip young men of their individuality and subjectivity, and fail to explore the plurality of young men’s experiences. Research in the U.S. has found that being labeled by teachers and parents as a troublemaker is associated with young men’s subsequent participation in delinquent activity (Barker 2005). While there is no analogous research in sub-Saharan Africa, it is clear in interviews for this study and in the literature reviewed that young men perceive the stereotypes directed against them and act accordingly.

On balance, many of the problematic behaviors of young men—for example, the use of sexual coercion and violence against women, unsafe sexual behavior and participation in violence or local insurgencies—are often efforts by young men to publicly define or affirm themselves as men. The cultural imperatives of achieving manhood in sub-Saharan Africa (and much of the world) include getting married or forming a family (or being sexually active), and becoming a provider or working. In some cultural groups in the region, other tasks or mandates are added, including cattle-herding, defending the village or clan (and thus learning to be warriors) or contributing to public works projects. This paper will demonstrate that many of the negative or harmful behaviors of young men—whether related to violence or HIV/AIDS—are frequently part of public affirmations of male identity. Young men who participate in armed insurgencies—coerced, voluntarily, or both—and those who treat partners as sexual objects are often seeking to prove their manhood before their peer and social group within narrow constructs of what it means to be a man.

To address our starting questions, we:

- Reviewed literature on men and masculinities, conflict and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa;
- Consulted with colleague organizations to identify promising program examples that apply a gender perspective to work with young men in region;
- Carried out 50 key informant interviews with staff at organizations working with young men in Botswana, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda;<sup>2</sup>
- Carried out 23 focus group discussions and interviews with young men in Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda; and

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<sup>2</sup> The four countries were selected in collaboration with Bank staff as being illustrative of HIV/AIDS trends in the region, as well as presenting diverse scenarios in terms of conflict, post-conflict and violence. Nigeria was selected based on ongoing ethnic-based violence; interviews with young men were carried out mostly in the Kaduna region, the site of ongoing clashes between Christian and Muslim young men. South Africa represents a post-conflict setting with a diverse and creative array of program responses related to young men; interviews focused on young men engaged in these programs (townships in Johannesburg, Cape Town and rural areas in KwaZulu Natal). Uganda faces ongoing conflict between its armed forces and the LRA in the northern part of the country. Former combatants and young men in IDP camps were the focus of our interviews there. Focus groups were also carried out in Eastern Uganda where male circumcision rites are performed.



- Carried out four in-depth individual interviews of young men who showed compelling gender-equitable attitudes.

Throughout the report, we ask the questions: What is the value-added of applying a gender perspective to young men? What program examples and policies emerge from this focus? We conclude by identifying pathways to change, or factors that may lead to more gender-equitable and non-violent versions of manhood, as well as by identifying existing, culturally salient versions of manhood which already act to promote gender equality and non-violence.

## **The Conceptual Framework**

This paper takes the perspective that specific versions of manhood are: (i) socially constructed; (ii) fluid over time and in different settings; and (iii) plural. There is no typical young man in sub-Saharan Africa and there is no one African version of manhood. The term and concept of masculinities—referring to the plurality of ways of being men—has been used for more than 10 years in the field of gender studies (Connell 2003). There are in turn numerous African masculinities, urban and rural and changing historically. There are versions of manhood associated with war, or being warriors, and others associated with farming or cattle-herding. There are both indigenous definitions and versions of manhood, defined by tribal and ethnic group practices, as well as historically newer versions of manhood shaped by Islam and Christianity, and by Western influences, including the global media. An African young man may perceive gender norms from traditional rites of passage and elders in his cultural group, just as he may receive messages about manhood from rap songs from the U.S. In sum, in analyzing the discourses of young men, we must emphasize this plurality and fluidity in gender norms.<sup>3</sup>

## **II. THE SOCIALIZATION OF BOYS AND MEN IN AFRICA**

### **Introduction**

How is manhood defined in sub-Saharan Africa, and what are the implications of the socialization of boys and men for conflict, violence and HIV/AIDS? This section will briefly examine some of the major tendencies in existing literature and use examples from qualitative research carried out for this study to highlight certain key points.

We reviewed this literature and analyzed interview transcripts for what call “tensions” in masculinities. Indeed, a nearly universal feature of manhood is that it must be achieved—it requires behaving and acting in specific ways before one’s social group (Connell 2003; Gilmore 1990; Pollack 1998). Achieving manhood is in effect evaluated or judged by other men and women; young men in diverse social settings frequently report a sense of being observed and watched to see if they measure up to culturally salient versions of manhood (Barker 2005). For example, research in Nigeria concludes that both men and women had clear age-specific expectations of men’s roles, and that men and women both perceived that men are constantly assessed as to whether they live up to these expectations:

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<sup>3</sup> In analyzing the literature, carrying out site visits and analyzing the discourses of young men interviewed for this paper, we loosely applied an ecological approach to understanding young men and masculinities. An ecological model of human development, attributed initially to Bronfenbrenner (1979), has been widely used in youth development studies to represent the multiple levels at which youth interact with and respond to their environment. These levels include the intra-personal, family, local community, and wider context of social, political, and cultural norms. Applied to gender socialization, this model suggests that young men are not passive receptors of social norms related to gender, but rather are active participants in internalizing, reframing and reproducing gender norms that are passed on to them from their social settings, their families and their peers. In this model the given behaviors of a young man—such as involvement as a combatant, or use of sexual violence against a woman—are not attributed to one specific factor, but instead are examined in their full and interactive complexity. The model was also used in the analysis of program approaches applying a gender perspective in working with young men.

Through both formal and informal means, such as jokes, social ridicule and insinuations, a man is informed of what society expects from him. A non-conformist is made aware of his difference. The society exerts strong pressure upon anyone that deviates from the socially accepted gender roles, letting a male know when he is failing ‘to be a man’ (Social Sciences and Reproductive Health Research Network 2001: 97).

In identifying these categories of manhood and these tensions, it must be stressed that these categories are fluid and rarely mutually exclusive. Young men perceive multiple and sometimes conflicting ideas about what it means to be a man—and generally perceive that they are constantly judged and evaluated for their actions as men. We also emphasize the multiple dimensions of young men’s lives and identities. As previously mentioned, African men have largely been seen as monolithic, and usually negative, and often seen as motivated purely by economic issues, including land use and work. They have less frequently been examined in terms of their domestic lives—for example, as fathers and partners—or in terms of how motivation to work interacts with their other social roles (Lindsay and Miescher 2003). In parts of Southern Africa where men migrate for work, there has been much negative language surrounding reports of high rates of female-headed households. A 1999 study in South Africa found that 42 percent of children under the age of seven lived in a female-headed household (Palmary and Moat 2002). Traditional gender analysis has often focused exclusively on condemning men’s behavior, emphasizing accounts of men’s alcohol use and violence against women and children. While men’s negligence with regard to their family responsibilities must be highlighted, it is also important to understand the complexity of men’s roles in households and to consider cultural antecedents—and valid social reproduction roles.

Furthermore, in various accounts of young men, particularly in countries in conflict, young men have been portrayed as barbarians and vicious killers—“imagine a whole sub-continent of Lord of the Flies” as one journalist remarked (Grout 2002). Reports from Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Democratic Republic of Congo—however gruesome and shocking—do not speak for all young men in Africa, nor for all young men in these countries. Such accounts frequently fail to probe for underlying factors that lead young men to use or participate in this violence.

### **What Makes a Man in Africa**

The chief mandate or social requirement for achieving manhood in Africa—for being a man—is achieving some level of financial independence, employment or income, and subsequently starting a family. In much of Africa—where bride-price is commonplace—marriage and family formation are thus directly tied to having income and/or property. A young man interviewed in Lira in northern Uganda put it simply: “To call oneself a man it is simplest after (one is) married with children. No children and you are still a boy.”

Similarly, a study from Nigeria confirmed the importance of marriage in achieving manhood:

A mature, but unmarried man is viewed with suspicion and often precluded from occupying certain social positions. He is also viewed as irresponsible and perhaps even a ‘homosexual.’ ... In the Eastern zone the consequences of not marrying are very serious for a man. He is forbidden to hold certain titles and in the event of his death, he cannot be buried like a married man (Social Sciences and Reproductive Health Research Network 2001: 102).

Focus group discussions carried out with out-of-school young men (mostly underemployed) in Kaduna, Nigeria confirmed this association between work, marriage and manhood:

*Ali:* I have proposed to a girl. The problem is there is traditionally a lot involved to get married. It all depends on what I can buy or pay for my wife.

*Adeniyi:* I can’t get married now because I can only get married when I have money. The moment I get money, I will get married. I have a girlfriend and I share money with her. Something might come of it,

since I have some money. We might have sex, since I have some money and she loves me. But I do not have enough money to get married.

*Ahbed:* I don't think of marriage now, because when I get some money, I want to go back to school. I do have a girlfriend.

*Mohamed:* I don't get married because I don't have any work. I have a girlfriend but no work to do.

Many of these young men described themselves as being trapped as “youth”. Because they could not acquire employment, they were not socially recognized as adult men and thus could not get married. Some of the young men in Kaduna (the site of recent clashes between Christian and Muslim youth) said that being employed also brought social recognition beyond their family. Unemployed young men were frequently harassed by military forces or soldiers who were sent to areas where riots had taken place. Thus, having stable work—which might be identified by having a uniform or an identity card—was also coveted for the protection it offered. Police and soldiers respect young men with stable employment. In contrast, they expect that “idle” and unemployed young men will be troublemakers or “hooligans”, and treat them as such.

Similarly, in rural areas in Africa, or areas where men work primarily in subsistence agricultural production, manhood, marriage and work are highly associated with having access to land. Young and adult men in IDP camps in northern Uganda affirmed, as highlighted in later sections, that if they had no land “to dig”, they could not be considered men. Among ethnic groups in Africa that rely on cattle herding for subsistence, manhood begins when the father bestows land and cattle or other livestock to the son, which in turn can either serve as a bride-price, or enable him to achieve the status of manhood and form a family. In this way, achieving manhood depends on an older man—one who holds more power—deciding when a young man is able to achieve socially recognized manhood. This issue of older men holding power over younger men is one that will recur throughout this analysis.

Another aspect of work is the expectation that an employed man must support his extended family, as affirmed by University students interviewed in Kaduna, Nigeria:

*Interviewer:* What is expected of you as a man?

*Godfried:* You are the breadwinner.

*Charles:* If you get a job, you are supposed to support your whole family. At the end of your parents' days (when they die), you will be responsible for supporting the family.

*Ali:* When you get a good job, if you have a family of 20, you care for the rest (of your family). You sponsor them. That is tremendous stress. Or if anybody comes to you and asks you to do something unlawful, you will do it.

*Interviewer:* Meaning ....?

*Ali:* Meaning you will work at two organizations at the same time when that is illegal, or you may work at night, or if someone asks you as journalist (which all are training to be) to plant a story for them, you may do it.

*Wole:* Your salary will be small, so you may take bribes.

*Alfred:* Even with that, though, there are people who are well-paid who do that. They have money, but they still do those things.

This discourse reflects the social pressure to provide for the extended family, and the relationship between this pressure and the willingness to engage in illegal or unethical activities.

Similarly, Townsend's thoughtful account of men's migration in Botswana finds that men may support two or more households, depending on their age and role in the extended family. They may support a residential family consisting of a wife, children and some of the wife's family members, and may also be responsible for supporting their own parents. Men in this setting rarely establish their own households before the age of 40. Indeed the fact that younger, unmarried men have to contribute to their parents' households delays the formation of their own families. In this setting, the social norm for young men is to care for the livestock of their fathers, grandfathers, fathers, brothers and uncles. In many settings in the

region, young men are subject to their father's authority until he dies (Bennett 1998). Understandably, young men in such social structures express frustration with the multiple demands on them.

Men's social recognition, and their sense of manhood, suffers when they lack work. For example, in Yoruba regions of Nigeria, there are documented accounts of women belittling husbands when they are not able to provide financially for the family; men themselves reported feeling emasculated when they could not contribute to family income. In such settings, relationships between couples may become tenuous or stressed; some young married women keep their possessions in their father's house as a precaution in the case of having an "economically unviable" husband (Cornwall 2003). Accounts from out-of-work men in Tanzania and South Africa suggest that some compensate this feeling of emasculation by taking on outside sexual partners, or drinking. A young man interviewed in Uganda put it this way:

*Interviewer:* What happens when a man is not working?

*Charles:* Life becomes difficult. Because the wife will be asking for you for money and other things ...

You don't have food. We don't have salt. You will feel like you were better (off) not (having been) born.

That is the summary. You were better (off) not being married.

Accordingly, men (in Africa and elsewhere) go to great lengths to meet the cultural expectation of work. In parts of southern Africa, migration for work has been commonplace. In South Africa, where the trend has been widespread, as of 2000, there were an estimated 350,000 black male workers working in mines, 95 percent from rural areas within South Africa and from neighboring Lesotho, Botswana and Mozambique. The majority of these men live away from home in same-sex residences (Campbell 2001).

There is a growing body of research on the specific versions of manhood that have emerged among mine workers in South Africa, and secondarily among truck drivers. Ethnographies of mine workers have described a culture of insatiable sexuality, the daily fear of death and mutilation in the mines and the stress associated with seeing friends and co-workers injured or killed. Some mine workers describe the risk of HIV as minimal when compared to their occupational risks. Many show a remarkable sense of obligation to their families which motivates them to continue to work in hazardous conditions. While there has been significant attention to the HIV risk behaviors of mine workers, and a tendency to blame men in such settings for taking HIV back to their wives, most authors now see mine workers as "performing" or living up to a specific version of manhood. They seek to achieve socially prescribed versions of manhood—being sexually active and providing for their families—even when they rationally understand the risks of their occupation and their sexual activity (Campbell 2001; Moodie 2001).

Various studies have also confirmed that not just any work or employment is sufficient to achieve manhood. An adult man interviewed in Nigeria confirmed the importance of having stable employment as a requisite to being publicly recognized as a man:

*Yusef:* Most of all, if you are civil servant, society will recognize you. If you are a casual worker, they will not recognize you (as a man). ... If you are a civil servant, everyone relies on you. Even after you are a civil servant, there is pressure, because even more people come to you for help, wanting your money.

Other studies suggest the fluidity of men's definition of what is gender-appropriate work. A study in Mozambique found that low-income, urban-based men were moving into street commerce, traditionally an area of women's employment. With the lack of formal sector employment, some men are entering the informal sector as a way to cope with economic marginalization. As a consequence of this unstable employment, men reported that they were frequently unable to pay bride-price and more likely to enter into less formalized unions with women. In short, they were reshaping definitions of manhood and family formation in the face of economic challenges (Agadjanian 2002).

These limited examples confirm the importance of work in achieving manhood. This issue is important to highlight precisely because the connection between work and achieving a socially recognized manhood has seldom been examined in economic policies. However, this brief analysis affirms the need to

understand and take into account employment and job creation beyond their instrumental or income-producing purposes (Box 1). Young men who do not achieve a sense of socially respected manhood seem more likely to engage in violence; they are precisely the young men drawn into ethnic clashes in Nigeria, and in conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, or to gang-related activity in townships in South Africa.

### **Box 1: Employment and Young Men in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Ample literature and interviews carried out for this study confirm the importance of work in terms of achieving a socially recognized manhood. This presents tremendous problems for young men given high rates of under- and unemployment in Africa. While men continue to have higher incomes and a higher formal employment rates than women, high youth unemployment is a reality throughout the region. Various employment studies reiterate that economic growth in the region is too low (negative in some cases) to absorb the large youth cohort. Many studies of youth employment point to a mismatch between demands by employers and labor skills, outdated and rigid formal educational systems often focusing on academic subjects and providing few skills that are immediately useful for the workplace (Kanyenze, Mhone and Sparreboom 2000).

With the exception of South Africa and parts of North Africa, where the formal sector absorbs at least some of the youth cohort, the informal sector (including subsistence agriculture), is the major holding ground for young men in most of Africa. Indeed, various studies confirm that many low-income young men spend time in and out of the informal sector. In most cases, they would not define themselves as unemployed in official surveys. In urban settings, their days are frequently loosely structured and their time is divided between looking for work, leisure and maintaining social ties, frequently with other men, as a way to stay informed of potential work possibilities. Compared to young women, various studies suggest that young men have more leisure time (Frederiksen 2000), but at least some of this unstructured time may be spent on maintaining or forming social ties that may lead to work. Furthermore, for many low income young men, their engagement with the formal education system is often weak, precisely because of their unstable income. The following is an example of the discourse of a group of out-of-school and “weakly” employed young men Kaduna, Nigeria:

*Interviewer:* How is it finding work for you?

*Halim:* When I left school, I was an apprentice (unpaid), and I learned. I was not idle. I found work fast, but it is very difficult and offers meager pay.

*Ali:* My father was a painter and used to go with him on his work. When he died, I followed my father’s friends (also painters) and on some odd jobs. But I have had no job since 2000. When not working, I do small work, bricklaying, building, and digging. Sometimes I have work, other times not.

*Mohammed:* If I have no work, I try to spend my time reading, bettering myself reading in Hausa and English.

*Khaled:* I do odd jobs. At times, if I don’t have work, I go with my brother who is a welder. And when I have no work, I watch films.

*Omar:* Sometimes I work. When I don’t have work, I play football. The bad part is, sometimes the police harass us. [Why?] Because we have no work and they think we are hooligans.

It is clear that the social value of work—apart from its economic value—must be considered in youth employment policies. They must also consider the social challenges youth face, which go beyond the lack of work per se. Everatt, critiquing youth development policies in South Africa, affirms that: “Blind faith in the healing power of jobs and wages is the touchstone for youth development proposals.”(2000:2). There has been less attention to social challenges that youth face in acquiring employment, what he calls “disabling factors”, including trauma associated with community violence, long-term socialization patterns that run counter to the workplace, and gender-related challenges that limit young men’s and young women’s access to the job market when one exists.

It has become increasingly clear that the informal sector is not a long-term solution for creating adequate youth employment. Most young men affirm that intermittent low-paying employment is not adequate to achieve a socially recognized manhood and to form a family. But the informal sector is, for millions of young men in Africa, an intermediate or only survival option; it is a coping mechanism rather than a long-term solution. In addition, traditional agricultural subsistence is also problematic for young men, given the traditions of property transfer (controlled by older men) and rigid intergenerational roles. As we heard repeatedly from young men, and as numerous studies have affirmed, young men are having to wait too long to have access to land and the means to produce income and form families. These realities suggest the need for creative realistic and large-scale youth employment strategies that provide income—and status—in the short-run, while building the job skills of young people and the economic bases of their countries in the long-run.

## Rites of Passage

Many cultural groups in Africa have developed and continue to carry out initiation practices, or rites of passage, some of which include male circumcision, as part of the socialization of boys and men. Such practices are widespread in parts of West Africa, and in much of East and Southern Africa, with tremendous local and regional variations. These initiation rites (with frequently analogous processes for young women) often include seclusion of young men from their families (and from women and girls), and some informal learning process, during which older men pass on information and/or skills that are considered necessary to be an adult male in their societies. This information and skills may include how to hunt, how to treat women, how to build a house, warrior or fighting skills and historical information about the cultural group and its rituals.

Numerous studies have confirmed the cultural power of these rites of passage as “agents of political and social incorporation, notably of young men who are most likely to be the warlike element in any society” (Ellis 1997:6). These rites may become particularly important for creating cultural and collective identities when more formalized public institutions such as schools, formal religion and political institutions may be weak. These rites of passage provide a combination of social control, assistance and guidance to young people making the sometimes confusing and tense transition from childhood to adulthood, as well as forming or enhancing a sense of cultural or tribal identity and social cohesion.

A common factor in rites of passage is the reinforcement of a clear demarcation between children, or boys, and men, and between men and women. In many settings in Africa, there are expectations that boys must be separated from their mothers—that is from the female confines and quarters. Boys often are taken to live in a special compound for boys when they reach puberty. In some settings, male children are expected to be rebellious, stubborn and to refuse to take on tasks that are considered female.

Many of the components of these rituals include references to abandoning boyhood in favor of adult manhood. Some of the rites include a cathartic moment of being out-of-control, or drunk, or under the control of evil spirits before achieving a defined and mature adult identity. The age-specific peer groups, sometimes called secret societies, along with the initiation rituals, set parameters for conflict resolution, male-female relationships, family and community life, and adult roles. While some aspects of this socialization reinforce patriarchal gender norms that have negative consequences for women and men, they have deep cultural resonance and often serve as a form of positive social control. Indeed, whether in research or in the autobiographies of Jomo Kenyatta or Nelson Mandela, and many other African leaders (male and female), these initiation rituals are often seen as central to their personal development. Some of these rites of passages were, and still are, ways to gain access to elders, where men interacted with the chief and other leaders to resolve conflicts and training grounds for assuming political power.

While many of these rites of passage reinforce traditional gender hierarchies, they also sometimes act as a form of social restraint. An interview with a young man in northern Uganda, shows the multiple functions—positive and negative—of traditional rites of passage and the clan structure they reinforce. On the one hand, they taught boys how to be warriors, which may play into the hands of insurgency movements. On the other hand, in the case of violence against women, they served as a form of restraint on men:

*Interviewer:* What is the role of a young man in your cultural group (Acholi)?

*Charles:* I am supposed to be the overall head of the family ... I take financial responsibility. And, I defend the family, which is one of the roles of the boys. We fight. In the past, when there were tribal wars, that's how we defended the Acholi people. They (my tribe) fought sometimes for goats ... a long time ago.

*Interviewer:* What was it like when the clan structure still existed, say when men used violence against their wives?

*Charles:* Actually, (in) the former, the clan members would force these people (a couple in which a man used violence) together and then iron out their difference. The trouble causer is punished. But now, people are displaced (and) the clan structure is almost destroyed. And so these people (men who are violent toward their wives), they leave their wives, and they go for other women or something. And this woman will suffer the responsibility of bringing up all these children.

Rites of passage ceremonies and secret societies have sometimes been co-opted for armed insurgencies. In Liberia, Charles Taylor is said to have drawn on them extensively to legitimate his power. His warlords used elements from traditional rites of passage—such as talismans and tattoos—that supposedly left young men immune to enemy fire. Cross-dressing that is part of traditional rites of passage was subverted so that rebels sometimes dressed as women when carrying out their worst atrocities. Some authors have argued that armed movements have in effect become newer versions of rites of passage, continuing to draw on traditional elements—such as seclusion from the tribe, the dominance of men and boys, a cathartic or out-of-control moment, among others (Ellis 1997).

While it is difficult to generalize about rites of passage in Africa, what is clear is that they may simultaneously reinforce strict sex segregation and gender inequalities, while also serving as a form of positive social control (Box 2). As seen in the example below, such rituals often include information related to sexuality, with implications for HIV, violence against women, and male-female intimate relations in general. It is also apparent that rites of passage are fluid—incorporating new information and realities—which makes them resilient and enduring.

### **Box 2: Male Circumcision among the Gisu in Eastern Uganda**

In Eastern Uganda (in and around the city of Mbale, near the border with Kenya), the Bigisu cultural group that dominates the region practices ritual male circumcision as part of the rite of passage to manhood. Every two years, young men between 15 and 18 “voluntarily” participate in a month-long process involving entire communities. Young men are circumcised without anesthesia by “surgeons”—men in the communities who have been trained by other men to carry out the process.<sup>4</sup>

The circumcision itself often involves two cuts of the foreskin. After the first cut, the young man may participate in ritual dances. Some young men are said to pour salt and pepper in the wound to enhance the pain. Following the procedure, young men spend approximately one month in seclusion, healing from the process. When the month-long healing process is completed, the surgeon and male family members speak with each young initiate, enjoining him to have sex with any village woman of his choice (provided it is not the woman he intends to marry). Through this ritualized sex, the young man is said to rid himself of “evil and boyish spirits.” He is also urged to have “live sex,” meaning sex without a condom. In interviews carried out with young men ages 17-20 in the Mbale area, a group of young men had this to say about the procedure:

*Wilfred:* The thing (circumcision ceremony) is done publicly ...

*Robert:* They organize a group of young men, and if you are not already circumcised, they will find you...then they will throw something like vinegar on your clothes so that you have to change them or take them off. Then, they will take off the rest of your clothes and circumcise you right there, just like that.

*Andrew:* When you are done (circumcised) and you have been healed...you must have sex and you must go live (have sex without a condom). You might even go with a girl who is infected (with HIV or STIs) but you cannot refuse.

<sup>4</sup> In the gender literature, the issue of male circumcision in such conditions has been noticeably absent, focusing mostly on female genital cutting. Of course, the implications and conditions of female genital cutting are different in important ways from the circumcision of male adolescents, and vary by country. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that similar risks faced by young men are either taken for granted or that the prevailing gender discourse sees socially proscribed genital cutting as a risk for girls and young women, but normal for boys and young men, even when male circumcision in such settings also brings health risks for young men. The issue is complicated further by the fact that male circumcision apparently reduces the risk of HIV/AIDS and STI's.

### **Box 2: Male Circumcision among the Gisu in Eastern Uganda (continued)**

The initiate is encouraged to get married as soon as possible and to begin childbearing shortly thereafter. In some villages, the young man may be given a hoe or other work instruments, so he can begin working on a plot of land. He is publicly acknowledged as having achieved manhood:

*Interviewer:* After you have been circumcised, how do you feel?

*Richard:* You feel very proud.

*William:* They used to make fun of me (before I was circumcised)...they will call you a woman (before you are circumcised)...they will call you a little child...

*Bradford:* The only way to change this practice is through religion... We who are born-again (Christians) do not accept the circumcision. If you become a born-again you get the circumcision in the hospital.

*Andrew:* Yeah, but they do not consider you a man if you do it in the hospital.

*William:* It means that you didn't stand the pain.

*Interviewer:* And after you have been circumcised, what do they tell you?

*Andrew:* They tell you that you are now a man and if a girl comes to you, you can go with her (have sex)...you can get married.

*Richard:* They give you lots of gifts, things like a machete and hoe, things so you can start working and start a family...

Young men are subjected to tremendous societal pressure to undergo the procedure. Some young men, mostly from more educated or wealthier families (or from evangelical church groups), choose to have the procedure done at a hospital. However, these men are not considered real men because they did not endure the pain. Young men half-joked that if a Gisu man died without having been circumcised, the men in his village would carry out the procedure on his body before he was buried.

The comments from a born-again Christian young man above suggest that the practice is malleable, but is still quite strong. Even those young men who identified themselves as Christians affirmed that they are "Gisu first and Christians second." They said they sometimes did not heed the pressure to have sex immediately after the healing process (and before marriage), but they felt compelled to lie to their peers that they had had sex. Said one self-described Christian young man: "You tell your friends you had sex with some woman in another village. That way they won't know."

The list of expectations or requisites for achieving manhood is changing among the Gisu. Several young men said that while they were allowed to get married after having been circumcised, they were also expected to complete their secondary education and to have some steady income before they married. Thus, being circumcised was necessary, but not sufficient to achieve manhood in a modernizing Uganda. Some surgeons have also begun to incorporate new, hygienic practices in the ritual, using the slogan "one candidate, one knife." In the following section on program experiences, we present a project from Kenya that seeks to use the circumcision ritual as a way to pass information on HIV/AIDS and to promote gender equality.<sup>5</sup>

### **The "Big Man" and Intergenerational Tensions**

Historically in nearly all of Africa, tribal society has been and often still is based on the authority and supreme manhood of the chiefs, and references to the "big man" and to rigid community and tribal hierarchies leaving young men in waiting to become men:

The African 'big man' provides perhaps the most enduring image of African masculinity. Across the continent and for a long sweep of history, ambitious people (usually men) have worked to enlarge their households and use their 'wealth in people' for political and material advancement (Lindsay and Miescher 2003:3).

This arrangement of the big man and his dependents has been key to social organization for the continent as a whole. In parts of Namibia, for example, Lindsay and Miescher state:

<sup>5</sup> In the last 15 years, 35 studies from 10 countries, mostly in Africa, have found a significant association between HIV risk and lack of male circumcision (Halperin). There are varying statistics on the degree to which the surgery can reduce risk and several ongoing randomized controlled studies will be able to offer the clearest evidence on a link (van Dam and Anastasi, 2000). Due to these associations, there are many efforts invested in strategies for making safe male circumcision more widely available.



...male power was equated with men who had their own livestock, houses, wives, and juvenile dependents—men who were ‘senior’ and who performed the social role of ‘fathers.’ Such power was reproduced through their ability to determine the criteria and candidates for becoming ‘real men’ by getting married and setting up their own households” (Lindsay and Miescher 2003: 10).

In the countryside, the big men commanded respect and dispensed rights to land, and were at the top of the social hierarchy, followed in decreasing order of power by other adult men, uninitiated young men, boys, women and girls. In some settings even today, older men control most resources, including those earned by young, unmarried men. In Botswana, in one setting studied, older men had control over land use and cattle, and thus over young men as well. As Townsend concludes: “From the point of a view of a man in rural Botswana, moving through the life course is a process of negotiating a way through a series of overlapping and competing claims for the products of his labour” (1997: 419).

Colonization undermined and otherwise upset some of the powers of the traditional big men, or created new big men backed by colonial powers. From the time of colonization, African men and manhood have often been constructed in relation to European manhood. For example, historically, the term “boy” has meant maleness, but also social immaturity, and inferiority before adult men, particularly white men. The word was used as an insult by European men toward African men and also by African elders to keep the younger generation of men “in their place” (Lindsay and Miescher 2003: 5). A review of the historical literature on African manhood reveals numerous examples of colonizers who questioned or criticized the masculinities of the colonized. In other cases, African men are sometimes co-opted into the role of subjugating other African men, as in case of the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi, and the case of black policemen and black armed forces members in apartheid South Africa.

The concentration of power in the hands of big men and elders, or the generation of older men, continues to be a factor in Africa, leading to ongoing power struggles between older and young men and is related to some insurgencies in the region. In much of Africa, older men—whether as fathers, chiefs or elders—determine when young men can own land, have access to family goods or wealth and marry. This institutionalized stratification of age groups puts junior or younger men at the service of elders, and the control of property and women by older men creates a structural conflict between younger and older generations of men.<sup>6</sup>

One of the tensions between older and younger men is about access to women. In much of Africa, adolescent women often marry older men, sometimes much older than they are, in part because these older men have the resources to pay bride wealth or bride-price. In many countries in Africa, the proportion of married adolescent girls ranges from 20-60 percent while it is no more than 6 percent for young men in many countries (Bankole, et al. 2004). While such data have often been used to highlight the vulnerabilities of young women in relation to their generally older spouses, this data also suggests that older men have greater access to younger women, at the expense of younger men.

This intergenerational tension manifests itself in numerous ways in contemporary Africa. In South Africa, for example, there have been conflicts between rural-based elder men, and wage-earning younger men who migrate to cities for work. Many if not most of these migrant workers send income to their families, thus maintaining a status as men even if not physically present. Migration to cities and modernization have become ways for young men to usurp the power of elders. In some settings, migration to cities for work has become part of a new rite of passage. By moving to the city, young men escape rural power hierarchies, earn money which allows some independence, and access to women.

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<sup>6</sup> Most researchers suggest that for women, there is no analogous intergenerational tension between women, since in many parts of Africa, women marry and begin childbearing at early ages. In parts of Africa where polygamy is practiced, there may be tensions between first and subsequent wives, these tensions are not necessarily generational.

Violence in the form of street gangs, or urban street-based cultures, represents another form of manhood outside the traditional control of elders. The common discourse among traditional rural-based elders is that these urban-based young men are not respectful of traditional customs and hierarchies (Carton 2001). Intergenerational struggles in the KwaZulu Natal region in the late 1980s and early 1990s led to the deaths of 15,000 men (Morrell 1998). At the root of this struggle was the attempt of older African men to hold onto the rights traditionally accorded them and the efforts of a younger generation to break free from patriarchal control.

Indeed, power struggles between older men (sometimes seen as representing corruption and cronyism) and younger men are often related to conflicts across the continent. In the case of Nigeria, young men interviewed in Kaduna, showed anger toward *Al-Hajis* (Islamic men who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and thus had some wealth) and their social equivalents:

*Ali*: In our communities, there is plenty of work for us...they exploit us and want us to do the hard work (like lifting and buildings things). [This was affirmed by all four. They referred to unpaid work, meaning lifting and cleaning and other “dirty” tasks that the community asked them to do.]

*Khaled*: We become men when we think about being on our own. It depends on when you get a lot of money to be free. Then you can do what you want.

*Yusef*: We already take care of ourselves (which makes us men) and have to take care of our junior brothers.

*Muhammed*: Nobody will help us if we do not look for work and money. The government doesn't care about us...and helping us find work. We have to care for ourselves. The elites only look out for their own children.

Another “young” man (young because men up to the age of 40 are considered to be youth in some parts of Nigeria) expressed rage at older men and the challenges he faced in acquiring employment. He was 39 when he finally acquired a civil servant job, a job for which he said he had to pay a bribe, which in turn cost him years of itinerant work to acquire. He said, with anger in his voice:

The leaders [referring to older men] are the one who make the Muslims and Christians go to the streets and loot houses and shops. They are the ones behind it. They should know that as soon as we have the chance, we will kill them all [says this with visible anger on his face].

### **Box 3: The Role of Women in the Making of Men**

While much of the discussion in this paper and on socialization focuses on the role of men in constructing masculine gender norms, it is important to point out that women also play an important role in the socialization of boys and men. Whether as mothers, aunts, sisters, girlfriends, sexual partners or teachers, women come in direct contact with boys and directly and indirectly pass on messages regarding gender norms. Young men's behaviors related to sexuality, for example, are directly influenced by young women's expectations about negotiating sex and condom use. As mothers, women directly influence the behavior of boys, for example, by channeling them into activities they perceive to be appropriate for boys and men and discouraging attitudes or behaviors they perceive to be associated with girls and women.

The key point is that gender roles are constructed and reconstructed—and must be questioned—by both men and women. Girls and women can contribute to traditional, harmful versions of manhood, just as boys and men can contribute to traditional, restrictive versions of womanhood. True and lasting changes in gender norms will only be achieved when it is widely recognized that gender is relational, that it is short-sighted to seek to empower women without engaging men, and that is difficult if not impossible to change what manhood means without also engaging young women.

## Masculinities, Urbanization and Social Change

Manhoods in Africa must also be studied within the context of social change, urbanization and political upheaval, including civil unrest and in some countries, the lack of functioning social institutions. Conflict in the region is related to how versions of manhood are socially constructed, and manhood and masculinities are also affected by conflict and social change. For example, nationalist and independence movements led to a highly respected version of “struggle masculinity” around those men who led nationalist and independence movements. This tendency was accentuated in Zimbabwe and South Africa, but also existed in independence struggles in Tanzania, Mozambique and Angola. In the case of South Africa, there is a significant literature describing this struggle masculinity—a version of manhood shaped by constant confrontation with the police, the apartheid-era military and the white minority. Male leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle were coveted by women and emulated by younger men who were newer to the cause. Yet while black men were subordinate to whites, they still maintained gender privilege over women in the homelands. As Morrell describes: “Where black men resisted class and race oppression, they were also, simultaneously, defending their masculinity. This often involved efforts to re-establish or perpetuate power over women” (Morrell 2002).

Urbanization and the expansion of formal education, and the increased enrollment of girls in public education, are also leading to changes in definitions of gender roles in general, and in manhoods specifically. The net effects of urban migration on manhood are complex to assess, but various accounts would suggest both positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, young men who move to cities lose connection to and perhaps feel little affiliation with their rural roots; they may also be distant from positive forms of social control once exercised by clans and elders. At the same time, cities may expose young men to more gender-equitable versions of manhood, or force them to question stereotypes they may have had about young men from rival groups. As Sommers notes (2003:7): “In Africa and elsewhere, cities force people to mix and become familiar with members of groups whose paths might never cross in rural areas”. Indeed, while migration to cities where different groups interact can create tinderboxes for conflicts, cities are also spaces where rival groups come to see each other as “human,” struggling for the same things—to achieve an education, to find work and to maintain their families.

Formal schooling clearly also has an impact on the social construction of masculinities, and is a space for constructing, creating or reinforcing specific versions of manhood. Young men interviewed in Kaduna, Nigeria, affirmed that young men with higher levels of educational attainment were the least likely to participate in ethnic conflicts. Indeed, in the case of secondary and post-secondary education, most of the public education facilities have both Christian and Muslim youth. While some in-school youth were clearly involved in the rioting, we observed teachers mediating tensions between Christian and Muslim youth and promoting a critical reflection about the riots—factors which no doubt serve to diminish tensions among those young men who have access to this education. Our observations suggest that male teachers in this secondary school modeled a version of a modern, rational and educated man who was able to deconstruct ethnic tensions through critical reflection.<sup>7</sup>

Research with young men and women in secondary schools in various parts of southern and eastern Africa suggests that with regard to gender norms, schools may present both modernizing—more gender-equitable messages—while simultaneously reinforcing rigid, sexist norms. Studies with in-school youth in Ghana, Malawi and Zimbabwe found that men’s and boys’ use of violence against women was accepted and even encouraged, while girls were largely socialized to be tolerant and to passively accept such violence (Leach 2003). Another study in Zimbabwe found that schools reinforced traditional roles,

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<sup>7</sup> At various times during the focus group discussions in this secondary school, a male teacher would interfere when students argued emphatically for one religious group over another. Through questioning—essentially the Socratic method—this teacher diffused or minimized ethnic tensions.

while also promoting a discourse of equal rights of girls to education (Gordon 1998). In the Zimbabwe study, teachers and headmasters were usually men, who, along with male students, reinforced a discourse that women were sexual instigators and temptresses. Girls on the other hand described themselves as victims of sexual violence and harassment. The study found a contradictory discourse by boys and girls—girls needed education and had equal rights to education, in contrast with lingering beliefs about sex-specific professions and fields of study (i.e., women should become nurses or be in caring professions, while men and boys should be in technical professions).

Similarly, research in rural schools in Botswana found that boys and girls espoused gender equality and women's need to work, but at the same time saw equal rights for women as something foreign (Ansell 2002). Another study on gender roles in Botswana found a similar dual discourse: girls and boys acknowledged the sexual harassment that girls face, while at the same time both girls and boys were open to new gender roles as part of development and modernization processes (Commeyras and Montsi 2000).

Other accounts of gender socialization in schools find rigid socialization of boys, along with reinforcement of intergenerational hierarchies, suggesting that boys chafe under rigidly defined versions of manhood, and age-specific hierarchies, while also making girls vulnerable by seeking to live out socially proscribed misogynistic tendencies. An insightful analysis of student unrest in Kenyan schools in 2000-01 finds clear and rigid gender orders contributing to violence against girls, as well as violence against teachers and headmasters. This violence included a highly publicized incident of adolescent males raping female students who did not agree to participate in riots they initiated, thus allegedly causing them to lose face. This same incident included a comment by the male head-teacher at the school that the young men did not want to hurt the girls but “only wanted to rape them” (Kariuki 2004).

Other incidents during the time period studied include the murders of school headmasters by male students, apparently over longstanding grievances and power struggles between male students and the male school headmasters. In another incident in 2001, 68 students burnt to death when classrooms were set on fire by male students angry over exam results and increased pressure on them to pay school fees. In a thoughtful analysis of these events, Kariuki states:

The self-image of the adolescent male student as an oppressed and powerless individual is a devastating blow in the light of the pervasive socialization that the adolescent male student receives from his parents, teachers and other forces of socialization. Having been groomed to react aggressively and violently through socialization, the adolescent male student is caught in a Catch 22 situation where he has to respond aggressively or passively risk being seen as ‘un-masculine.’ Only then do the boys begin to organize their line of attack on the calculated basis of their powerlessness. Student violence in the schools should thus be viewed as the embodiment of a power struggle where one of the stakes is the societal meaning attached to masculinity (2004:7)

Kenya Ministry of Education data from 2000-01 found that 13 percent of secondary schools in the region suffered from unrest and riots, including damage to school property, injuries and deaths. Nonetheless, as Kariuki states, “The gendered politics of boy's actions were...kept out of the general accounts of these acts of student violence” (2004:1).

All these examples highlight the problematic nature of gender socialization and gender hierarchies in the school setting. Too many young men are socialized into versions of manhood that encourage sexual aggression toward girls. A 2000 study in South Africa among 30,000 young people found that one in four young men said they had forced a girl to have sex at least once (Leach 2003). Leach states: “Having a girlfriend, competing over girls and boasting about conquests were clearly essential features of dominant male peer culture” (Leach 2003: 390). Male teachers often set the tone for how boys treat girls; boys and girls interviewed in the same study perceived that many male teachers propositioned female students. Some young men in the schools condemned male teachers—not for sexual harassment and misuse of authority—but for taking the available girls (Leach 2003).

In addition, while the traditional discourse on educational attainment in sub-Saharan Africa has been that boys had greater access and preferential treatment than girls—which on the whole has been the case—the story is not so simple. For example, a recent study of boys in 12 junior secondary schools in Ghana and Botswana finds many low income boys underperforming in ways that resemble other parts of the world, aggressive behavior, lack of attention and challenging authority. Girls in such settings were encouraged to focus on finding a mate; being too smart was seen as decreasing the likelihood of a good marriage. These accounts suggest that the traditional gender discourse about education in Africa that girls are at a disadvantage and boys hold the advantage is, while correct on aggregate levels, incomplete in describing the range of educational realities.

Indeed, literature and interviews with key informants suggest that if aggregate statistics confirm that boys are staying in school longer and generally enrolled at higher rates, there are at least some low-income boys who are not performing well in school and whose access to schools is, like girls, precarious. In some settings in Botswana, young men drop out of school earlier because of social expectations related to work (Townsend 1997). Young men interviewed in Nigeria had to drop out when a father died to take over business; young men in northern Uganda were forced to drop out when the family moved to an IDP camp. On aggregate, girls lack access to education and face unequal treatment in schools in Africa, but these examples suggest the need to examine the data more closely for gender-specific vulnerabilities that both girls and boys face.

As a final note on gender norms and manhood in the education system in Africa, it is worth mentioning positive examples. The public education system in Africa, for all its challenges and shortcomings, including those related to gender, is also a valuable space for instilling a discourse of nation-building, modernization and civic participation. In several focus group discussions and site visits to schools in Nigeria and Uganda, young men showed an impressive sense of optimism and duty, and what might be called a “public servant” or “civic-minded” version of manhood. The following is an example of this discourse from one of the schools visited:

*Godfried:* You must be properly behaved, in your attitude toward younger ones and toward elders and in the community, and in school.

*Ali:* In your community, you must be active in all you do. A young man is entertainment for his community and he is work, what I mean is, he does the work that older ones cannot do. He should be seen as working, always acting positively.

*Andrew:* He may be part of a vigilante group (voluntary groups formed in the community for brigades).

*Edward:* He must be correct and well-behaved. Without young men, society would not progress. We must always be polite in greeting elders. We must carry things for elders and help them. We are the leaders of tomorrow. You must be collectively united. And you should go to school.

*Mohammed:* You are the future expectation of society. Those are young men ages 16-25, that is what I consider to be young men.

*Ajayi:* You are eager to do things, and you mind what you will be in the future, to make your future bright. You are required to help and you do not complain when you are assigned to help.

### **Sexuality and the Social Construction of Manhood in Africa**

For young men in sub-Saharan Africa, as for many young men worldwide, sexual experience is frequently associated with initiation into manhood and achieving a socially recognized manhood. This fosters a perception of sex as performance, specifically a means by which to demonstrate masculine prowess. Young men, in many cultures, Africa included, experience pressure from peers to be sexually active and have multiple partners, in order to be seen as men. These sexual experiences may be viewed among peers as displays of sexual competence or achievement, rather than acts of intimacy (Marsiglio 1988; WHO 2000). Moreover, the status that a sexually active young man might attain among his peers can

sometimes be equally, if not more important, than the intimacy that comes from the sexual relationship itself (Lundgren 1999). This pattern of sexual bravado as a means to peer acceptance often continues into manhood (Barker 2000b). This association between sexual activity, manhood and identity has numerous direct implications for HIV/AIDS prevention. It implies among other things that changing sexual behavior among young men must consider how sexual behavior is linked to the sense of self and desire to achieve a socially recognized version of manhood.

Although young men's sexual experiences are, in general, more self-willed than those of women, it is important to acknowledge the extent to which social pressures govern young men's sexual behaviors and choices. For example, in many settings in the region, if a young man does not have sex with a girl, his reputation may suffer among his male peers (Gorgen et al. 1998; MacPhail and Campbell 2001). Among Zulu young men in South Africa, a significant minority of young men report that they would prefer abstinence before marriage, but profess that they feel obliged to have sex before marriage for fear of social rejection (Varga 2001). And not only from male peers—the Zulu young men report that young women also have a role in reinforcing traditional views about manhood and sexuality.

The notion that men have a right to multiple partners is reinforced in numerous ways in many cultural groups in Africa. Throughout the region, the tradition of polygamy is closely linked to the norm by which masculinity is expressed as sexual conquest and prowess, particularly as represented by fertility (Silberschmidt 2001). These links have important implications for sexual behaviors and choices, particularly in terms of number of partners and use of condoms. While the tradition of polygamy nearly always places men in a role of power over their wives, in its traditional form it restricted extra-marital affairs. However, in some settings, the tradition has now become more informally interpreted as a man's right to have as many sexual partners as he wishes. And while the tradition per se has been dismantled by various social and economic factors and limited by the law in some countries, the normative discourse that a man needs more than one partner continues. For example, a group of young men in Mbale, Uganda, affirmed:

*Interviewer:* Is it okay to have many wives and partners?

*Patrick:* Depends. For example, my father married 10 wives. It depends on income. Some marry because of desire. Others because they have the resources.

*Eddie:* 10 or more (wives) in those days. These days because of poverty and sickness just one (wife), real one, and perhaps an additional one.

*Interviewer:* Why an additional one?

*Eddie:* From time immemorial, the grandparents, they have said you even need two walking sticks. Same with the wives. A person with one wife is like a person with one eye.

This social sanctioning of multiple partners can be linked to expectations that a man should have sexual relations with a number of women by the time he gets married. In many settings, this creates conflicting pressures for young men in terms of personal desire, religious beliefs, traditional culture and family and peer expectations. University students in Kaduna, Nigeria, offered these examples of competing pressures on young men in terms of their sexual activity:

*Ali:* Some families want to know if you are a man. They want to know if you are man enough to handle a woman, in bed I mean. And so they will say, you have all these beautiful women around you, why don't you think about getting married. Can't you handle them?

*Wole:* I have a friend, who has lots of women friends, and there is a lot of pressure from the family for him to get married or to have sex, but he fears God. He is religious (and does not want to have sex before marriage). He begins to doubt whether he can perform in bed.

Although peer and traditional norms frame sexual activity as a defining issue in achieving and maintaining a socially recognized manhood, pre-marital sexual relations are still generally viewed as taboo in many if not most settings in sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, young men face conflicting pressures in

terms of sexual behavior. Many young men interviewed in this and other studies preface discussions about sex by commenting that although the social, and in many instances religious, norms argue for not having sex before marriage, most young people were in fact having sex. University students in Nigeria said:

*Interviewer:* What about sex before marriage? Is that something that happens?

[Laughter]

*Ali:* Well, the issue of religious faith comes in here.

*Alfred:* The African tradition doesn't support sex before marriage...both of our major religions do not support this...however [all laugh] it depends on the individual to obey or disobey...so you have youths involved (and having sex) and so you have covering it up.

*Samuel:* It is not good (sex before marriage) but all of us are involved (having sex), or the majority of us. There may be some good men among us, but the majority of us are (having sex). [More laughter]

As shown by the exploitation of the defilement law (Box 4), young men's sexuality can be significantly shaped by socio-economic and political, as well as cultural, forces. The previous chapter explored the broader connections between masculinity, poverty and unemployment and the paradoxes these create in terms of asserting manhood. While there is limited research on how economic forces influence young men's sexual behaviors, some of the literature suggests that men may seek additional sexual partners when they perceive their sense of manhood to be threatened, as when unemployed (Silberschmidt 2001).

#### **Box 4: The Defilement Law in Uganda**

Male sexuality is overtly stigmatized in some parts of the region. An example is the defilement law in Uganda which defines sex between any adult or young man under 18 with a girl or young woman under 18 as a criminal act. The law was intended to target perpetrators of sexual violence, young and old, but since the law can be enforced independent of the age of the male, it can be exploited to the extent of stigmatizing sexual relations between consenting youth. For example, in the case of two consenting 16-year-olds, the young man would still be culpable of having committed a criminal offense. In this case, the law would negate the sexual agency of the young woman and presume, in all cases, that the young man is a sexual predator. The law is apparently well-known and feared by young men in Uganda. Among young men interviewed in a detention center for juvenile offenders in Mbale, in eastern Uganda, more than half had been arrested for "being caught with a girl" and in Lira more than half of the group personally knew a young man who had been arrested for defilement. The following are the young men's interpretations of being charge with defilement:

*Andrew:* Someone alleged that I loved his daughter. I was not caught in the act with the girl. The parents suspected me and had me arrested.

*Interviewer:* Why do you think they did that?

*Andrew:* People are jealous.

*Interviewer:* Why are they jealous?

*Andrew:* There was a misunderstanding between my family and the girl's family, a conflict between households.

*Richard:* I was arrested because someone claimed I defiled a girl and made her pregnant. I did not make her pregnant, I never had sexual relations with her. Even the girl said this.

*Samuel:* I was arrested because of a girl. I was washing by the river and there was a group of girls there. One of the fathers came and the girls ran away. The man insisted I had slept with his daughter.

*Interviewer:* Why would the father accuse you?

*Samuel:* Because he saw the daughter running from my direction and assumed I had been sleeping with her.

Young men and key informants reported that in times of economic hardships, some parents and guardians may manipulate the defilement law to serve financial ends. More specifically, if a young male is caught with their daughter, parents will demand money in exchange for not pressing charges. To be sure, legal efforts to reduce and eliminate sexual violence are necessary. However, if not adequately enforced and if broadly written so as to make all sexual activity between young people illegal, and construed as violence, laws such as these stigmatize young men. In the case of the defilement law in Uganda, the measure seems to have increased the vulnerability of young men and women by in effect criminalizing manifestations of adolescent sexuality.

For young men and young women, economic disempowerment has important implications for their sexual behavior. For example, an ethnographic study in an Eastern Cape township in South Africa, suggested that the lack of economic and recreational opportunities for youth led to sexual relations being used as a means for gaining respect and social status (Wood and Jewkes 2001). In addition, as highlighted earlier, low-income young men frequently express frustration over the fact that young women are largely attracted to those young and older men with income. Older men, who tend to have more money, also seem to be “watching and showing off their money” to compete with younger men (Mataure et al. 2002). Young women in turn may pursue sexual relations with older men, who generally have jobs and more resources. In other cases, social structures that determine when men receive land and are socially sanctioned to marry, mean that mostly older men are able to marry. This can contribute to the inter-generational tension discussed earlier, in which young men see older men as having access to women (including younger women), jobs, resources and subsequently greater power. The shifting sexual arrangements in which young women become involved in relationships with older men, have implications for HIV risk, both for the young women and for their male peers.

In Africa and worldwide, prevailing norms about sexuality and manhood suggest that young men are expected to be knowledgeable, aggressive, and experienced regarding sexuality and reproductive health issues (Barker 2000b). By adhering to these prescribed gender roles young men, by default, often have a disproportionate share of the power and voice in intimate relationships with women. In spite of these norms, young men frequently often have little accurate information on these matters and fear admitting their ignorance, which may lead them to engage in unsafe behaviors that put both them and their partners at risk (Rivers and Aggleton 1999). In these cases, a tension may develop between the emotional vulnerabilities of young men and behavior that they are expected to adopt in order to be accepted as masculine in society (Holland et al. 1994). While on the surface many young men might display bravado, this may in fact be a compensation for insecurities or doubts about their sexuality. Often, young men have misconceptions about what their partners want, which in the context of poor communication, can have serious implications for HIV risk.

Finally, despite the evidence of strong social and peer pressures to engage in sexual activity, young men do not seek sexual relationships solely to prove their masculinity. Often, they also seek companionship, intimacy and pleasure. However, most of the research has focused on quantitative indicators of young men’s sexual behaviors, including age of sexual debut, number of partners, and frequency of encounters and the links between social norms and pressures and sexual activity (Varga 2001). Less is known about the nature of young men’s sexual relationships, including types of partners, sexual practices, desire and sexual pleasure.

### **Socialization and Young Men’s Views of Women**

While this literature review did not seek to provide a complete review of gender socialization in sub-Saharan Africa, it is worth examining some examples of young men’s views about girls and women, as these views have direct implications for HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence. For example, a common practice among young men in Africa and worldwide is that of categorizing women. Young men distinguish between girls who they view as suitable for longer term relationships, including marriage, and girls with whom they had short-term, sexual relationships. In Nigeria, those young women who had sex before marriage, either to earn income or favors or because they wanted to, were classified as “harlots.” In research previously cited from school settings in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the region, male students and teachers frequently cast girls and women as sexual temptresses, in effect blaming young women for any sexual transgressions that the young men carry out.



In other cases, young men interviewed described women as inferior and morally weak; in some cases young women are seen as property to be given to the husband's family. Some young men criticize young women for using sex to acquire income. One group of young men (Christian and Muslim) interviewed in a secondary school in Kaduna, Nigeria, reflected these views of girls:

*Salim:* A girl's burden is different. In my village (he is from rural area outside Kaduna), I am from a family of four. The burden on the girl is greater. God created women to help. She is expected to do that. Here in Africa we care much for boys than girls. Because boys remember their families, but a girl leaves the family (for her husband's family). If there is any inconvenience for a girl, they become harlots and get what they need [they sell or trade sex for money].

*Edward:* Yes, girls may need material things more than boys and they capitalize on that (selling sex) and get what they need.

*Godfried:* Those girls are harlots. If you are a good girl, you do not lay yourself out for any man. She can learn other things, like how to sew or press hair and continue her education, and give to a man at the proper time (after marriage).

*Nassar:* Girls are definitely different. You (as a boy) learn how to take responsibility. That of a female, she may not have the courage to show responsibility. She may be devoted to her parents but she will leave the family and go her husband. A boy, he will think about this future...but not a girl...

Nonetheless, it is important to note that some young men make efforts to understand the difficulties that young women face and some men are keenly aware of the negative treatment and harassment that women face. While their attitude may not be entirely empathetic, some men believe that the sexual harassment that women face is unjust, as did this group of adult men in Kaduna, Nigeria:

*Franklin:* If a woman wants to get a job, she will have to give sex to get it. To become a civil servant like us, she will have to have sex.

*Habib:* Unless she is not pretty or she comes from a big (powerful) family. [The rest of the men laughed at this.]

*Ayo:* You can't let your daughter go to these places (where we work) because of these things, because you know this will happen.

*Franklin:* Nowadays, on the police force or in the military, a woman will get promoted if she has sex. It's the natural way they work. It's in the blood of the elites to do these things.

University students in Kaduna, Nigeria, similarly reported that their university-educated female peers experienced harassment in the workplace:

*Samuel:* You (as a woman) find yourself working and you may have better experience than a man, but she has to enslave herself. Your promotion depends on getting customers and the next thing you know your boss will give you a big account. This woman I know, that happened to her. Her boss gave her a big expense account and then he asked her out on a date and he wanted to have sex with her. So she went to talk to the director of the firm and told him what had happened and he said: 'What do you think you were hired for?' Ladies are regarded as an exploitable tool.

*Yassif:* At the workplace, they even tell her what to wear...they tell her to wear a miniskirt. She comes to your office and half her body is outside her suit. She is very beautiful and uses that... Her qualifications become her physique.

A few young men go beyond simply observing the unjust treatment and sexual harassment of young women and openly state that such treatment is wrong. For example, when the peers of a young Muslim man in Nigeria were criticizing women and saying that they were untrustworthy, the young man said: "Girls should be given the same opportunities, just as boys have." Other young men, while usually a minority, voice a similar sense of indignation over the unfair treatment of young women. These examples suggest the complexities of engaging young men to reconsider their views about young women—a necessary step for promoting gender equality and safer sex.

## Young Men and Same-Sex Attraction in Africa

In much of Latin America, Europe and North America, homophobia is often part of the socialization of boys. Boys are enjoined to act in certain ways, or risk being stigmatized by being called gay. In this way, homophobia is used as a way to reinforce prevailing norms on gender-appropriate behavior. This appears to be somewhat less an issue in Africa in that being a “real man” is not being not-gay, but more about being not-woman, not-girl and not-child. In some cultural groups in parts of Africa, a culturally recognized concept of same-sex attraction does not exist, is denied or is repressed to the extent that the problem is not so much homophobia as it is denial and lack of familiarity with same-sex attraction. With a few notable exceptions—South Africa being the most obvious one—there is not a strong gay minority that has asserted its identity and created identity politics in ways common to parts of Latin America, North America and Europe. There may in fact be significant same-sex sexual attraction and sexual encounters in Africa that are invisible or hidden precisely for this reason.

There continues to be widespread denial, stigmatization and condemnation of homosexuality throughout Africa (Foreman 1999). It is often referred to as “un-African” and many countries still classify any sexual relations between men as illegal. When sex between males is acknowledged, it is often in the context of “special circumstances” where men might be separated from regular partners and women, such as prisons, military, boarding schools and shelters (Kiama 1999). However, there is some research on examples of same-sex attraction that have been accepted culturally. For example, in the case of migrant mine workers, limited ethnographic research in South Africa has found instances of men who established temporary marriages with other men, including in some cases, cross-dressing by the “female” partner, and the degree to which local communities accepted this arrangement. Louw (2001) suggests that while some community members derided the practice, others accepted it, but in general the couples were not harassed. This example is useful in drawing distinctions between different reactions to same-sex attraction, ranging from lack of awareness to derision to outright rejection and acceptance.

There is limited research on same-sex attraction and activity in much of Africa, with the exception of South Africa, which has followed a distinct trajectory in relation to sexual diversities (Niang et al. 2002; Bujra 2000). In 1990, for example, the country hosted its first gay pride parade and in 1994 the new constitution banned discrimination based on sexual orientation. Indeed, in South Africa, gay organizations are among the most organized and visible men’s organizations (Morrell 2002).

The limited research on same-sex attraction in Africa shows that male-to-male sex is more common than assumed and that often, young men might have sexual experiences with other men, without necessarily considering themselves of a non-heterosexual orientation (Kiama 1999). In this context of fear and social ostracism, there are many men in Africa, as in many parts of the world, who live “constitutionally homosexual and socially heterosexual” (Kiama 1999). For example, a study in Senegal with men who have sex with men showed that the vast majority had also had sex with women (Niang et al. 2002).

In some cases, men who have sex with men and who live a visible lifestyle as gay have suffered violence and social ostracism. In Kenya, nearly 40 percent of men who had sex with men reported having been raped outside their home and 13 percent report having been assaulted by the police (Niang et al. 2002). Furthermore, nearly half of the 250 men interviewed for the study had suffered verbal abuse from their family. In sum, this limited information on same-sex attraction in Africa suggests the need for additional research on the topic, both as an issue of human rights and also in terms of HIV/AIDS vulnerability.

## Young Men and Perceptions of Gender-Based Violence

Violence and coercion, including verbal threats and forced sex, are common features of young people's sexual relationships and in adult intimate relationships in sub-Saharan Africa (MacPhail and Campbell 2001; Wood and Jewkes 2001). For example, in a study in a South Africa township, young men ages 13-25 discussed having tricked young women into sex, lying about the use of condoms and using physical violence against women with too many partners (MacPhail and Campbell 2001). In another study, more than half of the girls reported having experienced physical assault by a boyfriend (Jewkes 1998).

Some young men may view violence against women as a socially sanctioned extension of male authority in the private realm (Wood and Jewkes 2001). In focus group discussions, some young men spoke of violence as a means to make a woman "understand"—essentially as a means of discipline. The most commonly reported motive for using violence against a woman is infidelity, proven or suspected. Another motive was a woman refusing to have sex. Young men in Uganda explained that such a refusal might mean that the woman has another lover and thus be considered a sign of infidelity:

*Interviewer:* What if a woman refuses sex?

*Patrick:* The man says there must be a reason and starts beating her. Maybe she has been with another.

*Samuel:* When the wife goes with other men, it is the gravest sin she can do. She deserves very serious beating.

Many young men interviewed saw sex as contractual; if the woman accepted favors or said she would go out with him, sex was expected, in some ways parallel to traditional, rural African views about bride-wealth. As a young man in Uganda related, it would be acceptable to use violence against a woman, in this case "a slap," at "times when you take her out, have negotiated and then she refuses."

Both the literature and our field research point to a range of perceptions and definitions among young men of what qualifies as violence against women. Among many of the young men interviewed in Nigeria and Uganda, a slap, for the most part, is seen as acceptable, whereas exceeding that could be dangerous, both because it could seriously harm the woman and also because it might bring reprimand (from the elders or the official authorities).

Most young men interviewed recognized that it is not appropriate to use violence against a female partner, yet reported that it occurs often. Others reported an association between anger and drug use, particularly alcohol. At the same time, many young men seemed to hold women accountable for provoking violence—whether due to infidelity or nagging. Silberschmidt (2001), writing about men in East Africa, argues that "successful masculinity" among one's peers requires having many sexual partners, the attractiveness of those partners and the ability to control those partners. Young men, particularly low income young men, are constantly at risk of losing face because older men and men with money are more likely to attract partners. Thus, she argues, that to compensate for this lack of power, some men may use other strategies to achieve and secure their authority over women, including aggressiveness and violence.

In some settings, the use of violence to discipline women is reinforced by local traditions such as bride-price. In research conducted by Law and Advocacy for Women in Uganda, for example, the majority of the focus groups identified bride-price as a direct cause of domestic violence (Human Rights Watch 2003). Presumably this is mainly due to the social norms of male "ownership" of women and the female duty which it perpetuates. In another Uganda study, one in four men and women (from a 3,106 sample) believe that a woman cannot refuse sex, even if she knows her partner has HIV/AIDS (Blanc et al. 1996).

The literature also reports the internalization of violence against women as a norm among both young men and young women. Some studies show that boys and girls might interpret the use of violence due to infidelity as reflecting the level of emotional investment; that is, when a man uses violence against a

woman, it shows that he is emotionally invested in the relationship or cares for her. In focus groups in Uganda, several young men mentioned how women will think a man does not love her if he does not hit her. Wood and Jewkes (1998) report that young women interviewed in townships in South Africa spoke of physical assaults as a male strategy for “getting you to love him.” Furthermore, they report that many young women did not recognize forced sex with their partners as rape.

Other forms of violence against women have been the subject of recent research in Africa, including sexual coercion and sexual harassment. In a recent South African survey of nearly 12,000 youth, 98 percent of young men reported having really wanted their first sexual experience versus only 71 percent of young women (Pettifor et al. 2004). In another South African study, female participants indicated that the majority of men engage in relationships to satisfy their own sexual needs and that women perceived themselves as powerless to define relationships on other terms (MacPhail and Campbell 2001).

The previously cited examples of sexual violence and harassment in schools suggest how social norms at the community level, and within schools, can perpetuate norms that encourage violence against women. We also saw examples of sexual violence and harassment in the workplace reported by university students in Nigeria. It is important to point out that most of these behaviors continue largely unquestioned and unpunished, thus conveying the notion to young men and women that such behavior is acceptable and normal.

As pointed out in previous examples, it is clear that not all young men use violence against women. Just as there are social norms that encourage such violence, there are examples of social norms and socialization forces—traditional clan structures, extended families, and rites of passage—that may serve to reduce violence against women. Nonetheless, these norms supporting the acceptability of men’s violence against women are internalized and reproduced by both young men and women and can have grave implications where couples are not able to communicate effectively with each other (Wood and Jewkes 1998).<sup>8</sup>

It is important to highlight that while girls are more likely than boys to be victims of sexual abuse or sexual coercion, many boys are also victims. Apart from research on young men’s experiences of sexual abuse and rape in specific contexts, including living on the streets (Swart-Kruger and Richter 1997) and in prison (Gear 2001), there is still very little research on the extent and nature of young men’s victimization by sexual violence. In Zimbabwe, 30 percent of 549 secondary study students in one survey reported that they had been sexually abused; half were boys being abused by women (FOCUS 1998). Research in other settings confirms that having been a victim of sexual abuse, or of violence, increases the chance that boys will be violent toward their partners. While these examples are limited, it is important to consider ways in which young men are made vulnerable by sexual violence, whether in schools, communities or specific settings such as the street or prison.

### **Some Final Reflections about the Socialization of Boys and Men in Africa**

Interviews with young men and a preponderance of literature suggest that change is underway in terms of gender norms, and manhoods, in Africa. For example, university students in Kaduna, Nigeria said:

*Interviewer:* What are things like for women these days?

*Alan:* Things are changing...women are changing. Women have their own role but because of economic problems...women initially used to take care of the home and the children. But now with the economic problems, women are supposed to work. That is forcing a lot of women to work.

*Abdul:* She may become a widow with children...and she may have no choice but to work.

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<sup>8</sup> These findings related to gender-based violence also have implications for HIV/AIDS; numerous studies affirm that sexual violence increases HIV risk. Research in South Africa found that actual violence (sexual or physical) and also feeling unable to discuss sexual matters with a male partner were related to higher sexual risk (Wood and Jewkes 1998; Dunkle 2004).

*Ayo:* Society determines the role for women. Everybody is becoming educated these days. Now even women are competing. We are all competing for work, and women are expected to contribute to the family.

Some researchers and journalists have even begun to echo the recent discussions in Europe and North America on a crisis in masculinity. Trends in developed regions—women’s access to the labor market, men’s reactions to women’s new roles, and more educated women—are showing up in some parts of Africa. In South Africa, for example, a handful of anti-feminist men’s groups have emerged, similar to those in North America and Europe (Morrell 2002). At the same time, a few small men’s groups are working to engage men in reducing violence against women. Both types of organizations are indicators of men’s reactions, sometimes positive, sometimes negative, to changes in gender roles.

However, it is important to highlight that men and masculinities are constantly in crisis and always changing. While gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS and conflict in the region may be calling more attention to the “trouble with boys,” it is important to emphasize that masculinity is always an issue. As Morrell (1998:614) states: “It is understandable that we look at masculinity when violence occurs, but it is important to understand that masculinity is at play all the time. It may be particularly evident in action, but it has social force within the workings of non-violent organizations and institutions too.”

As a final example about changes in gender norms, extensive ethnographic research with young people in urban Kenya has found significant fluidity in terms of gender norms; both unmarried young men and young women, for example, frequently contribute to household tasks. Young people there receive messages about gender from North American and European television, generally promoting the empowerment of young women, while also receiving traditional messages reinforcing gender hierarchies (Frederiksen 2000). The point is that gender roles are fluid and that masculinities are in flux; and it is precisely this environment of change that can be used to promote greater gender equality.

### III. YOUNG MEN, VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

#### Introduction

As of 2002, approximately half of Africa’s countries and about one in three persons in the region were affected either directly or indirectly by conflict. If we add other forms of violence and criminal activity, the number of affected persons increases even more. While mostly discussed in passing, there are direct links between violence and conflict with the way that manhoods or masculinities are constructed. While some of the armed insurgencies have clear ideological causes, many are directly related to an attempt by young men to acquire power, or to question the power of specific groups of older men, and to live up to a specific version of manhood.

In discussing how culturally salient versions of manhood in Africa are related to or contribute to violence, we must also discuss voices of dissent and restraint. For example, while rites of passage and secret societies are frequently criticized for promoting warrior skills, much of the traditional socialization also promoted—and in some cases still promotes—restraint from violence. Similarly, there is tremendous diversity in the region in terms of whether violence—by young men against women or against other men—is socially sanctioned or is the object of social control. For example, accounts of young men’s socialization in South Africa suggest a clear difference between play fighting or fighting within ritual events, and fighting that is out of control or carried out with the intention of causing harm. Traditional rites of passage often emphasize the former and condemn the latter. In the home, some violence of men against women is often tolerated, but severe, one-sided violence, may be reprimanded. There is also social support in some settings in the region for corporal punishment, which can include men “punishing”

their wives, and the sanctioned use of physical violence against boys in school. These examples highlight the plurality of men and masculinities and the complexity of linking manhood to violence.

In addition, in discussing conflict and violence in the region, it is important to keep in mind that each conflict and violence scenario has its own specificities, and demands a level of detailed analysis beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>9</sup> What is clear is that manhood and masculinities are at play in all these conflicts. In many liberation struggles, even some based on clear ideologies, those organizing or leading insurgencies have played on generational issues, emphasizing young men's grievances toward adults and sometimes reinforcing the intergenerational divide (Stavros et al. 2000).

### **Young Men and the Dynamics of Armed Conflicts**

That young men have been combatants in armed conflicts in the region is ubiquitous, and is a longstanding historical tradition in some parts of Africa. Various documents estimate that there are as many as 300,000 child soldiers worldwide, the majority of these in Africa, and the majority boys (Verhey 2001). The numerous reports on child soldiers, when they mention gender, frequently report on the smaller percentage of combatants who are girls, or comment on sexual violence used against girls. These issues need urgent attention to be sure. But we also see in many accounts of gender in conflict settings that the fact that the vast majority of child soldiers are boys is seen as so normal or commonplace that it needs no comment at all.

In terms of young men on the front lines, the most visible and reported conflicts in the region have been those in Liberia, Sierra Leone and more recently Democratic Republic of Congo. At the most basic level, boys involved in these most brutal of armed insurgencies become "big men" by being in control of a given setting and able to exert violence on those around them. In addition to immediate survival, they achieve and wield power. Young men who become combatants in these settings are often bombarded—both before becoming combatants and after—with violent images of manhood, whether in the form of *Rambo* films, gangsta rap, or the idolization of big men such as Charles Taylor. Some observers of young male combatants in West and Central Africa suggest that the violence feels like a performance of young men acting out a violent version of manhood, seeking to instill fear and to make their presence known before a terrified audience. They are acting out a socially recognized role of manhood taken to its extreme. As Ellis (2003:110) states: "In many of these wars (in West Africa), both local and foreign observers have detected an element of youth out of control, adolescents and even children who, in societies with strong gerontocratic traditions, seize power by force."

Young men also find camaraderie with male peers in armed insurgency groups, and in some cases may find male role models or surrogate fathers, and substitute families. In countries where between 10 to 25 percent of adult males have HIV and where men frequently have to migrate for work, the leaders of insurgency movements sometimes come to be emulated by young men and boys who lack male role models and guidance.

Another common element in young men's participation in conflict is the issue of rites of passage or indoctrination. Nearly all armed movements and wars involve some kind of initiation rituals, as does the recruitment and training of soldiers in conventional armies. In some settings, such as northern Uganda, Liberia, Sierra Leone and DRC, this initiation is mostly traumatic, involving the forced use of violence

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<sup>9</sup> For example, Cold War tensions were involved in conflicts in Angola and Mozambique. Access to resources—oil or diamonds—have been involved in some conflicts in the region, including in the Delta region in Nigeria and to some extent in Sudan and Sierra Leone. Ethnic tensions, linked with colonial legacies, are involved in other cases, as in Burundi and Rwanda. Ethnic factors are also involved in the case of the LRA in northern Uganda. In other cases armed violence has emerged as a resistance to one-party states or authoritarian regimes. Some conflicts have emerged as a result of perceived unequal distribution of resources for one ethnic group over another. More than one of these factors has been involved in most conflicts.

against family members, and threats of murder for non-compliance. Many armed insurgencies in the region have drawn on or tapped into the traditional socialization of boys and young men as warriors, using elements of these traditional rites in their own, brutal indoctrination (Stavros et al. 2000). In some cases, insurgencies or leaders of armed movements have made deliberate links to historically relevant initiation rituals and rites of passage, as in case of some groups among the Zulu in South Africa and Charles Taylor in Liberia. In other cases, the indoctrination of young men into insurgency movements has included political education.

For some young men, the armed insurgencies represent a rational choice. For example, a recent study in Liberia suggests that intergenerational conflict is directly related to young men's involvement in the conflict there. Since big men have access to younger women, young men sometimes have extramarital affairs with the wives of these big men. The punishment for these affairs is a fine. Since these young men do not have income to pay the fines, they often end up working for the big men in a form of indentured labor. The frustration produced by such a system, plus a general sense of social marginalization, no doubt contribute to young men's willingness to join rebel groups (Richards et al. 2005). Furthermore, the lack of gainful employment and land "to dig"—which as seen previously is the major prerequisite for achieving a socially recognized manhood—is also linked to young men's participation in armed conflicts. Clearly lack of vocational and educational opportunities is related to young men becoming part of armed forces, or rebel groups (Large 1997).

Other accounts of young men's participation in conflict find that some young men may be coerced while others participate voluntarily in the same conflict. For example, the thoughtful analysis by Schafer (2001) on young men involved with RENAMO in Mozambique questions the view that all young men who participated were coerced and psychologically brutalized to become crazed killers. She finds different trends in different parts of the country, and during different moments of the insurgency. She concludes that some young men were co-opted or recruited rather than coerced in dehumanizing ways; while most young men said their recruitment was involuntary, they did not describe being brutalized. Some young men saw participating in the insurgency as a viable economic activity in the face of rural poverty.

Historically, African armed insurgency movements with clear ideologies, as in the case of Tanzania and South Africa, generally have promoted some degree of restraint in the use of violence, including collective decision-making about the use of violence, social control over members who seek to use excessive violence and often used violence after exhausting non-violent means. Some authors suggest that the worst violence happens in the vacuum of a political cause; that is, where violence becomes an end in itself, providing young men with power, a supply of sexual partners and income. Clearly in some settings, young soldiers are led by other young soldiers. The RUF in Sierra Leone is an example of a movement without an ideology (or a weak one) that used extreme violence, including dismemberment, violence against women and children, terrorizing the countryside and forced induction.

Many of the newer armed movements—LRA, RUF, and those in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire—mostly lack a clear ideology and often revolve around a cult of one individual or a handful of leaders, seeking to acquire power at all costs. These newer groups have not been able to win over the countryside—in fact, they have alienated the countryside they were to liberate—and thus turned to forced recruitment of those most vulnerable to use violence, namely young, unemployed, low educated men (Abdullah 1998). In some cases, the same insurgency may have different meanings for different young men. For more educated young men, the rebellion often has political undertones. For less educated young men, it is mostly about following a big man who distributes weapons and war booty, and offers status by participating in violence and terrorizing.

In thinking about these initiation processes and factors that contribute to young men's participation in some armed conflicts, particularly those that lack political ideologies and have used brutal forms of

violence, it is important to affirm that this violence is produced. It is not a natural state of the behavior of boys and young men, nor is it biologically programmed.<sup>10</sup> This violent behavior is reinforced by social structures at the community level, and sometimes at the family level. In sum, this is learned violence—learned by modeling, reinforcement, shame, overt threats and coercion. Some insurgency groups have learned through experience and their own brutalization, to efficiently manipulate the social environment to create this violence. Those young men originally coerced to become part of rebel groups sometimes become the next generation of leaders who coerce other boys to join. In this way it is difficult to distinguish what begins as coerced behavior and what is subsequently voluntary. The following quote of a young man who was abducted by the LRA in northern Uganda is all too common:

It was on May 6, 2003, at night. The rebels (LRA) came and got us at home. It was me and my parents and brothers (who were there). They picked up a *panga* (machete) and gave it to me to kill my parents. We were five (in the house) including my two brothers. I refused to kill my parents. And when they saw that, they took the *panga* from my hand and cut my father. And when they cut his head he died instantly. Then they brought my mother...they kept beating her with a stick...she was crying. Then they cut her neck (and killed her) while I was watching. My two brothers who were there too were taken inside a grass hut and burned. They burned all the houses (on our compound) to the ground. Even my documents were inside (and were burned).

This young man was able to escape from the LRA during the confusion created when his group was caught in the crossfire with the Ugandan army. What we see in his account, and the thousands of others like it, is a clear intention of making young men, and often young boys, feel powerless in gender-specific ways. Insurgency groups in northern Uganda, Liberia and Sierra Leone often choose the youngest sons and younger boys, who are even more likely to feel a sense of powerlessness and to be the most susceptible, malleable and traumatized by these experiences. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, drugs are often added to the indoctrination, as a way to lose control and to carry out acts of brutality. It is no coincidence that in the socialization of boys and men around the world, drugs and alcohol often form part of rites of passage and of first sexual encounters. Young men often describe drugs and alcohol as giving them the courage to do the things required of them to be seen as men.

Indoctrination may include other forms of brutality and violence. Former abductees and former combatants interviewed in Uganda talked of forced cannibalism and being forced to rape young women—again, part of a deliberately traumatizing and shame-creating indoctrination. Reflecting on these acts of trauma and brutality, it is important to keep in mind that if young men and boys could so easily be induced to kill and use violence, or were willing to use violence of their own volition, and if violence were an inherent part of young men's temperament, this kind of indoctrination would not be necessary.

While most research has focused on young men as combatants in insurgency or rebel groups, young men have also been widely employed in rural militias—local groups armed by the military to serve as the “front-line” against insurgency groups. In Rwanda and Burundi, large numbers of young men have been recruited into such militias since the early 1990s. Congolese young men are widely engaged in militias that are fighting against the perceived Rwandan occupation of their territory. In Uganda such militias have been formed to fight against the LRA. Among young men interviewed in IDP camps in Uganda, many young men reported facing pressure to join these militias; some continue in the militias, while others resisted and some participated and then were able to leave.

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<sup>10</sup> Recent research on violence and delinquency in the U.S. and Western Europe has sought to identify early childhood predictors of violent behavior, including biologically-based tendencies, such as temperament, aggressiveness, and hyperactivity. Overall, these predictors of violent behavior for young men are relatively weak in their explanatory power. Many authors have concluded that while there may be some evidence for the early propensity of aggression in boys, the majority of violent behavior is explained by social factors during adolescence and childhood. Boys are not born violent—they learn to be violent, mainly by seeing other boys and men use violence, by witnessing violence, by being victims of violence in the home, at school, in their neighborhoods and by seeing violence as an effective means to acquire income, power, respect and attract women (Sampson and Laub 1993; Barker 2005).



Similarly, large numbers of young men are recruited into conventional armies in the region, through coercion or voluntarily. These forms of participation by young men as combatants have received much less attention than young men participating in insurgency groups. While the degree of trauma and coercion involved in young men's participation in militias and conventional armies may be far less than that found in some insurgency groups in the region, these young men may require as much assistance to reintegrate into civilian life as those involved in insurgency groups.

There has been significant discussion of the means that armed groups use to recruit and coerce young men; nearly absent is any reflection about those indigenous sources of strength which allow or keep young men out of conflict. Accounts from Mozambique found that many adult and young men tried to stay out of the conflict and that some went to great lengths to try protect their families from such violence (Schafer 2001). There is an interesting example from the town of Bo in Sierra Leone, where youth-serving organizations were able to keep young men outside RUF activity, by recruiting young men into civil defense units through local football clubs (Peters, Richards and Vlassenroot 2003). Whether because of personal convictions, the ability of their families to help them escape, fear, community mobilization, or some combination, some boys and young men are able to stay out of armed groups. These accounts may be particularly useful in understanding and building on social capital and protective factors that may prevent young men's future involvement in armed conflicts.

### **Young Men Affected by Conflict, in Post-Conflict Settings, and Violence**

Young men are affected by and react in gender-specific ways to conflict. One of the most telling patterns is young men's propensity to migrate. In virtually all conflict and post-conflict settings, men, and young men in particular, are more likely to migrate than are women and older men (Cockburn 1999). Young men are also more likely to migrate to cities as a reaction to conflict, increasing the number of children and youth on the streets (again mostly a male phenomenon), and leaving them vulnerable to being recruited into new forms of violence. While this may appear on one level to be a protective factor for young men, who have the mobility to leave refugee camps and seek better livelihoods, it also means that young men are separated from their communities and families (Stavros et al. 2000). Sommers (2001b) discussing the status of young men refugees from Burundi who settled in Tanzania, found that young men who migrate from another country often become outcasts or are seen as second-class citizens in their newly adopted countries; they are sometimes acutely aware of this status and the stigma they face.

For young men involved as combatants (in insurgency groups, conventional armed forces or militias) one of the biggest challenges is returning to civilian life. Indeed, young men often face a major challenge in returning to their second-class status, and of being powerless and marginalized again due to prevailing intergenerational power differentials. Having wielded power, some young men are reluctant to return to settings where they are subordinate to adults (Peters, Richards and Vlassenroot, 2003). Similar concerns have been voiced by young men in South Africa, who participated on the "front lines" with the ANC, and now perceive themselves to be relegated to second-class status (CSV 1998).

There is a considerable research on helping child combatants reintegrate to civilian life and the specific traumas they face. In interviews of young men in northern Uganda, reported traumas include having to cope with the consequences of being forced to rape girls, of being put on the front line as a buffer when Ugandan military approached, of being forced to kill a family member and of being forced to practice cannibalism. Some former abductees live in constant fear of re-abduction; one young man we interviewed had in fact been abducted, escaped and then was abducted again. Others fear the military; in the case of northern Uganda, boys of military age have sometimes been killed by the military who suspect them of being members of LRA, even when they are not.

Other challenges include lingering fears and prejudices by communities and families, who believe that as former combatants they may use violence again at any time. Given the stop-start process of many conflict settings, this is a reasonable fear. Among former combatants in northern Uganda, some reported that their families treated them as outcasts, and were scared of them when they returned. “When I returned [from being abducted by the LRA] my in-laws took away my wife and child. They were afraid I might kill her. Now I stay with my mother.” Others lost the chance to pay bride-price and marry, as this young man related:

I am with a woman but I have not yet married her. While I was gone (abducted by the LRA) my family gave all the cows to my brothers to marry because they did not think I would come back. A person like me has to start saving money. It takes time and it is not easy to accumulate enough.

Frustration is high for those young men in refugee camps, who are either ex-combatants, abductees or were displaced by violence. Young men we interviewed in IDP camps in northern Uganda confirmed that young men report a sense of idleness and little hope for the future, and may turn to alcohol and other substances. Many young men in camps report that they cannot get married and in the process achieve a socially recognized manhood. Said one young man living in an IDP camp in northern Uganda: “In the past, we would have the opportunity to dig [farm a small plot of land] and produce things and get married. Now we are displaced and it is very different [meaning they do not have land to dig on].” Forced settlement in camps weakens men’s ties to their land, leading to fears that others will take their land and that they will have nowhere to return.

Other authors found similar conditions in camps among Burundian refugees in Tanzania, where young men were described as seeking to “recuperate the masculinity that they perceive to have lost in the camp” (Turner 1999:1). Young men in camps frequently complain that women do not respect them; some men sense that camp administrators have become the new big men. In other cases, however, some young men seem to take advantage of post-conflict settings to question and usurp the authority of older men. Other authors have also reported on a loss of manhood suffered by men in conflict areas. Dolan (2003) writing on men in conflict-affected areas in northern Uganda reports:

Non-combatant men’s ability to achieve some of the key elements in the model of masculinity into which they have been socialized is severely reduced. Education and enterprise can no longer bring recognition or a sense of achievement. Men are unable to protect their families or property from rebels of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) or from soldiers who rape and steal. Humiliation, resentment, oppression and frustration lead to violence—sometimes directed against the self (Dolan 2003).

One manifestation of a sense of “demasculation” in refugee camps is sexual violence. Somali young men refugees interviewed in camps in Kenya said that because they could not get married, they would use sexual violence against women. This is a serious issue in cultural groups in which premarital sexual activity is highly sanctioned and marriage is delayed because young men cannot achieve the conditions for marriage in refugee camps (Sommers 2001a).

There has been a wide range of program responses for former combatants, although many of these are exclusively for ex-combatants; those youth—male and female—who were affected by violence but not directly involved as combatants are sometimes excluded. Indeed, several authors have suggested that in many conflict settings the differences between those who were combatants and those who were victims often break down in terms of their needs and realities.

Programs that assist ex-combatants and youth affected by the violence often face tremendous challenges. In Liberia, program reviews and evaluations have highlighted the lack of jobs and educational opportunities outside their programs. Other programs have created dependency while others are too short-term, raising expectations and then leaving young men frustrated when programs end.

In terms of vocational training for conflict-affected youth, there are often mismatches between market demands and the realities of income and employment possibilities in urban and rural communities. Program reviews have found examples of young men affected by violence being trained as auto mechanics, only to return to villages where there may be only two or three cars. In other cases, young men may value academic skills more highly while immediate needs suggest they need vocational skills (Peters, Richards and Vlassenroot 2003). In some educational support programs, the young men consider themselves too old to return to school. Most programs assisting conflict-affected youth in returning to school have been short-term, providing scholarships or waivers for only a year or less. It is also clear that simply reinserting young men in school does not resolve deficits in education systems.

Furthermore, few of these programs seem to have incorporated a discussion of how gender comes into play—that is, how efforts to engage young men must also consider their desire to achieve a socially recognized version of manhood, and intergenerational tensions between groups of men. To be sure, the gender-specific needs of both young women and young men have not been incorporated into most reintegration programs, but there has been more discussion about the gender-specific needs of girls and young women.

Another lingering question, seldom addressed in reintegration programs, is to what extent former combatants are liable or should be held responsible for their actions. Peace education programs have sometimes discussed this issue, but for the most part it has not been adequately addressed. Other challenges in reintegration programs include those of involving the community, or identifying, recruiting and training qualified staff, particularly in settings where conflict itself has led to migration and disrupted community life on a massive scale.

Whether re-integration and support programs for former combatants are effective depends on numerous factors, including for example, whether the young man was forced to carry out violence against his own family or community. Reintegration programs that tap into indigenous or traditional rituals, such as cleansing ceremonies, are reported to be useful. And, while most of the examples here suggest challenges, there have been useful experiences of accelerated educational programs for young men who have missed several years of schooling (Peters, Richards and Vlassenroot 2003).

### **Young Men, Gang Involvement, Ethnic Unrest, Vigilante Groups and Criminal Activity**

Other forms of violence are prevalent in Africa, and also clearly linked to masculinities. As Peters, Richards and Vlassenroot (2003) point out, the annual homicide rate in South Africa is nearly double the estimated death rate from conflict in Sierra Leone. Various studies confirm gang activity, predominantly involving young men, in urban areas in Africa, including South Africa, Nigeria and Mozambique. In the Western Cape Region of South Africa, 90,000 young people are reported to be members of gangs (Barker 2000b). Nonetheless, there is more research on conflict than criminal activity and a relative dearth of accurate data on criminal activity and delinquency in most of sub-Saharan Africa, with the exception of South Africa (Shaw and Tschiwula, 2002).<sup>11</sup>

South Africa is said to have one of the highest homicide rates in the world (as of 2004), and one of the highest rates of sexual violence in the world, with an estimated 52,733 women raped a year (South Africa Police Service 2004). Every year in South Africa, 11,000 persons die of gun-inflected wounds. Homicide is currently the leading cause of death for young men ages 15-21. Worldwide 80 percent of homicide victims are male; in South Africa the figure is 88 percent. Furthermore, in 2002, more than

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<sup>11</sup> There is growing research, program development and policy attention to violence and delinquency in South Africa, and considerable analysis of how this violence is linked to culturally salient versions of manhood.

45,000 young people under 26 were in South African prisons, representing 36 percent of sentenced prisoners in South Africa. Among those on trial, there were 27,000 young people, the vast majority young men, accounting for 53 percent of the population of those awaiting trial (Palmary and Moat 2002).

Young men were the leaders of South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle, their families supporting them to live in exile and train as combatants. These young men once had status and were associated with a heroic version of masculinity linked to Nelson Mandela, Stephen Biko and other ANC and anti-apartheid leaders. Similarly, Buthelezi declared Inthaka to be a movement based on masculine values, enjoining African men to participate in the struggle against apartheid in the name of the Zulu culture that had historically resisted white rule in South Africa.

The socialization of young men in these movements made specific references to weapons and the use of weapons to achieve freedom. In the case of the ANC, the AK-47 became associated with the liberation movement, and was a visible symbol for young men (Cock 2001). Zulu nationalist images project a man carrying a spear and other traditional weapons and in some traditional Zulu areas, rites of passage for young men include learning how to be a stick fighter. Both in low income urban areas (townships) and in rural areas in South Africa, wielding a gun is a sign of status, male affluence and power. Says Cock (2001): "The gun is a convenient peg on which to hang traditional notions of masculine power." In many parts of South Africa, for much of the 1980s, 1990s and lingering effects today, both white and black young men were often socialized into a militaristic version of manhood through the formation of a brotherhood of combatants, whether for or against apartheid.

South Africa's townships currently experience much of this violence. With the end of apartheid and the realization that long-standing economic inequalities would not be remedied in the short term, some authors suggest that more young men are turning to crime and violence, some of this in the context of gang activities. As Xaba states (2001:107), many of these accounts discuss the: "...heroes of yesteryear who have become the villains and felons of today. This has been seen by some researchers as a form of compensatory manhood marked by sexual violence—that is men seeking to regain a sense of manhood through criminal activity and violence against women. Numerous accounts affirm that township life in South Africa is based in part on the "toughness" of men, a toughness that can either be channeled into sports, or into criminal activity (Morrell 2001).

Interviews and analyses of young men involved in criminal activities in South Africa find that an array of factors are associated with their participation in violence, including family conflict and violence, the inability of families to provide social control and constructive guidance, and socialization into violent versions of manhood associated with rebellion and attaining quick financial rewards. As a study by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (1998) states:

...the money made from crime does not only address their need arising from poverty in the home. It supports a particular lifestyle that is hedonistic, glamorous and revered. It is a lifestyle that allows the *amagents* (delinquent young men) to literally and figuratively transcend the confines of the world—the here and now... It turns these youngsters into objects of attraction, rather than repulsion in their own communities (1998: 10).

While the South African government has offered basic education and life skills specifically for the young men involved in the struggle, the challenges to engaging young men in these settings are formidable:

For the few 'exiles' and 'comrades' living lives of crime, it is no secret that the knife-edge life of violent crime is eminently more remunerative than the palliatives offered by the Adult Basic Education and Life Skills Programmes in which former 'comrades' and 'exiles' are expected to enroll. It is almost impossible to encourage anyone to exchange a life, however dangerous it may be, in which there is a possibility of driving a C220 Mercedes Benz for a life in which he will be carpenter, electrician or painter or, more likely, unemployed (Xaba 2001: 119).

In the case of South Africa, as in accounts of delinquency from Western Europe and the Americas, research suggests that delinquent acts in townships usually start small, gradually intensify and are nearly always carried out by groups of young men.<sup>12</sup> Gangs are described as providing a sense of belonging, when few other social institutions—family, community, school—provide this. Furthermore, in the specific context of South Africa, prison has lost its stigma as many of the heroes of the anti-apartheid movement spent time in prison in what was seen as a new rite of passage for young men (Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation 1998). Other accounts of gangs suggest that they reinforce traditional gender scripts or values in which women are seen as property, and sexual violence (in the form of gang rape) may be promoted as a form of initiation into the group (Vetten 2000).

In addition to gang violence, there are also examples of young men involved in other forms of organized violence that are neither gangs per se, nor armed insurgencies. These include vigilante groups, such as those in Nigeria. They also include groups of young men hired by white farmers and black businessmen in South Africa in the 1990s to hunt criminals and carry out summary executions. In the case of Nigeria, the violence against international oil companies in the Delta region has also been mostly perpetrated by young men. There have been several thoughtful analyses of violence in the Delta region, and the violence against state and multinational oil companies from a political perspective. This violence emerged largely from perceptions that the communities where oil was extracted did not benefit and that revenues were squandered by corrupt regimes. Political organization led to large-scale protests, and civil disobedience. Many of the groups perceived the failure of non-violent action, which along with repressive action by the police, was key to the young men turning to violent action. As one researcher states: “Each military regime deployed armed soldiers, as well as the notorious mobile police paramilitary branch, popularly called ‘Kill-and-go’, to quell community disturbances.”(Ukeje 2001:354).

The subsequent violence against oil companies was also at least partly linked to ethnic conflicts—about perceptions of which ethnic group was more or less favored by oil companies and local government. The young men involved included both more educated and highly politicized youth, along with less educated youth, who tend to lead the militant wings of the movements, while their more educated counterparts lead the political arms of the movements.

This example shows how young men’s involvement in armed conflicts interacts with easy access to arms, historical ethnic rivalries, brutal police response and lack of access to employment. It also demonstrates how politically motivated violence can sometimes disintegrate into general mayhem. As too often happens, once groups of young men are armed and encouraged to use weapons, what might have started as a politically focused violence can turn into general hooliganism and harassment. Militant groups that once mostly or only attacked oil company staff and their installations now create havoc in some major cities in the region. What once had a political basis sometimes devolves into violence as a means to acquiring and maintaining power for its own sake.

Another example of violence gone out of control is the case of vigilante groups in Nigeria, one of the most famous being the Bakassi Boys, which were initially started as self-defense groups to protect market sellers from robbery; they are now subsidized by the government as an explicit public security project. The Bakassi Boys currently wield significant extrajudicial power in parts of Nigeria and carry out summary executions at the whim of local politicians. They have, apparently, reduced crime in some cities, but they also kill human rights activists or whomever dares to speak out against them (Human Rights Watch/CLEEN 2002).

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<sup>12</sup> One study in South Africa suggests that, among other factors, the greater involvement of young women in pro-social groups in South Africa (the church being the prominent one) serves as protective factor for keeping girls out of gangs (Vetten, 2000).

### **Box 5: Ethnic Tensions and Young Men in Nigeria**

We interviewed young men in the middle belt city of Kaduna, site of recent clashes between Christian and Muslim youth. Major riots took place in Kaduna in 1987 and again in 1999 around the time that a Miss Universe contest was to be held in Nigeria. Tensions continue to be high even after the 1999 event, particularly as Muslim leaders have sought to introduce Sharia law for Muslims living in parts of northern and central Nigeria. Many young men and some staff at youth organizations say they believe that riots of the magnitude of the 1999 clashes (they left as many as 2,000 dead) would be unlikely to happen again. However, on the very day they said this, riots erupted when Christian youths attacked a Mosque and Muslim youths reacted by attacking and damaging some churches.

From program staff and media reports (and interviews with young men) it is clear that the ethnic violence in Nigeria primarily involves young men, and that being idle, out-of-work and out-of-school are among the main reasons they become involved in this violence. The following were the responses of a group of adult men, all Muslim and lower income, regarding the violence:

*Interviewer:* Why do youth get involved in this violence?

*Aamil:* Most of the young men involved were drop-outs. The elites, they direct them to be violent too.

*Mahbub:* Since 1981 I have been involved in every riot there has been. If the violence came, I would be involved. I had no work. I had nothing to do. Why should I not get involved? Three months ago, I became employed as a civil servant. Now that I am getting my daily bread, why should I get involved (in such violence)? Lots of young men do not have this (stable work).

*Daniel:* Some of our leaders used this violence to achieve their aims. [Like what?] To make their candidates stronger (politicians). They know that we don't have jobs (and that we'll get involved in this violence).

A group of younger Muslim men also said similar things:

*Interviewer:* Why are young men getting involved in these riots?

*Aamil:* For all these problems, it is the elite who has contributed. They have a political agenda and they motivate youth to participate.

*Mahbub:* They gave us bad information about what was happening and that is what led to the violence.

*Nadim:* I heard that because of Sharia, they hired some people to come out against Sharia... I don't know if it was a Christian or Muslim who did that. I also heard a rumor that the elites paid young men money to motivate violence.

*Daniel:* Some people believe that to resort to violence is not good. Others believe in using violence, because they are getting something out of it.

One of the young men who were involved in this violence said: "They would come up to you on the street and if they were Muslim, they would ask you to recite from the Koran. If they were Christian, they would ask you to cite from the New Testament. And if you could not, they would kill you like that." Several young men talked about the fear they felt; one young man (now a college student) was initially involved in the 1987 riots, but then when he first saw blood shed, he got scared and left. His example illustrates the patterns of mob violence, in which a handful of violent youth can incite youth who would otherwise not be likely to use violence:

*Aamil:* I was involved (in the violence) in 1987. I was going to an Islamic school, and some people came and told me they were killing Muslims, and can't we retaliate. I was in mosque and they told us that this was a religious war, that this will be a *Jihad* and that we must go. I was in the adolescent stage, and I thought, "I am going to *Jihad*!" But my parents told me not to, so I sneaked out of the house with a friend and we went to an assembly, and I took my grandfather's dagger. And we saw the older men, the fundamentalists, who wanted to propagate the thing. And they told us that the Christians are killing Muslims in this neighborhood, and most of the youths were aggrieved ...and annoyed.

And then when I saw someone dead, I cried. When I first saw blood, I ran back home... And then they started to burn all the churches in our neighborhood...and we went with them (to burn the churches). We were happy to be there (going with the group to burn and loot the churches). I was inside a church building holding a stick (to destroy things). And then they started to tell me to steal anything that we could. And the other boys came back from burning and looting another church and told us all they got and all they did, and so we said we can outdo them. So even in civil war, you have young men trying to outdo each other.

And then it escalated from one neighborhood to the whole city. I came home, but my friend stayed with the group (the rioters) to build a roadblock. And then the police started to pick up the Muslim boys...people thought that the police and the military were mostly Christians so the police are getting involved and helping

**Box 5: Ethnic Tensions and Young Men in Nigeria (continued)**

the Christians.

*Interviewer:* Who was involved in the riots?

*Aamil:* Maybe the majority of those involved were in secondary school. (His friends who were involved were in school). But most children, most youth did not want to get involved. There were unemployed (and out of school) youth who (were the main ones who) participated but they were usually not from the community...

Behind the ethnic components of the violence, there was anger over elites, adult men, politicians and religious leaders, Christian and Muslim, who are seen as manipulating the situation and benefiting from it. Indeed, in many ways the young men seemed angrier at these elites than they did at rival religious groups or followers of the rival religion. This anger was related to the lack of employment and a clear sense that they were being excluded from the labor market and from the power, opportunities and resources that the older generation—and particularly a few members of the older generation—has. Both Christian and Muslim young men were adamant that the causes of the riots were not merely religious. While they might argue over the meaning of their religions and could become inflamed over the implications of Sharia law, they agreed that while religious (and ethnic) differences had always existed, these did not in themselves cause violence:

*Aasif:* It is not really a religious crisis, but for those who come out for fights. I think it is ignorance. If it was a religious issue, we would all fight. It is unemployment.

*Robert:* It is a level of understanding between the religions (lack of it). Why should I fight if I really know what their religion is about? It is the hooligans. It is linked to religion, they (the instigators of the violence) link it, but it is not the cause.

Most ethnic violence reports in Nigeria have focused on the surface tensions—clashes between Muslim and Christian groups—but the deeper tensions are mostly gender and age-related access to resources and power.

**Young Men, Social Unrest and the Youth Bulge Argument**

Much of the literature on conflict in the region points to youth frustration over corrupt post-colonial and often repressive regimes, whether as part of armed insurgencies or simply as social unrest. While most of this literature does not focus on what is male-specific about youth unrest in the region, it is frequently affirmed that young men have been the majority of these movements throughout the region. Whether in the case of labor unrest in Sierra Leone, unrest against the apartheid regime in South Africa or recent riots in Cote d'Ivoire, young men are often the most visible actors in the unrest. There are, to be sure, vast differences between the more focused student-led violence found in apartheid-era South Africa, and the violence carried out by boys and young men in Sierra Leone, Liberia and similar settings.

Nonetheless, the socialization of boys often plays into such unrest and violence. In addition to intergenerational tensions, other authors have suggested that the development or formation of a specific youth culture is also at play. In discussions of townships in South Africa, there is a common refrain that parents, teachers, and religious leaders have lost their relevance and legitimacy before youth. Various researchers and advocates have called for the need for social structures and institutions that channel youth energy and demands in ordered ways.

Several researchers have presented accounts of young men, out of work, and with tremendous free time on their hands, loosely connected to any social institutions, creating their own language and their own culture (Sommers 2003). If often seen in a negative light, however, some reports suggest that unemployed young men in such settings are a major voice for cultural expression, who are able to service through music and mingling of different tribal groups and their creative informal economic activity.

To what extent is youth violence—which is nearly always young men's violence—in sub-Saharan Africa a function of simply having many young men in a society? A recent World Bank document states: "Large-scale unemployment, combined with rapid demographic growth, creates a large pool of idle young

men with few prospects and little to lose” (Michailof, Kostern and Devictor 2002: 3). As previously suggested, numerous researchers have sought to associate violence with the sheer numbers of young men. The population structure of Africa is well-known for its youthfulness, with nearly half of the population between 5 and 24 years in many countries. In those African countries hardest hit by AIDS, what was once a population pyramid with a wide base and narrow tip, is giving way to a wide base, and a very thin middle, as adults are dying of AIDS. And, clearly unemployment is a major issue for economies with rapid population growth. Youth unemployment in South Africa is estimated at more than 50 percent, and is expected to increase (Mail & Guardian, April 20, 2001).

Many researchers have examined this connection and the issue of a large youth cohort as a factor in violence. Various works present out-of-work young men as a menace and in negative and pessimistic tones suggesting that young men can and will be sucked into violence and violent groups at any moment. Mesquida and Wiener (1999) make a strong and convincing case that one of the most reliable factors in explaining conflict (coalitional aggression) is the relative number of young men (under age 30) compared to men over 30. In analyzing data from more than 45 countries and 12 tribal societies, they find—even controlling for income distribution and per capita GNP—that the ratio of 15-29 year old men for every 100 men aged 30 and over is associated with higher rates of conflict. In a similar vein, Cincotta, Engelman and Anastasion (2003) state:

Why are youth bulges so often volatile? The short answer is: too many young men with not enough to do. When a population as a whole is growing, ever larger numbers of young males come of age each year, ready for work, in search of respect from their male peers and elders. Typically, they are eager to achieve an identity, assert their independence and impress young females. While unemployment rates tend to be high in development countries, unemployment among young adult males is usually from three to five times as high as adult’s rates, with lengthy periods between the end of schooling and first placement in a job (2003:44).

Urdal (2004), reviewing 1950-2000 demographic data, concludes that countries with large youth cohorts do indeed have higher rates of conflict than countries with smaller cohorts but he contends that there is not a clear threshold as to how many young men make countries more prone to conflict. Furthermore, he adds, youth bulges are more likely to cause armed conflict when combined with economic stresses:

The generational approach has some serious shortcomings with regard to the explanatory power of the relationship between youth bulges and violence. The development of generational units may explain the formation of youth movements that can function as identity groups. Identity groups are necessary for collective violent action to take place. But it is not necessary that identity groups are generation-based for youth bulges to increase the likelihood of armed conflict. Furthermore, the generational approach does not offer explanations for the motives of youth rebellion nor does it provide sufficient explanation for the opportunities of conflict (Urdal 2004: 3).

However compelling the youth bulge argument is, it is important to re-affirm that in any of these settings, only a minority of young men participate in such conflicts. For example, the vast majority of young men—even those unemployed and out-of-school—were not involved in conflict in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Second, it is impossible and unrealistic to separate age distribution from income distribution and political repression. These issues clearly interact to produce violence, along with socially relevant versions of manhood.

There are, to be sure, many young men—who are culturally enjoined to work outside the home—without access to work and thus vulnerable to being recruited into insurgency groups and other forms of unrest. But from a more sophisticated ecological perspective of human development, this demographic argument does not account for the vast majority of young men, who even in the poorest countries with the highest youth ratios, do not become involved in conflict. There is tremendous variation within countries and among young men and numerous intervening variables from family to community, to individual perceptions.



The inability of governments to provide opportunities for young people must also be taken into account. Indeed, a large youth cohort need not be a problem if societies find ways to engage young people in meaningful, democratic national projects. As Ellis states (n.d.:12): “The recent history of West Africa, then, includes the experience of young people who were offered the vision of state-led development, and of prosperity, only to become frustrated in the economic and political conditions obtained since the 1970s.” The same could be said for much of sub-Saharan Africa. Perhaps it is not too many young men who are the problem, but rather our collective inability to respond to their needs.

Ultimately, youth in urban areas have more free time and fewer social roles that constrain them, thus increasing the possibility of their participation in activism, unrest and riots. Indeed, young men, who marry later than young women, particularly those in urban areas, have a longer period when they may be out of work and only loosely connected to their families. They have less that ties them down and thus less social control, while at the same time perceive pressures to acquire work and thus achieve manhood. They may compete with older men who they perceive as wielding power and having access to women. But even with all these factors, we must recognize the plurality of young men. Applying a demographic prophecy to young men in Africa is ultimately a racist and sexist oversimplification that dehumanizes low income African young men.

### **Final Reflections about Young Men and Conflict**

These examples show direct linkages between conflict, violence, social unrest and salient versions of manhood. The intergenerational tensions between older men, who usually control power, and younger men, who usually do not, are related to many of the conflicts in the region. However, the gender dimension, specifically the issue of masculinity, must be included along with other factors. We see in the examples here that what started as politically motivated insurgencies may become general banditry, brutality and mayhem. Internal political rivalries may also gain a momentum of their own. We have seen examples of conflicts with clear political motivations, and others based mostly on a desire for status and power, for achieving manhood at all costs. In the latter, violence often becomes an end in itself. This complexity confirms that generalizations of the conflicts and about young men should be avoided.

In other cases, motives for participating in violence are multiple. The reasons for joining may be different from the reasons for staying involved. Coercion may be involved initially, but later the young men may become voluntary adherents to the ill-defined cause. In other cases, young men may join voluntarily but then be coerced to stay. The amount of individual choice, particularly when we talk about younger youth, is also questionable. The data argues for avoiding simplistic analyses—such as blaming conflict on demographic trends—and it also argues for the need to look at the gender-specific realities and vulnerabilities of young men.

Finally, the research about young men in conflict settings calls attention to the fluidity of roles and vulnerabilities. Some young men are combatants; others are refugees, some are both. A study of conflict-affected areas in northern Uganda, for example, confirmed that the same individual over the course of a conflict may be a rebel, then a soldier in the conventional army, then a refugee and civilian. This same study also suggests tremendous similarities between the impact of conflict on men and women, and boys and girls. Dolan (2000) found evidence of sexual violence against women, and also against boys and men. While there are tremendous differences between the sexes in conflict settings that should not be ignored, these examples highlight the need to take a more nuanced look that does not merely equate being a man with combatant and being a woman with being a victim.

## IV. YOUNG MEN AND HIV/AIDS IN AFRICA

### Introduction

In sub-Saharan Africa, there are nearly 10 million young men and women, ages 15-24, living with HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS 2003). Of this group, more than 75 percent are women, reflecting a worldwide feminization of the epidemic (UNAIDS 2004). The unequal balance of social power between young men and women in Africa combined with the patterns of risk behaviors among young men, suggests that young men play a key role in shaping the future of the epidemic. Specifically, we must consider how their risk behaviors are learned and reinforced, and ultimately, how young men can be engaged as protective forces.

There has also been increasing research on gender-related risks and vulnerabilities and HIV. The majority of this research has focused on the specific needs and risks of young and adult women and it is only in recent years that there has been growing attention to the need to also engage men, particularly young men, in HIV prevention efforts (Nzioka 2001; Varga 2001). Despite this increasing attention, there is still little in-depth research on the underlying norms that drive young men's attitudes and behaviors in various contexts (Wood and Jewkes 1998).

This section provides an analytical review of how the socialization and behavior of young men contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. It is not intended to be an exhaustive review of the literature on HIV/AIDS and youth in Africa, rather it is an effort to highlight patterns and provide a conceptual framework for the more salient trends and issues. It seeks to identify some of the various contextual realities that underlie young men's HIV-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviors and to point out how gender relations and behavioral practices are shaped by economic, social and cultural realities.

As stated earlier, there is tremendous diversity among young men in the region, and likewise there is a spectrum of experiences when we discuss vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. From the young boy living on the streets in Johannesburg or the university student in Lagos to the military conscript in Malawi or the ex-abductees of the LRA in Lira, young men in sub-Saharan Africa form many distinct, and yet often interacting, ethnic, cultural, religious and socio-economic identities. In order to appropriately address the needs of each group and individuals in the context of HIV prevention, it is necessary to understand how young men are made vulnerable, or potentially protected, by various elements in their socialization, education, economic prospects and access to health services.

In recent years, there has been a growing focus on how young men are socialized, particularly in terms of sexuality. Studies show that while many young men are beginning to report a reduction in partners and an increase in condom use, there are still mixed reactions to HIV risk, including limited verbal communication with partners and low perceptions of risk (Varga 2001). However, there are still many gaps in research and program efforts, particularly in regard to certain groups of young men, including young men who have sex with other men, young men assuming the role of caregivers, and young men living with HIV as well as potential gatekeepers for effectively reaching young men.

### Sexuality and HIV/AIDS

There is evidence that adolescents worldwide, including in Africa, have become sexually active at earlier ages in the last few decades (Moore and Rosenthal 1993; UNAIDS 1999). Of major concern is the high number of annually reported STD and HIV infections among adolescents that suggests a significant degree of unprotected sexual activity (Barker 2000b).

Even when adolescents (and adults for that matter) possess adequate information, they still engage in risky behaviors. Research has shown that while factual knowledge of HIV transmission is important, it is not a sufficient predictor of safe sexual behavior (Moore and Rosenthal 1993). Working to fill this gap between knowledge and behavior thus requires an understanding of the underlying determinants that actually lead adolescents to engage in unsafe behaviors.

Numerous researchers have affirmed that gender role norms are among the strongest underlying social factors that influence sexual behaviors (Gupta 2003). Ideals of masculinity, such as those which espouse male sexual needs as uncontrollable, multiple partners as evidence of sexual prowess, and dominance over women (physical and sexual), can place both young men and young women at high risk of HIV infection (Rivers and Aggleton, 1998). For example, studies have shown that across all cultures, men tend to have more sexual partners than women and thus on average experience more exposure to risk situations and can be expected to infect more partners in a lifetime (UNAIDS 2000). Women, in contrast, are expected to be passive and innocent on matters related to sex and are thus placed at heightened risk of HIV infection (Rivers and Aggleton 1998).

The intersection of these different gender roles has perpetuated HIV infection risks for both young men and women, while significantly shaping the expansion of the epidemic (Rivers and Aggleton, 1998). For example, an analysis of data from the National Survey on Adolescent Males in the U.S. found that beliefs about manhood emerged as the strongest predictor of risk-taking behaviors; young men who adhered to traditional views of manhood were more likely to report substance use, violence and delinquency, and unsafe sexual practices (Courtenay 1998). Research in Brazil, applying an attitude scale (the Gender Equitable Men Scale) found a strong association between adherence to traditional norms about gender and issues such as self-reported use of violence against women, and self-reported STI symptoms (Pulerwitz, Barker and Segundo 2004). Men who held more traditional beliefs about gender and the roles of men were more likely to have used violence against women and to report having had an STI. In this context, it has become increasingly crucial that sexuality research address young men as a priority. The topic has been substantially ignored, particularly on qualitative levels, and only more recently is there a growing literature concerned with male sexuality throughout the region (MacPhail and Campbell 2001; Varga 2001).

In Africa, young men have an average five-year window between their sexual debut and marriage. This window is usually linked to a higher number of partners than young women have on average. This greater number of sexual partners, combined with inconsistent condom use, means that both men and their female partners are made vulnerable. A young African woman, entering into marriage or a sexual relationship with a male partner (likely to be several years older) is thus highly vulnerable. This highlights yet again the need to engage young men as they initiate sexual activity, and before, to reduce their own vulnerabilities and those of young women.

### **Cross-Generational Sex and HIV/AIDS**

On average, young women form partnerships with men five to ten years older whereas young men have relationships with women of similar age or slightly younger (Gregson 2002). This pattern means that women are likely to be infected by HIV at younger ages than men, and that young men's risk of HIV increases as they get older and have more partners (Mataure et al. 2002). Men over 25 had HIV rates ten times higher than 15-19 year old boys (PANOS 1998). In some settings, older men deliberately seek young women and girls as sexual partners because they believe that young women are less likely to be infected. This perpetuates the chain of transmission of HIV from older men to younger women, who in turn may infect younger men, and reinforces norms of women as sexual objects to satisfy male desire.

In many parts of Africa, particularly in more impoverished regions, there has been a reported increase (or at least increased attention to) in the numbers of older men—“sugar daddies”—who offer money and gifts in exchange for sex with younger women (Luke and Kurz 2002). There are cases in which young women are actively or passively encouraged by parents and guardians to pursue these offers (Gage 1998; Silberschmidt and Rasch 2001). This situation has had a dramatic impact on young women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, as evidenced by the demographical pattern of infection in which increasing numbers of young women are being infected by older partners (Luke and Kurz 2002). At the same time, the young male sexual partners and companions of these young women are also made vulnerable, as they may seek sexual relations with even younger female peers. Focus group discussions with young men in Nigeria and Uganda suggest that some young men criticize or are resentful of young women for exchanging sex for favors or money, while others seem to understand the conditions that lead young women to enter into such relations. In addition to the direct risk of HIV infection, the phenomenon of sugar daddies reinforces young men’s perceptions of power dynamics along lines of gender, age and wealth, and as we have seen, fuels their resentment toward older men.

There are also reports of young men paying for sex and other accounts of young men being paid for sex. One national survey in Kenya revealed that up to 17 percent of unmarried boys 15-19 had paid for sex with money or gifts (Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 1998). There are also reports of young men being involved in transactional sex with older and married women, known as “sugar mummies.” (Mataure et al. 2000). These relationships are often propelled by economic need, as with the young women, and also for status among peers. In settings where bride-price is practiced, a young man might become involved with an older woman in order to help raise the necessary wealth to get married. Or, as we heard in countries such as Uganda, where a young man might face charges of defilement if he has a sexual relationship with a young woman under the age of 18, he may prefer older women as legally safer partners.

### **Young Men and HIV/AIDS-Related Knowledge and Attitudes**

Awareness about HIV/AIDS and STIs has increased in most parts of Africa in the past ten years, and research shows that at least 90 percent of young men and women aged 15-19 have heard of HIV/AIDS (Bankole et al. 2004). Despite these high levels of awareness there continues to be low levels of safer sex, particularly for girls, and misconceptions both about preventive behaviors, including condom use, and the disease itself (Harrison, Xaba and Kunene 2001; Varga 2001). There are also specific areas of knowledge—about the difference between HIV and AIDS, the link between STIs and HIV risk, and the window between infection and possible detection—where research is lacking (Varga 2001). As previously mentioned, knowledge is an insufficient predictor of safer sex behavior. In focus group discussions in Kenya, young men reported experiencing conflicting pressures, between their knowledge (about HIV/AIDS and safer sex behavior) and their behavior, or between what they know they should do and what they actually do (Nzioka 2001).

Most young men in Africa are aware of HIV and many have the knowledge to instigate condoms use (Bankole et al. 2004). However there are various barriers to their use, including self-risk perception, access to condoms and negotiation with a partner. Several studies suggest that many young men externalize the threat of HIV, that is, they associate HIV with high-risk or out-of-the-ordinary sexual encounters, such as rape and sex with commercial sex workers (PSI 2003) and excessive alcohol, in a sense making all other sexual encounters “safe” (MacPhail and Campbell 2001). Throughout the region, an estimated 50-80 percent of young men know that appearance does not necessarily reveal infection status (Bankole et al. 2004; UNAIDS 2002). However, some young men may continue to rely on outward appearance as a means of identifying infected individuals (PSI 2003).

In other studies, young men associate HIV with women who are “promiscuous,” and some young men believed that girls and women were more promiscuous than men (PSI 2003). Indeed, many young men seem to shift the risk or blame, of HIV on to women, just as some young men do in terms of sexual violence. Other studies have suggested that some young men view STIs as a sign of virility (Nzioka 2001; WHO/UNAIDS 2002). For example, a study in rural Malawi found that young men boast about the likelihood of being HIV-positive, since it would be a badge of manhood before their peers (Kaler 2003). All these examples suggest the complex ways in which knowledge is filtered through attitudes and social norms, particularly those related to gender.

### **Young Men, HIV/AIDS Prevention Strategies and Condom Use**

The relative merits of the widely disseminated ABC approach (abstinence, partner reduction and condom use) have been debated at length in other documents. With regard to young men, it is telling to note that the first two approaches are rarely spontaneously mentioned as forms of HIV prevention. In national sample data from various countries in Africa, young men have a low awareness of all three ABC methods and less than 20-40 percent spontaneously mention abstinence as a means of prevention (Bankole et al. 2004). More in-depth studies have shown that many young men do not view abstinence as a reasonable option for prevention, although girls might see it as desirable option and report that they would have preferred to delay their first sexual experience (Harrison, Xaba and Kunene 2001; PSI 2003). Additionally, young men are also less likely than young women in most settings to spontaneously identify monogamy as a way to avoid HIV/AIDS (Bankole et al. 2004). Instead, the prevention method most cited by young men is condom use and in several settings is the only preventive behavior spontaneously mentioned (Bankole et al. 2004).

In Africa, as in many other parts of the world, consistent and correct condom use remains highly important in terms of HIV prevention. However, young men’s use of condoms always or frequently is still much lower than desired and lower than reported knowledge about condoms and HIV/AIDS would suggest, and often varies according to the reported nature of the partner or relationship (e.g., occasional partner, regular partner, or sex worker) (Bankole et al. 2004; Harrison, Xaba and Kunene 2001; Nzioka 2001). While 20-80 percent of young men in most African countries have ever used a condom, fewer than 40 percent of young men aged 15-19 in several countries had used a condom the last time they had sex (Bankole et al. 2004). This disjunction between knowledge and behavior suggests a continued resistance to consistent condom use, explained in part by how young men view gender roles and sexual activity and also how they perceive their risk of infection and the effectiveness of and access to condoms (Nzioka 2003; Harrison, Xaba and Kunene 2001; PSI 2003).

#### *Views on condoms*

In some settings, the notion of masculinity is associated with an ideal of unprotected (flesh to flesh or live) sex as more pleasurable, often with numerous partners (MacPhail and Campbell 2001). These sexual behaviors and gender stereotypes may be reinforced among peers. Research has shown that young men may be belittled by peers for using condoms and, as a result, may decide to not use them again (MacPhail and Campbell 2001). Also, young men may display uncertainty and lack of confidence regarding the proper use of condoms, although prevailing norms would suggest that it is difficult for them to express these doubts. Condoms are often perceived to be ineffective or defective, as also seen in focus group discussions carried out for this research (MacPhail and Campbell 2001; Nzioka 2001).

The contraceptive value of condoms can also contribute to a negative connotation among young men as it militates against young men’s notions of pregnancy as proof of masculinity and a source of pride (Abdool et al. 1992; MacPhail and Campbell 2001; Preston-Whyte and Zondi 1991). Nonetheless, promoting condoms for both their contraceptive effect and HIV prevention has been a strategy in some contexts.

Indeed, in some cases, young men show more concern over an unwanted pregnancy than over HIV (Nzioka 2000).

*Negotiation of condom use with partners*

Many young men believe that condoms are unnecessary in steady relationships and should only be used with casual partners (Harrison, Xaba and Kunene 2001; Mataure 2000; MacPhail and Campbell 2001). This is particularly worrisome considering research showing that some young men still rely on appearance and reputation to make decisions about a woman being safe and therefore not requiring condoms (MacPhail and Campbell 2001; PSI 2003). Additionally, in many settings, young males express strong beliefs that it is not necessary to use a condom with a virgin (Mataure 2000).

In steady relationships, both young men and women often view condom use as an indicator of the seriousness of a relationship, more than as a means to protect oneself or one's partner (Harrison, Xaba and Kunene 2001; Varga 2001). Young men interviewed for this study reported that condoms are most often used for casual encounters, and as a young man in Uganda related, "(once) you begin to trust your partner you stop using a condom." This is because a suggestion to use a condom with a steady partner might disclose or insinuate a hidden sexual history (Nzioka 2001; Varga 2001).

Research also suggests that young women have been socialized to accept the subtle forms of control around sexual activity, which has been corroborated in various studies on sexual violence (Varga 2001). A study in South Africa found that young women identified their ideal relationship as one in which the male made the decisions, including the use of condoms and the timing of sex (Harrison, Xaba and Kunene 2001). The same study also found that girls reported it easier to refuse sex than to negotiate condom use.

Indeed, many young men continue to believe that a young woman who carries a condom is promiscuous or in any case, should be concerned about her reputation (MacPhail and Campbell 2001). In a focus group discussion with university students in Nigeria, young men said:

*Interviewer:* Can women carry condoms?

*Alfred:* I know these two women hookers who carry condoms...

*Ali:* Sometimes it is hard to know which girl is a hooker; you know you cannot always distinguish which girl does that (trades sex for money).

*Andrew:* Why would an ordinary woman carry condoms with her if she was not a hooker?

*Halim:* I was going out with this one woman and we were not having sex, and she went to pay the bill. And some condoms fell out of her bag. And I was shocked and asked her about it. Morally it was bad (for her to have condoms). But she told me, she did not want to have sex until she got married. But she said, we are human, and anything can happen. Morally it was bad, but realistically it was good. That's why it is good to have self-discipline.

*[The group then went back and forth as to whether it was moral or not for a woman to carry condoms. They talked over each other in a rather heated, but lighthearted exchange.]*

While some young men may agree that a woman carrying condoms does not always indicate they are sexually active, as these quotes suggest, the majority usually admit concern for the reputations of those young women who do.

*Factors involved in the purchase of or access to condoms*

Young men might decide to not use condoms because purchasing them would require disclosing sexual activity publicly, and they may fear parents and elders disapproval of adolescent sexual activity (MacPhail and Campbell 2001; Nzioka 2001). In addition, research from some settings in Africa finds that men believe they cannot turn down any opportunity to have sex. For example, young men in South Africa have reported that since most live at home with families, when limited opportunities to have sex do arise, precious time cannot be wasted on obtaining a condom (MacPhail and Campbell 2001).

In addition, poverty is often cited as a powerful factor inhibiting the purchase of condoms; indeed many young men express concerns about the costs of a condom (Bankole et al. 2004; MacPhail and Campbell 2001). Young men in refugee camps and in rural areas may express this concern even more frequently. Boys from higher-wage communities in South Africa were about 50 percent more likely to report having used a condom the last time they had sex than boys from lower-wage communities (Kaufman et al. 2002). On the other hand, research has shown that young men are generally unwilling to accept free condoms, purchase cheap condoms, or are skeptical of them, because they believe these might be of questionable quality (Nzioka 2001).

In spite of these difficulties, a few countries have made important advances in making condoms available. In one study in South Africa, more than 90 percent of young men and women across settings reported that it was easy to get condoms when they needed or wanted them (Pettifor et al. 2004). In other settings, young men have reported that obtaining condoms is not a problem because of their widespread availability in clinics and shops (Harrison, Xaba and Kunene 2001). Moreover, mass media campaigns can be effective for reaching those young men who have access to these sources of information (Harrison, Xaba and Kunene 2001).

In sum, the literature suggests divergent interpretations or motivations for condom use, a lack of communication and negotiation skills between young couples and an inequitable negotiating power. Given current dynamics, in which condom use among most young African heterosexual couples generally depends on a young man's self-perceived risk, increasing condom use among young men requires us to examine how rigid gender norms impact both young men and women.

### **Young Men, Substance Use and HIV/AIDS**

The connection between substance use and HIV has long been confirmed. Worldwide, men account for approximately four-fifths of injecting drug users and studies have shown that male users are also more likely to share needles and not to use condoms (UNAIDS 2000). Men and boys also use other substances at higher rates than women and girls. For example, in Kenya, boys are more than twice as likely as girls to have tried alcohol and marijuana (Erulkar et al. 1998). For many adolescent and adult men, using alcohol or another substance helps prove manhood or helps them fit in with the male peer group. Using drugs and alcohol is also part of risk-taking, including unprotected sex, as mentioned previously. In South African survey, young men were twice as likely as young women to report having had sex under influence of alcohol (Pettifor et al. 2004). Substance use is apparently also higher among certain vulnerable groups, including refugee young men, ex-combatants, combatants and young and adult men living in migrant worker camps or on the streets (Swart-Kruger and Richter 1997). While still at relatively low rates, several studies confirm increasing injecting drug use among low-income young men in Lagos and other major African urban centers (WHO/UNAIDS 2001).

### **HIV Testing and Living with HIV/AIDS**

In various countries in Africa, only 1-9 percent of young males aged 15-19 have been tested for HIV although most say they would like to be (Bankole et al. 2004). In a national study in South Africa with 11,904 youth, young men were less likely to have sought HIV-testing; 15 percent of young men compared to 25 percent of young women in the sample had been tested (Pettifor et al. 2004). Other studies have found that young men are often traditionally excluded from information about maternal and child health, which is often a point of entry or source of information about HIV for young women (WHO 2003). To this end, HIV testing, while it has its own specificities, follows traditional gender norms related to help-seeking and health seeking. In addition to limited access to health services, many young (and adult) men have the perception that clinics are "female" spaces, and that real men do not get sick. In

the case of a focus group in South Africa, a group of HIV-positive fathers said that men generally wanted to avoid testing and disclosure, and said that women are “braver” when it comes to testing:

*Interviewer:* Are other men like you getting testing for HIV?

*Patrick:* Guys are not ready to come out and discuss their HIV status... Women are very brave on that part. Men still do not admit that they have HIV. A woman still won't tell her employer, nobody can. You will fight at work and somebody will call you a walking corpse. You don't tell your status at work.

*Samuel:* On that part of telling someone about your status, you have to be careful who you tell. You can disclose to your family and they may kick you out because they do not understand it...

There is limited research on the specific reactions and behaviors of young men who are HIV-positive. Some reports suggest that there are few sources of support, particularly for unmarried young men. Interviews for this study and other research suggest that both adult and young men are less likely to care for their health in general and are reluctant to reveal their HIV status. This social isolation leads to stress and can directly impact the health of men (Foreman 1999). Some discourses by young men would suggest that being HIV-positive flies directly in the face of traditional ideals of being—virile, healthy, productive and working. As one young HIV-positive father interviewed in South Africa said: “If you are not working and you are HIV positive, like many of us, that is the worst state that a man can be in.”

### **Conflict and HIV**

While this paper has mostly separated the issues of conflict and HIV/AIDS, there are, of course, important links that should be mentioned, even if only briefly. A significant literature has examined how HIV/AIDS affects combatants and how conflicts are carried out (including the use of rape and the spread of HIV as a combat strategy).

In Africa, as throughout the world, young men represent the majority of military personnel and as such, one of the professional groups most affected by the epidemic (UNAIDS 2004). According to UNAIDS, STI rates among armed forces are often two to five times higher than civilian populations. HIV prevalence rates among soldiers are as high as 10-20 percent in many countries, and as high as 50-60 percent in some (Elbe 2002). A recent BBC report based on a study with 500 Nigerian naval officers found that AIDS may now be responsible for more than half of all deaths in the armed forces (BBC 2004). While there is an urgent need for awareness and testing services among the military, there is also a need to address the influences of socialization and militarization on the behaviors of young men in the military. Often, young men in the military are indoctrinated with values of fearlessness and violence, and norms that reinforce gender inequities (Malaza-Debose 2001). Sexual prowess is often integral to the self-image of being strong and aggressive. Soldiers are generally young, sexually active, have high levels of alcohol consumption, money to pay for sex and are separated from family. In addition, soldiers generally face a limited choice of sexual partners and many young military conscripts may have sex with the same women over a period of time.

During periods in which they are away from home and from their regular sexual partners, sexual activity—consensual and coerced—may increase. Although unprotected homoerotic sexual activity in the military may also contribute to HIV transmission, it is generally hidden. In some places men who have sex with men are expelled from the military (PANOS 1998).

Among young men living in conflict and post-conflict settings becomes yet another vulnerability. In refugee camps, however, the fear of HIV appears more remote than other immediate fears, such as hunger and personal security (Malaza-Debose 2001). Furthermore, determining the extent of HIV in a conflict setting is often hindered by incomplete data; conflicts affect the ability of countries to invest in health care, gather data and make condoms available, just as HIV/AIDS devastates social networks.



There is also increasing documentation of the deliberate use of rape by soldiers as a systematic means of waging war. In the Rwandan conflict, for example, an estimated 200,000-500,000 women were raped (Elbe 2002). There have even been reports that some soldiers raped women with the intent of spreading HIV. Although this is difficult to document, some women survivors reported that men raped them telling them that they would eventually die of AIDS. HIV rates are indeed high among rape survivors; one study in Rwanda of 1,200 genocide survivors found that two-thirds were HIV positive (Elbe 2002).

In addition, the migration of young men to and from camps, previously discussed, has direct implications for HIV/AIDS. Young men who migrate or even within camps may turn to sex workers in part because they cannot get married. Young women in camps, as young men told us in Uganda, may become vulnerable to sexual exploitation. The rape of young women and forcing young men to rape by some insurgency groups, has of course, clear implications for HIV/AIDS, both for the young women and men directly involved as well as to the partners and wives of returning ex-combatants.

### **Final Reflections on HIV/AIDS and Young Men**

Masculinities are clearly changing in Africa, as in the rest of the world. There have been some suggestions that the dimensions of the AIDS epidemic in Africa and the devastation of families are forcing some men to question gender norms and attitudes that were once unquestionable. Some men are taking on care-giving roles and others are caring for their own health in new ways. The number of AIDS orphans has also led to changes in family arrangements, with young men taking on roles previously assigned to women. While this leaves young men vulnerable, and often curtails their education, it is contributing to changes in gender norms. Later sections discuss examples of young men who have reviewed the devastation of HIV/AIDS in their own communities and families, and their personal lives, and begun to question their traditional views about manhood.

Other examples of this change include modifications in traditional rites of passage. Among the Lango people in northern Uganda, an ancient hunting tradition in which the elders would bless and give counsel to young men has been transformed into a forum for discussing the dangers of AIDS and its impact on traditional cultural views of manhood (InterWorld Radio 2003). The elders voiced a fear that AIDS would kill off an entire generation and commented that they used to be happy when young men had a series of girlfriends, but these messages have changed with the AIDS epidemic. Throughout the region, there have been many changes in traditional structures and lifestyles because of AIDS. To be sure, these changes are also accompanied by an adherence to many traditional attitudes, taboos and gender norms, but the scale of the epidemic is forcing some men to question gender roles, which in the long run will be positive for men and women.

## **V. PROGRAM APPROACHES APPLYING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN WORKING WITH YOUNG MEN**

### **Introduction**

This section presents illustrative examples and lessons from promising program approaches in applying a gender perspective to working with young men in Africa on issues related to gender equality, HIV/AIDS, violence prevention and support in post-conflict settings. It is not intended to be an exhaustive review of such programs, either in the four countries studied nor in Africa as a whole; such reviews have been carried in numerous other documents (Lowicki 2000; Senderowitz 2000; Varga 2001). Rather, the focus is on a relatively small number of programs that have included a specific discussion of the gender-specific

realities of young men.<sup>13</sup> Information was gathered through a literature review and interviews with more than 50 key informants in Botswana, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. Programs were identified based on discussions with World Bank staff in the four countries, referrals by key informants at a number of international organizations, key informants in the countries and through literature searches.

By applying a gender perspective to working with young men, we mean that these programs have for the most part applied a dual gender perspective to engaging young men: (i) *Gender Specificity*: the programs include an explicit discussion of how the socialization of boys and men is related to the major issues they address (HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health, health promotion, violence prevention, including gender-based violence, and post-conflict reintegration). In sum, the programs have reflected on what is specific about young men in large part because of how they are socialized. (ii) *Gender Equality*: the programs recognize that young men must be engaged to redress gender inequalities, i.e., to improve the health and well-being of young women.

This dual approach of gender specificity (that is examining the specific health and human developmental needs of young men) and gender equality (engaging young men to redress gender inequalities) is the cornerstone of an emerging collective field that is often called male involvement, mostly in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS prevention (Barker 2000a). A growing number of program experiences—mostly non-government, but some governmental—have learned that men must be engaged for their own health and personal needs.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, most adult and young men will not find such programs compelling unless there is some discussion and inclusion of their own needs. Adult and young men do have specific vulnerabilities due to prevailing patterns of socialization. In addition, these programs have emerged from a rights-based perspective that recognizes tremendous gender inequalities that create lingering disadvantages for girls and women.

While large-scale impact is yet to be achieved, there is a growing array of program initiatives, of research, and of policy initiatives, seeking to meaningfully engage men in promoting gender equality. These include clinic-based efforts to engage men, either in primary health care, or in specialized reproductive and sexual health clinics. Men's roles as fathers have also been the subject of international seminars, program development and advocacy.

In some countries, public health facilities are encouraging men to participate in childbirth and prenatal care. Other initiatives engage men in promoting maternal health by educating them on warning signs of maternal complications. UNICEF and other UN agencies have begun to discuss ways to engage men more fully in promoting the health and development of their children. A handful of NGOs in Latin America and parts of Africa have started educational sessions, group discussions or support groups for fathers, including both adult and adolescent fathers. Others have carried out mass media campaigns to promote positive images of men's involvement in the lives of children and of actively engaged fathers, to counter prevailing negative versions.

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<sup>13</sup> Examples of programs that address the gender-specific needs and vulnerabilities of young men are presented in a summary table in Annex 1. Detailed background and methodology for several of the more promising program examples are included in Annex 2.

<sup>14</sup> These programs frequently draw on conclusions from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo Conference) and the Plan of Action from the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women. The Cairo Plan of Program of Action articulated the growing international consensus, and placed particular emphasis on the need to engage young men in gender equality and health issues (POA Cairo 1994 7.34). Specifically, the Plan of Action states: "Special efforts should be made to emphasize men's shared responsibility and promote their active involvement in responsible parenthood, sexual and reproductive behaviour, including family planning; maternal and child health; prevention of STIs, including HIV; ...shared control and contribution to family income, children's education, health and nutrition; and recognition...of the equal value of children of both sexes. Male responsibilities in family life must be included in the education of children from the earliest ages. Special emphasis should be placed on the prevention of violence against women and children" (United Nations 1994).

In terms of HIV/AIDS, programs in parts of Africa and elsewhere are engaging men to prevent mother-to-child transmission and a few organizations have started support groups for HIV-positive fathers to promote their own health and well-being, but also to encourage them to support their partners and children. UNAIDS focused its 2000-2001 World AIDS Campaign on men and boys, with the slogan “Men Make a Difference.” This campaign prompted many countries to target specific HIV prevention efforts on the sexual behavior of men (UNAIDS 2000).

In terms of gender-based violence, in North America and Western Europe, much of the focus has been on providing legal protection for women. However, since the early 1990s, a number of important initiatives are working with men. Many of these programs reach men who have used violence against women (via alternative sentencing, court-mandated counseling programs), but more promising still is the number of campaigns and educational activities to engage men in preventing violence against women. One important example is the White Ribbon Campaign, a movement of men working to end violence against women, which started in Canada in the early 1990s, and is now active in more than 30 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and North America.

Limited formal and anecdotal evidence from these experiences shows that working with boys and young men can be effective, in program and financial terms, to ensure more equitable and responsible behaviors through adolescence and adulthood. Much of the work, however, has been project-based and short-term, with relatively little systematic documentation and evaluation, leaving many open questions in terms of how to best engage young men in various settings.

A small but growing body of impact evaluation research with men in HIV/AIDS prevention has measured impact on attitudes and behaviors. A 2001 Population Council meta-analysis of programs that engage men found that on the whole, when well-constructed such programs do lead to attitude and behavioral intention change. Of the studies reviewed, 8 out of 14 found a reduction in the number of sexual partners by men, 5 out of 9 showed increased intention to condom use, and 2 out of 6 showed attitude improvements related to safer sexual behavior (Hawkes et al. 2001). A quasi-experimental impact evaluation study of Program H, an integrated gender equality and health promotion initiative for young men in Brazil confirmed attitude and behavior change on the part of participating young men (Pulerwitz, Barker, and Segundo 2004). Results from this impact evaluation (carried out in collaboration with and supported by the Horizons Program, Population Council) found that after participating in program activities, condom use among stable partners increased more than 25 percent and young men’s attitudes related to gender changed in positive ways on 10 of 17 indicators in one community and 13 of 17 indicators in another. In addition, self-reported STI symptoms decreased by more than 45 percent in one of the two communities involved, and condom use increased with stable partners. These changes continued—and in some cases increased—one year later. (A control group showed no change on any of these indicators). Results from smaller-scale evaluations of Men as Partners and Stepping Stones have also shown positive changes in attitudes on traditional gender norms (discussed in Annex 2).

Traditionally, work with young men has been limited to programming that targets discrete risk groups which are often male, from truck drivers and military conscripts to migrant workers and clients of sex workers. These programs have largely focused on unidirectional communication of information or service delivery and have rarely addressed the underlying impact of gender socialization and norms on men’s behaviors. In addition, most of the research and programs on male involvement have focused on adult men. Work with young men has been mainly limited to small-scale projects, often working in isolation. Scaling up of such programs has rarely been achieved.

In the field of violence prevention and post-conflict reintegration, this dual gender perspective, and a gender perspective on young men, has rarely been applied. Some initiatives in gender-based violence have focused on young men. As noted earlier, there is a growing body of research on the gender-specific

realities of young men in conflict and post-conflict settings, and on the ways that the socialization of boys and young men makes young women vulnerable. Overall, however, a gender perspective has not been applied to young men in post-conflict settings.

### **Box 6: Summary Description of Main Programs**

Details and methodologies are included in Annexes 1 and 2.

**Climbing into Manhood Program (Kenya)** is a pilot health education initiative for young men, incorporated into the traditional male circumcision ritual.

**Conscientizing Male Adolescents (Nigeria)** engages young men on issues related to gender-based oppression through a long-term group education and reflection process.

**The Fatherhood Project (South Africa)** promotes positive images and expectations of men as fathers and works to create a programmatic and policy environment to support men's greater involvement with children.

**Men as Partners (South Africa)** engages young and adult men and women in the promotion of gender-equity through small group educational workshops, community-level mobilization and national advocacy.

**Men Sector (Botswana)** is a national alliance of governmental and NGOs that seeks to reduce HIV/AIDS by engaging men in prevention and care-giving.

**Soul City (South Africa)** uses diverse media strategies, including television, radio and newspapers, to disseminate information and promote reflection on pressing health and social issues.

**Stepping Stones (Regional)** engages entire communities, young and adult men and women, in workshops and critical reflections on gender roles, communication and relationships.

**Targeted AIDS Intervention (South Africa)** uses peer education and football to engage young men in discussions about women's rights, sexuality, HIV/AIDS and care-giving.

**Positive Men's Union (TASO-Uganda)** encourages HIV-positive men to be involved in prevention efforts and in providing care, for themselves, their families and communities.

### **Common Approaches, Lessons Learned and Operating Principles**

A number of lessons and common operating principles emerge from these program experiences:

***Explicit inclusion of discussions of manhood/masculinities in educational activities.*** Nearly these programs have included some discussion about men and masculinities, and gender norms, in their group activities. In the case of Men As Partners (MAP) and Stepping Stones, these discussions are systematized in curricula, which are made available to their partner organizations. By training other organizations to use the same methodologies, this reflection about gender can in turn be included in the activities of other youth-serving organizations. It is important to emphasize that these discussions about gender and masculinities, are not simply "feel-good" discussion groups or group therapy. Rather, they are concrete and deliberate efforts to engage young men in critical analyses of gender roles, which when adequately structured can lead to measurable changes in attitudes and behavior (Barker 2005).

***Creating enabling environments.*** Most programs, in addition to work with small groups of young men, also seek to change the social environment. Applying an ecological approach (even if they do not explicitly mention an ecological model), they generally seek to engage peer groups, social groups, or entire communities to promote changes in social norms related to gender, violence and HIV/AIDS.

***Broader alliance-building.*** Many of these examples, particularly MAP, also seek to build broad-based alliances at the local and sometimes national level to contribute to changing discourses about men and manhood. By engaging the armed forces, the police, trade unions, and others, for example, a relatively small program can increase its reach and influence. In this way, messages offered in group educational

activities, community campaigns, educational materials, or social service settings are echoed and reinforced by credible, national level organizations.

***Including the multiple needs of young men.*** Many programs, even when they focus primarily on HIV/AIDS or gender-based violence prevention, for example, have recognized that young men, particularly low-income young men, need employment. MAP and other programs have in fact encountered major challenges in terms of being able to provide stipends and salaries to young men working as peer promoters. The reality is that most low-income young men in Africa devote much of their time to working, seeking work, or developing social networks to assist in the search for work. Given both the survival or subsistence need for work, combined with the social meaning of work for young men, it is short-sighted of program planners to overlook this.

### **Ongoing Challenges to Program Development for Young Men with a Gender Perspective**

The programs chosen for these short case studies represent some of the most promising examples. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of NGOs and government agencies Africa engaging youth in activities related to HIV/AIDS prevention, health promotion, post-conflict reintegration, peace education and violence prevention. Many of these struggle for funding, lack adequately trained staff and are narrowly focused on merely providing information (in the case of HIV/AIDS), or in the case of post-conflict reintegration, focusing only on income generation and disarmament. Including a thoughtful and comprehensive gender perspective—that includes the gender specificities of young women and young men—is an additional challenge. The examples cited here, while limited, offer ideas on how programs can meet this challenge.

There are a number of challenges as more programs in HIV/AIDS, post-conflict reintegration and violence prevention seek to apply a more comprehensive gender approach to young men, including:

***Programs need to reinforce and include better impact evaluation.*** Of the examples cited here, only MAP-South Africa and Stepping Stones (South Africa) have or are undertaking rigorous quasi-experimental impact evaluations. Initial evaluation data from MAP suggest that attitudes and behavioral intentions changed after program activities. Such data is vital, not merely to refine and revise program approaches, but also for advocacy purposes—to demonstrate to policymakers and community leaders that men can in fact change attitudes and behaviors, and that a gender perspective applied to men and boys brings benefits for both young men and to women.

***The challenge of scaling up and engaging the public sector.*** All the examples included here are NGO efforts, with limited participation of the public sector. A major challenge in applying a gender perspective to young men is that of scaling up efforts to reach large numbers of young men, which generally entails engaging the public sector. There are promising examples of engaging the public sector, including MAP's collaboration with the South African armed forces and police, national policy discussions in South Africa about men and masculinities, national discussions in Botswana about men and AIDS, and initial discussions at the national level in Uganda. Nonetheless, large scale interventions that apply a gender perspective, in HIV/AIDS prevention, gender-based violence prevention, violence prevention and post-conflict re-integration are yet to be found. This provides a unique opportunity to the World Bank and its partner organizations to provide leadership.

***Need for documentation, dissemination and technical exchange on program experiences and lessons.*** The examples cited here suggest that curricula, training manuals, methodologies, social marketing campaign<sup>15</sup> materials and processes and evaluation instruments exist. Too often programs are pressured

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<sup>15</sup> Also commonly referred to as behavior change or social norms campaigns.

to produce materials with their own name and logo. Funders want to be associated with something new and unique. Nonetheless, there are program materials that could be more widely disseminated and utilized, and exchanges that could be promoted. These should go beyond short-term seminars or training workshops to include long-term partnerships that facilitate the true exchange of social technologies for engaging young men in a gender perspective.

### **Box 7: Including a Gender Focus for Young Men in Existing Youth Development Initiatives**

The field of youth development—in Africa and elsewhere—has faced the ongoing challenge of identifying the most effective ways to engage young people and promote their holistic development, ranging from jobs or livelihood skills, health promotion and health care, cultural-based and recreation activities, and complementing and enhancing their formal education. Among the challenges that youth development initiatives face is recruitment and retention, identifying and offering the best array of services and programs, integrating existing and new services, taking programs to scale, and impact evaluation. While this paper does not attempt to thoroughly address these challenges, it is relevant to consider how to include a gender focus on youth development initiatives. The following represent salient issues to consider, followed by suggested questions that existing initiatives could ask themselves regarding a gender focus for young men.

**Creating a Positive Sense of Identity and Belonging.** This literature review confirms that one of the major developmental challenges of young men in Africa is acquiring a socially recognized version of manhood. In the absence of other means to achieve a gendered identity, young men in various parts of the region sometimes gravitate toward gangs, vigilante groups and insurgency groups. Even when recruitment in such groups may be coercive, young men frequently come to see themselves as belonging to this group. Traditional rites of passage, political groups and religious groups may also provide this sense of identity and belonging for young men, sometimes with negative consequences. Many youth development programs in turn recognize the need to promote a sense of belonging to a group and pro-social identities. Some of the programs cited here have also sought to create a socially recognized identity for young men. CMA in Nigeria has rituals of belonging, and a structure of membership in which younger men are formally and informally mentored by older men. MAP uses t-shirts, logos and social activities to create a sense of belonging among young men and women who act as peer promoters. These experiences suggest that existing youth development initiatives should consider how to incorporate rituals of belonging and how to promote gender-equitable, non-violent versions of male identity within these rituals.

**Life skills programming.** There is a growing use of the term “life skills education” or life skills to refer to training and group educational activities for young people ranging from health education, HIV/AIDS prevention, violence prevention, communication skills, and sometimes even job skills. A recent review of the literature on life skills suggests that it is often weakly and inconsistently defined, and unevenly implemented, even when the same curriculum is used. These problems and challenges aside, examples of programs included here—CMA, MAP and Stepping Stones—all offer educational and training activities based on a similar format of empowerment, group formation, communication skills, role play activities and critical thinking skills that could be incorporated into existing life skills programming. These activities focusing on gender and masculinity could also be included in peace education efforts (which have also faced the same challenges of impact evaluation, inconsistent definitions and implementation).

**Scouts, national youth service programs and other large-scale youth membership organizations.** National youth corps and large scale non-governmental youth membership organizations are found throughout Africa. These programs should not be considered broadly representative of all youth; typically they have membership or application requirements, which may include educational attainment and which may exclude some of the most vulnerable youth. Nonetheless, by reaching substantial numbers of youth, particularly young men, such initiatives are strategic partners for including discussions about gender and masculinity. Many national-level Scouts organizations and national youth corps programs have already included activities related to health promotion, sexual and reproductive health, violence prevention and HIV/AIDS. In Kenya the Boy Scouts have started a national-level initiative to train scout leaders in working on gender norms, including discussions of masculinities.

**Box 7: Including a Gender Focus for Young Men in Existing Youth Development Initiatives (continued)**

**Linkages and partnerships with the formal education system.** School-based HIV/AIDS prevention and sexuality education initiatives have a long history in Africa, and elsewhere. Many of these have also included discussions or group educational activities on gender roles, sometimes including discussions on masculinity. While they represent a tremendous opportunity to further enhance discussions and reflections about gender and masculinity, there are also major shortcomings and challenges. One major question has been who carries out HIV prevention and sexuality education activities with youth. Various reviews of in-school HIV/AIDS and sexuality education have found that teachers frequently lack adequate skills and training to take on these sensitive issues; in other cases, the public education system is already stressed with providing basic education. Another challenge is that many teachers—particularly male teachers—may hold traditional, even misogynistic views about women, and in some cases they may even be responsible for sexual harassment and sexual violence. This suggests that collaborations with the public education system may be more effective than expecting the school system itself to carry out effective gender sensitization activities. These findings also point to the need to start with campaigns, training activities and sensitization of school principals and directors and teachers, to encourage them to critically reflect about their own attitudes and behaviors related to gender norms.

**Youth centers.** Youth center approaches in which activities based in a single site have been used in numerous settings throughout Africa; Love Life in South Africa is an example. While sometimes hailed as the “single solution” for youth development, there are major challenges, chief among these being recruitment, retainment and self-selection. Research suggests that youth largely self-select and that in many cases, those youth, both young men and women, who are most vulnerable are the least likely to participate in youth centers. In other cases, specific groups of youth in a sense “take over” the centers, making them attractive to specific groups, but sometimes excluding others. Despite these challenges, there are creative ways to include discussions of gender and masculinities in youth centers.

The following represent specific questions that should be asked of existing youth development initiatives related to gender and young men:

*Which kind of young men participate in the program?* As mentioned, programs often reach those who are the least vulnerable. Those young men who see programs as irrelevant, uninteresting or not part of their reality are likely to avoid them. Yet it may be these young men who are most likely to participate in gang activity, insurgency groups and other forms of violence.

*Where do young men already hang out?* In many cases, low-income young men gravitate more toward informal, self-formed youth groups, rather than those part of formal programs defined by adults. Youth development staff should seek to understand how these informal programs attract young men, and what formalized youth initiatives can learn from this process.

*What is the array of attractive and socially recognized identities for young men in a given setting?* Who do young men look up to, who do they aspire to be? What pro-social and gender-equitable elements of these could be incorporated into youth programming?

*What are the gender norms and views about masculinity within youth development institutions?* What kind of formal and informal messages do young men receive about gender roles and masculinity in national youth corps, in the Scouts, in the school system. This reflection should include an analysis of the barriers, challenges, gatekeepers and opinion-setters, and pathways to change, or voices of resistance who may be promoting non-violent and gender-equitable views about manhood.

## **Policy Responses**

This paper did not set out to provide a comprehensive analysis of policies related to gender and young men in Africa. Nonetheless, based on site visits and key informant interviews, a number of relevant insights on policy implications emerge. Policy initiatives to include explicit discussions about young men

and the need to engage them in a dual gender perspective largely do not exist in the four countries studied. The following are brief reflections on policy efforts to promote a gender perspective in young men:

**Box 8: Government Initiatives and Policy Responses Related to Young Men**

**Botswana:** In Botswana, the Men Sector is a national alliance of governmental and NGOs including the defense forces, the police, the House of Chiefs and Parliament and local NGOs. The alliance, a presidential initiative, seeks to reduce HIV/AIDS by ensuring that men are well informed and actively involved in prevention and care-giving. To date, however, the efforts of the alliance have been hindered by funding problems and achievements have been limited to workshops and meetings among alliance members. There has been relatively little direct work with men, nor comprehensive planning and joint action. Thus, while the alliance presents an interesting model for governmental and NGO collaboration on working with men in HIV/AIDS, it has been limited in its implementation.

**South Africa:** Among the four countries, and probably in Africa as a whole, South Africa has paid the most attention at the policy level to engaging men in the promotion of gender equity. The National Office on the Status of Women spearheaded the development of a National Task Force on Constructive Male Involvement and has promoted numerous dialogues between key national government representatives, civil society, and leaders from the field of male involvement. The constitutional body, the Commission on Gender Equality, has also played an active role in incorporating men in gender equality dialogues. The Department of Health has established a broad-based countrywide forum, Men in Partnership Against AIDS (MIPAA) to engage and support men's positive involvement.

**Uganda:** In its 2000 National AIDS Campaign, Uganda followed the lead of UNAIDS and focused on men and HIV/AIDS. While the campaign was not widely visible, it did spark reflection by some NGOs and national HIV program officials about the need to engage men.

## VI. PATHWAYS TO CHANGE AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY, NON-VIOLENCE AND HEALTH-SEEKING

### Introduction

The report has made references to alternative, non-violent versions of manhood and to elements of traditional socialization in Africa that promote non-violence, and more gender-equitable attitudes on the part of young men and to forms of socialization and social control that reduce the vulnerabilities of young men and reduce violence. In carrying out focus group discussions and individual interviews with young men, we sought to identify factors that serve to promote gender equality, health-seeking behavior and non-violence. Specifically, we interviewed young men who showed non-violent or gender-equitable discourses, often at odds with the views of their peers. In interviews with these young men, we attempted to identify factors that may be associated with having these alternative views about gender, violence and health-seeking. These interviews and our interaction with the young men were short. We should be cautious in reviewing the examples not to oversimplify or categorize young men based on short interviews and interactions. Nonetheless, the examples are useful for reflection on how to promote gender equality and non-violence among young men in Africa.

### Case Examples of Non-Violent and More Gender-Equitable Discourses

*Ali, Secondary School Student, Muslim, Kaduna, Nigeria: "I think girls have just as much right to education as boys."*

In a focus group discussion with Christian and Muslim young men, all enrolled in secondary school, the prevailing discourse was that girls and women were not equal to men and that men should work, while women should care for the home and children. Most young men questioned the importance of education for girls and women, arguing that such education might only be useful because "educated mothers can educate sons better," as one said. However, one Muslim young man disagreed. He said that girls and women were equal and deserved equal education and could excel in any area that men worked in (this in a



part of Nigeria where Muslim leaders want to enact Sharia law). In a subsequent individual interview, the young man said he had seen in his family how women's education is important (a female cousin had a Ph D). He also described how his father had used violence against his mother, but was reprimanded by male friends and colleagues and changed his behavior. All these things, the young man said, had led him to change his views on girls and women. These positive experiences from within his own family provided opportunities for Ali to reflect on gender roles and to develop more equitable attitudes about women.

***Khaled, University Student, Muslim, Kaduna, Nigeria: "When I first saw blood, I ran back home..."***

One university student in Kaduna spoke about his involvement in the 1987 Christian-Muslim conflict. He described the initial adrenaline rush he felt as he and his friends shouted *Jihad*. Nonetheless, when he first saw someone killed by the violence, he recoiled. He was momentarily compelled to be part of the violence out of a sense of group belonging, and of being caught up with his peers in a single-minded purpose. But when he found himself standing inside a church and began to participate in vandalism, and when he saw Christian youth injured, he recoiled. He recalled his parents' own views about non-violence and he thought about Christian friends and neighbors. Both his ties to his family, and their clear support for non-violence, and his critical thinking and reflection served as protective factors.

***Charles, a young father and husband, northern Uganda: "I don't want to beat my wife."***

A young, university-educated man in northern Uganda described his interactions with his wife. He believed that it was important for her to work, although he said their relationships would be strained if she was working and he was not. He said that he did not believe in violence against women, and also did not plan on taking a second wife, even though this was permitted and encouraged in his culture. He credited his own father's views about women with being his inspiration:

*Interviewer:* Have you gotten to the point where you thought you might (use violence against your wife)?

*Charles:* Actually, I plan to inherit my father's experience, actually, my father's behavior. He didn't beat my mother. And I do not want even to beat my wife. We can settle the differences between us, within the two of us. And that's the way my father was handling my mom. If they quarreled, he would keep quiet, wait, and... they would settle their difference. He has really been a role model for me as far as relationship is concerned. And he had only one wife. For me, I will not have more than one wife.

Through the positive example of his father, Charles was able to reflect on the value and importance of not using violence against women.

***Daniel, HIV-positive young father, Kampala: "After getting treatment (for opportunistic infections) and care at TASO, my health started to improve and I started to be more confident..."***

The AIDS Support Organisation in Uganda is the site for the first ARV treatment in Uganda, and is one of the first NGOs to offer specific support services for HIV-positive fathers. Through the Positive Men's Union (POMU), they offer support groups for men, in which young men counselors, most themselves HIV-positive, reach other young men. Research for this paper, and other studies confirm that men in various parts of Africa are more reluctant than women to seek HIV-testing and subsequently health care, either ARV in those settings where is available, or care for opportunistic infections. Daniel described a typical pattern of depression, denial and self-destructive behavior when he tested HIV-positive. He spent a year both out of school and out of work and his health deteriorated; he took few actions to seek health care. His brother subsequently invited him to participate in discussion groups with POMU, and sought health care. His health improved, he became involved in an income generation project, and he became a counselor for other HIV-positive men. He subsequently met his wife, also HIV-positive, and after counseling, decided to have a child, taking advantage of AZT available for pregnant women. His child is nine months old and HIV-negative.

Daniel's story suggests the role of important others—in this case a brother—modeling help-seeking, and the importance of group spaces within a program where young men can discuss with other young men challenges associated with being HIV-positive. Furthermore, by talking about his experiences

with other young men, as a participant and subsequently a counselor, Daniel reinforced his own help-seeking behavior.

### **Protective Factors**

Much of the research on young men and HIV/AIDS and young men and violence has tended to focus on the negative examples, or the prevailing behaviors, without probing ways in which young men can question and counter prevailing norms, and without probing for the contradictions in these prevailing norms. In the context of HIV/AIDS, for example, the standard KAP studies do not generally help program developers identify pathways or conditions under which knowledge is gained and safer sex can be negotiated. Nonetheless, there is a small but emerging literature on protective factors that promote gender equality, health-seeking or health-protective behaviors and non-violence (see Barker, 2005). Our program visits and interviews also identified possible protective factors:

***A high degree of self-reflection and space to rehearse new behaviors.*** In South Africa, a group of peer promoters working at the University of Western Cape in collaboration with the MAP Program, had seen examples of young men who had forced women to have sex and come to see that that was wrong. Other young men who participate in the program had interacted with the more gender-equitable young men—the peer promoters—and begun to “try out” the possibility of being more gender-equitable. This example suggests the importance both of self-reflection, and the need to create “safe spaces” in which young men can rehearse new behaviors without being ridiculed, as is often the case, in their male peer groups.

The example of Conscientizing Male Adolescents (Girard 2003) also points to the importance of an educational model for young men that explicitly focuses on promoting a critical consciousness about rigid gender norms, as does MAP. Activities by both organizations promote a reflection about the negative and harmful aspects of rigid versions of manhood—negative for young women and for young men.

***Having seen the impact of violence on their own families and constructed a positive lesson out of the experience.*** Young men working as peer promoters with MAP openly discussed examples of men’s use of violence against women that they had seen in their homes, and on university campuses among peers. Some of these young men had themselves carried out this violence, and were later able to reflect on the consequences and to change their behavior as a result.

***Tapping into men’s sense of responsibility and positive engagement as fathers.*** Both in the case of Daniel above, and in a focus group with HIV-positive fathers in Soweto, South Africa, a number of men reported reflecting about their behavior—in terms of caring for their own health, practicing safer sex and supporting their partners—in part because of the high value they place on their children. The potential to promote behavior change by tapping into men’s sense of concern for their children has been cited in other documents, but has seldom been taken to scale (UNAIDS 2000). Nonetheless, since young men’s unsafe sexual behavior also increases the vulnerability of women and children to HIV infection, young men’s anticipation of fatherhood and their high esteem for its responsibilities can be tapped as important incentives for practicing safer sexual behaviors (Scalway 2001).

***Rites of passage processes and traditions that served as positive forms of social control, and which have incorporated new information and ideals.*** In South Africa, one program engaged low-income, urban-based young men in an updated, traditional rites of passage program “in the bush,” in which elder men taught values of responsibility, non-violence, sexual restraint and respect for elders (Wood and Jewkes 2001). This was in sharp contrast to a sexually violent version of manhood prominent in townships. While the authors suggest that in the long-run, some of these young men revert to the versions of manhood that their peers typically adhere to, this is an important example of how traditional forms of

socialization can be tapped to promote changes in gender norms, reducing violence and HIV risk. The examples of the health education program for newly circumcised young men in Kenya (Annex 2), and the informal HIV discussions led by male Lango elders in Uganda, show similar dynamics—rites of passage and traditional socialization that incorporate new information.

**Family factors.** Families vary tremendously in terms of whether they promote more or less gender-equitable views, or can protect their sons from becoming involved in insurgency groups or other forms of violence. In the case of South Africa, in interviews with young people involved in violence in KwaZulu Natal, young people highlighted the family as key to helping keep sons out of ongoing sectarian violence. Similarly, we saw the examples earlier of Daniel and Charles, who cited a father and a brother as having modeled positive behaviors.

**In the case of some forms of violence and conflict, employment and school enrollment are protective factors.** In the case of ethnic violence in Kaduna, young men—including those previously involved in this violence—cited having stable employment and being enrolled in school as being protective factors. Education not only exposes young men to alternative forms of conflict resolution and critical thinking skills (useful for questioning the arguments of those who encouraged the violence), but also promotes a longer time horizon that goes beyond the immediate conflict incident.

**Community mobilization around the immediate vulnerability of young men.** While these examples are fewer, we highlighted the case of the village of Bo in Sierra Leone, which was able to organize itself to keep many young men out of the RUF. There are probably more such examples that have not been analyzed.

## Final Reflections on Pathways to Change

Change is happening, and it is happening even without program and policy initiatives to promote it. The educational attainment of girls and women, which has increased in the region, is clearly changing gender norms. Changes in economies mean that the economic advantages of men compared to women have eroded in some settings. Young men interviewed in diverse settings in Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda confirm the importance of women's education and women's income and perceive that these are good for families. Some men and boys are changing how they view women. Nonetheless, this change goes hand in hand with traditional gender hierarchies. Young men accept change, but also hang on to traditional views.

Changing gender norms is slow, and it is made even slower by the fact that those who make program and policy decisions often have their own deep-seated biases about gender and are frequently resistant to question those. Efforts to question the sexual behavior of men in the African context, for example, have sometimes run into resistance by national leaders who perceive that African men themselves are being “bashed” or maligned. To be sure, some program initiatives and research on HIV/AIDS is prescriptive and represent outside-in approaches in which foreigners are attempting to change African men and cast them in a negative light. Some of these efforts have only generated defensiveness.

The challenge to promote changes in gender norms is to tap into voices of change and pathways to change that exist in the context of Africa. Ultimately it will be the voices of these young and adult men, and women, who will promote the change. These include the voices of young men cited earlier who show pathways to change. They also include the voice of the Prime Minister of Mozambique who said that African men must question some of their attitudes. And it includes Nelson Mandela who publicly admitted that his son died of AIDS and who publicly came out to say that he regretted some negative

comments he had previously made about homosexuality. While none of these voices and examples are in and of themselves sufficient to change gender norms, they are a vital first step.

The voices here are also important for seeing the fluidity of youth and young men in particular. As mentioned at the beginning of this report, the discourse used to describe young men and the images of them are too often negative. While many young men are involved as combatants and in other violent and harmful activities, other young men find ways to stay out of such activities. Young men are on the front lines of protests and riots—sometimes with valid political motives. Frequently they are protesting against governments and regimes that deserve criticism and need to be held accountable. Many young men show tremendous flexibility, adaptability, creativity and energy—energy that should and could be tapped in the name of social, economic and human development.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Two of the most pressing social issues in Africa—conflict and HIV/AIDS—have direct links to gender and the social construct of masculinity. Nonetheless, most gender analyses of conflict in the Africa region focus on how sexual violence is used against women and girls, or on the relatively small number of women and girls involved as combatants. Reports on conflict, for example, generally conclude that those who use weapons are usually men, and mostly young men, and those who suffer and survive the consequences of violence and conflict are women and girls.

Similarly, in analyses of HIV/AIDS in Africa, most reports focus on how women are made vulnerable by the sexual behavior of men, often using an overly simplistic dichotomy that men always hold power in sexual relationships, and that women are powerless. Without a doubt, too many women and girls have been made vulnerable by the behavior of men and boys in conflict settings and in sexual relationships. However, in the development literature in general, and in many policy statements related to gender, African men, young and old, are presented in simplistic and overtly negative terms, and gender as it relates to men is ignored.

### *Applying a gender perspective with young men helps us to understand the root cause behind HIV/AIDS and conflict in Africa*

Applying a more sophisticated gender analysis as it relates to conflict and to HIV/AIDS helps us to understand how men and women, and boys and girls, are made vulnerable by rigid notions of manhood and gender hierarchies. Our central conclusions are:

- Versions of manhood in Africa are socially constructed, fluid over time and in different settings, and plural. There is no such thing as a “typical” young man in sub-Saharan Africa. However, for males in Africa, as in other parts of the world, the chief mandate or social requirement for achieving manhood is some level of financial independence, employment or income, and subsequently starting a family. Achieving manhood in the African context also often depends on an older man—one who holds more power—deciding when a young man is able to achieve socially recognized manhood. This issue of the “big man” and of older men in general holding power over younger men is a widespread and defining aspect of manhood in Africa. Initiation practices, or rites of passage, are other important elements in the socialization of boys and men throughout the region.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 10 million young men and women, ages 15-24, live with HIV/AIDS; of this group, more than 75 percent are women, reflecting a worldwide feminization of the epidemic. Gender role norms are among the strongest underlying social factors that influence sexual behaviors. For young men in sub-Saharan Africa, as for many young men worldwide, sexual experience is frequently associated with initiation into manhood and achieving a socially recognized manhood.

Prevailing norms about sexuality and manhood suggest that young men should be knowledgeable, aggressive, and experienced regarding sexuality and reproductive health issues. Young men often have a disproportionate share of the power and voice in sexual and intimate relationships with women.

- Despite relatively high levels of awareness in most parts of the region there continues to be low levels of safer sex, particularly for girls, and misconceptions both about preventive behaviors, including condom use, and the disease itself. In some cases, young men report the conflicting pressures they experience, between their knowledge (about HIV/AIDS and safer sex behavior) and their behavior, or between what they say they *should do* and what they *actually do*.
- Young men historically have been combatants in armed conflicts in the Africa region. Various accounts, and research carried out for this study, affirmed that the lack of employment, which provides both income and social recognition, is linked to young men's participation in armed conflicts. Other forms of violence prevalent in Africa are also clearly linked to masculinities, including gang activity, vigilante groups and ethnic-based violence.

***While still rare, work with young men in Africa is beginning to include a gender perspective—particularly as it relates to HIV/AIDS***

Men As Partners Program in South Africa, Stepping Stones in Uganda and South Africa, and Conscientizing Male Adolescents in Nigeria, are all examples of work with young men that apply a gender perspective. Emerging lessons from these programs suggests the importance of: (i) the explicit inclusion of discussions of manhood/masculinities in educational activities; (ii) the creation of enabling environments in which individual and group-level changes are supported by changes in social norms and in institutions; (iii) broader alliance-building; and (iv) the incorporation of the multiple needs of young men.

Furthermore, as more programs in the area of HIV/AIDS and post-conflict reintegration and violence prevention seek to include this more comprehensive gender approach in the case of young men, there are also a number of challenges to consider, including: (i) the need for better impact evaluation; (ii) the challenge of scaling up and engaging the public sector; and (iii) the need for documentation, dissemination and technical exchange in terms of program experiences and lessons learned.

***Empirical evidence on gender approaches to working with youth men is scanty***

With a few exceptions, little in the way of empirical evidence is available on best practices in terms of approaches and interventions on gender and young men in the Africa region. Lessons from international experience, however, suggest the following principles to promote gender equality, health-seeking or health-protective behaviors and non-violence: (i) a high degree of self-reflection and spaces to rehearse new behavior; (ii) constructing positive lessons out of the experience of having witnessed or carried out violence; (iii) tapping into men's sense of responsibility and positive engagement as fathers; (iv) incorporating new information and ideals into rites of passage processes and traditions that historically served as positive forms of social control; (v) engaging families, peer groups and social networks to promote more gender-equitable and non-violent versions of manhood; (vi) creating employment and opportunities for schooling to reduce violence and conflict; and (vii) mobilizing communities around the immediate vulnerabilities of young men.

### ***Reducing At-Risk Behavior among Young Men from a Gender Perspective: Directions and Entry Points***

Changing gender norms is evidently a slow process, but it is made even slower by the fact that those who make program and policy decisions often have their own deep-seated biases about gender and are frequently resistant to question these preconceptions. Efforts to question the sexual behavior of men in the African context, for example, have sometimes run into resistance by national leaders who perceive that African men themselves are being “bashed” or maligned. The challenge to promote changes in gender norms is to tap into voices of change and pathways to change that exist in the context of Africa. Ultimately it will be the voices of these young men and adult men, and women, who will promote the necessary individual, community and social changes.

#### ***Changes to Youth and Gender Policies***

This said, a first priority for governments and development agencies alike is to broaden gender policies to recognize the gender-specific needs and realities of men and to support strategies for their meaningful involvement in the promotion of gender equality. Examples of such policies already exist, such as the new constitution in South Africa, which has included several clauses on gender equality as it relates to men. Similarly, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa invoked the issue of manhood, suggesting that “for many, acceptance and forgiveness have been incorporated into new self-understanding of what it is to be a man” (Morrell 2002:30).

Similarly, youth policies need to include gender from both a female and a male perspective. Many youth policies do indeed recognize gender as a variable (e.g., Kenya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone) but the application is only to young women. To be sure, a focus on the inclusion of females in youth programs and organizations—which are mostly male-dominated—is necessary, but the absence of a gender perspective in working with men risks the effectiveness of these youth programs and policies.

#### ***Key Entry Points***

As for entry points, in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, the following would be important cross-cutting themes:

- *Working with Young Men through Mainstream Youth Organizations:* Youth institutions and organizations are important for young people. In Sub-Saharan Africa, youth organizations are frequently male-dominated, thus providing an important space to reflect and examine gender and how it impacts on young men. Types of youth programs that could include gender and young men include HIV/AIDS prevention, peer education, and recreational and cultural activities.
- *Engaging Communities through Community-Driven Development:* Community-driven development (CDD) has been used as a central mechanism for empowering communities and enhancing the relationship between public service providers and citizens in Africa, and increasingly, CDD is being viewed as a means of reaching young people. Because most African countries are using CDD in both urban and rural areas, CDD is one of the potentially most powerful means of reaching young people as well as their parents, teachers and peers, and community leaders on issues such as gender and young men. The possibility of earmarked resources for youth within CDD is now being raised in some African countries, thus providing a specific entry point for gender and young men.
- *Using Social Marketing to Promote Change in Gender Norms:* Social marketing has been highly effective worldwide in changing social norms and behavior in areas such as nutrition, family

planning, and health—with radio being the most effective medium in Africa. Such techniques are being used to change social norms on gender. In South Africa, for example, the 5-in-6 Project was named for the five out of six men who, statistics suggest, do not use violence against women. Through its “Everyday Hero Campaign,” it promoted the idea that five in six men—“an overwhelming majority”—want to end violence against women. Experience has demonstrated that relying on youth to inform media and social communication campaigns is central to their effectiveness, e.g., in the development of condom brands. Using positive role models for young men who serve as voices for respect, non-violence, self-control and resistance is another important strategy.

Sector specific entry points are:

- *Education.* The education system is one of the most powerful systems for socializing young people and thus an important entry point for addressing gender and social constructs of masculinity. To the extent that gender-based materials are available and are being used, these should be reviewed for content and messages related to male gender issues. In secondary education, again to the extent that they are in place, life skills, family life education, sexuality education, and HIV prevention programs should be adapted to include materials and discussions on gender and young men. Teachers and other staff in the public education system must also be engaged to question their own attitudes and behaviors related to gender.
- *National HIV/AIDS Programs.* National AIDS programs should include explicit elements on young men and gender. Moreover, specific efforts should be made within these programs to engage men on gender equality and safer sex behaviors. Social norm communication strategies should also focus on creating a masculine culture of care, prevention and solidarity rather than simply providing information. Lastly, programs focused on maternal and child health and the prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission, HIV treatment programming, HIV-testing and national-level HIV prevention efforts, should have a focus on youth men and gender.
- *Employment and Training.* Addressing labor market constraints and limited employment opportunities goes beyond the scope of this paper, but to the extent that job creation policies and programs exist, they should take into account the gender-specific realities of young men. Making available employment and training opportunities that provide income necessary in the short-term for young men to achieve socially recognized notions of manhood, and that provide real opportunities for skills development, would go a long way to reducing at-risk behavior and preventing conflict among young men.
- *Juvenile Justice.* Juvenile justice systems and policies should be re-examined with a view to understanding the gender-specific realities of young men. African traditional courts historically avoided punitive policies of juvenile justice used more frequently in the West, in favor of restorative justice. A number of post-conflict countries have applied restorative justice policies, although many are now moving toward more punitive policies. The “defilement” law in Uganda is an example of punitive policies that may be ineffectual in reducing sexual violence. South Africa’s experiences in diversion programs, including community service, life skills training and victim-offender mediation should be considered for replication throughout the region. Lastly, various national organizations, including the police, the armed forces, youth corps and vocational training programs should adopt policies to include gender sensitization, and discussions of masculinity, in their training activities.
- *Post Conflict.* A number of opportunities to address young men and gender exist within the framework of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs following conflict.

For example, both the demobilization and reintegration phases include orientation and psycho-social support to ex-combatants (and their dependents) that allow for discussions and reflections on reasons for conflict as it relates to gender and men. It is also important to reinforce positive images of masculinity for former combatants who need to find non-violent male identities in a post-conflict society. Lastly, young men could be engaged as “peace builders” and promoters of gender equality in pre-conflict situations (plans are in place in Chad to support such an initiative).

### ***Investing in Research***

Additional research is needed to better understand how the changing nature of masculinity affects adolescent boys, the developmental differences between younger and older adolescents, and the potential of different protective contextual factors to promote safer sexual behaviors and non-violence in the context of sub-Saharan Africa. Evaluation of existing program interventions is another priority. Such evaluations would help NGOs and government agencies that are beginning to apply gender lenses to young men to structure, systematize and conceptualize their interventions in more strategic and consistent ways. Specific research questions that have been identified include:

- What are the attitudes of gate-keepers, such as teachers, community members and others who are the main socialization agents for young men?
- How are gender-related norms constructed in diverse settings where young men are socialized, including the education system, the workplace, communities and the armed forces?
- In what circumstances do men question or resist “militarized” or violent versions of manhood? What community processes and social control serve to reduce conflict and violence and to protect young men from becoming involved in armed or insurgency groups?
- What are the factors that inhibit or encourage young men to seek health services, including and focusing on, HIV testing and treatment and adherence to treatment regimes?
- What are young men’s views of new HIV and STI-related technologies, including microbicides and the female condom?
- What is the influence of married young men, who are often left out of both research and interventions in terms of being a population with special needs?
- What is the understanding of young men regarding ABC messages, particularly in relation to partner reduction and consistent condom use?
- What are the possibilities of applying a gender perspective to young men in post-conflict reintegration programs? To date, gender mainstreaming and a gender perspective in post-conflict reintegration programs for ex-combatants have looked at the special needs of young women. Operations research on what it would mean to apply a gender perspective to young men in these programs would be vital.
- What are the gender-specific challenges of young men as they transition from conflict settings and male identities associated with violence to male identities associated with post-conflict?

Lastly, action-research models that help youth identify social norms and engage in critical reflection can be an effective research strategy. An interesting example comes from researchers in Botswana who carried out an essay contest in which young people were asked what it would be like to wake up one day and find themselves a member of the other sex (Commeyras and Montsi 2000). The process served to promote a critical reflection about gender at the school-level and also provided useful insights on the nature of change, and the challenges of promoting change, in gender norms in formal education settings.



## Annex 1: Promising Programs

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Throughout the region, there are many notable examples of HIV/AIDS prevention, post-conflict reintegration, peace education, health promotion and violence prevention efforts that are reaching young men. Many of these examples have been discussed and analyzed in other reviews. The focus of this report, however, is on the handful of programs that have included discussions and approaches related to the specific realities and vulnerabilities of young men and applied a gender lens to young men. To this end, the summary table includes a diversity of notable practices and methodologies for engaging young men in the promotion of gender-equity. There are, to be sure, other programs that have applied a gender perspective to engaging young men. The examples discussed here represent those that have: (i) existed for several years; (ii) have methodologies that have been tested and systematized; (iii) have either carried out some form of evaluation, or at a minimum have devoted staff resources to reflecting about their objectives and outcomes; and (iv) have an explicit inclusion of activities for engaging young men in the questioning of rigid forms of socialization.

Detailed information on the background and methodology of several of these programs are included in Annex2.

Summary Table of Promising Approaches

ORGANIZATION	FOCUS	KEY STRATEGIES	TARGET POPULATION	EVALUATION	COLLABORATIONS	LESSONS LEARNED
Conscientizing Male Adolescents (Nigeria)	Gender Socialization; Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS prevention; Prevention of gender-based violence	1-small <b>group educational</b> 2-distribution of newsletter in schools 3-community-based advocacy activities 4-peer promoters	Young men in Calabar and Uyo schools	<b>Anecdotal reports and in-depth interviews</b> indicate positive attitude and behavior change; future plans for systematic evaluation	Local schools; local NGO focused on promoting empowerment of young women	Critical and <b>systematic discussion of masculinity</b> more effective than specific focus on health and behavior;  Engagement of <b>young male leaders as positive role models</b> has amplification effect among peers
The Fatherhood Project (Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa)	Social norms/media	1-raise <b>public awareness on importance of fathers through traveling photo exhibition</b> 2-produce and disseminate existing research for advocacy and program efforts	General public; government representatives; social service organizations and professionals; foundations.	<b>Anecdotal and media reports</b> indicate growing public awareness of need to address male involvement and engage men as fathers.	Media; local government; universities NGO's; faith-based organizations; community-based organizations; private sector	<b>Visual media is a strategic vehicle for promoting positive images of men</b>
Men as Partners – Engender Health and Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (South Africa)	Gender Socialization; Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS prevention; Prevention of gender-based violence -Community Violence Prevention	1- <b>small group educational workshops</b> 2- <b>capacity-building of partner organizations</b> 3-community action teams 4- <b>national level advocacy</b>	Young and adult men and women in male-only and mixed groups in workplaces, trade union, prisons, government, universities, and communities	<b>Small-scale quantitative impact evaluation</b> (2002) with 209 male participants; improvement in HIV knowledge and positive changes in attitudes towards gender roles, including issues related to gender-based violence; <b>Quasi-experimental impact evaluation</b> underway.	Labor federations, community-based HIV/AIDS organizations, South African National Defense Force, Hope Worldwide, national NGO specializing in HIV prevention care and support	Activities should <b>engage men as positive partners</b> in the promotion of health and equity; <b>Strategic alliances at local and national levels</b> help to ensure acceptability and sustainability of efforts
Men Sector (Botswana)	Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS prevention	1--information campaigns 2-- <b>capacity building of key government and non-government coalition partners</b>	Policy-makers and leaders of various male-dominated sectors; Young and adult men in defense	<b>No official evaluation</b> ; anecdotal reports indicate increased awareness of need for male involvement in prevention and care-	Male-dominated organizations including Defense force, Department of Prisons and Rehabilitation, Police Services, Men Sex and	<b>Engagement of national level institutions</b> lends to credibility and reach of efforts; Government-led

ORGANIZATION	FOCUS	KEY STRATEGIES	TARGET POPULATION	EVALUATION	COLLABORATIONS	LESSONS LEARNED
			forces, prisons, and communities	giving	AIDS, Ministers, House of chiefs and parliament	coalitions and policy efforts need <b>committed and sustained funding</b>
Soul City (South Africa)	Social norms /media; Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS prevention; Prevention of gender-based violence	1-broadcast of entertaining and educational <b>television and radio programs</b> in conjunction with dissemination of written materials and advocacy campaigns	General public of all ages; viewing analysis indicates popularity among young men – theme of most recent series is socialization and masculinities	<b>Formative research for program content and follow-up evaluation with sample audience;</b> programs viewed as important source of information and inspiration; link to increase in more gender-equitable attitudes and interpersonal communication about domestic violence	TV, Radio and Print Media; Non-governmental organizations, Universities	<b>Diverse media strategies</b> ensure that different audiences can be reached; <b>Educational efforts over an extended period</b> add to credibility and impact
Stepping Stones (Regional)	Gender Socialization; Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS prevention; Prevention of gender-based violence; Community violence prevention	1- <b>small group educational workshops</b> which engage entire communities	Young and adult men and women, in peer-based and mixed-groups	<b>Small-scale evaluations</b> indicate increased shared decision-making among couples, application of communication skills to both sex and non-sex issues and behavior changes in relation to more equitable income distribution, decreased gender-based violence and increased safer sex. – <b>Large-scale randomized control trial in South Africa</b> underway	Community leaders and members	<b>Peer-based groups</b> are important spaces for exploring myths and perceptions related to gender and sexuality; mixed groups provide opportunities to discuss and commit to strategies for change; <b>Endorsement of community leaders</b> is important in the mobilization of participants and in ensuring sustained changes
Targeted AIDS Intervention (South Africa)	Gender Socialization; Sexual and Reproductive	1- <b>peer education activities</b> in schools and through sports clubs and events 2- <b>training workshops for</b>	Young men ages 11-18 in province of KwaZulu-Natal	<b>Questionnaires and focus-group discussions</b> indicate growing awareness of	Local schools; South African Football Association	<b>Role models</b> , such as football players, are key partners in mobilizing and

ORGANIZATION	FOCUS	KEY STRATEGIES	TARGET POPULATION	EVALUATION	COLLABORATIONS	LESSONS LEARNED
	Health and HIV/AIDS prevention	<b>teachers and school leaders</b>		women's rights, appreciation for care-giving, and positive impact in delaying sexual debut		motivating young men to participate in activities; Activities should be <b>culturally specific and fun</b>
Positive Men's Union (POMU)–TASO (Uganda)	Gender Socialization; Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS prevention; HIV/AIDS support and treatment	1- <b>support groups for men living with HIV/AIDS</b> 2-support and long-term planning for affected families 3-community-outreach activities to build awareness	Young and adult men living with HIV/AIDS in Uganda and their families;	<b>Anecdotal reports</b> indicate increased health-seeking behavior among men and improved communication with partners	Women's organizations; Community leaders	Men need <b>“safe” spaces</b> in which they can discuss experiences and concerns in living with HIV/AIDS and practice care-giving and health-seeking skills; <b>Collaborations with women's groups</b> contribute an important perspective and help to that efforts address the holistic needs of men and their families

## Annex 2: Detailed Background and Methodologies of Promising Programs

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### STEPPING STONES

#### Background

Originally developed and tested in Uganda for use with non-literate rural communities, Stepping Stones is a participatory training program that has since been widely adapted and used throughout the region. It engages entire communities, young and adult men and women, in critical reflections on gender-roles, communication, relationships, and links these to sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention. It provides a grass-roots and low-cost approach to mobilizing change at individual and community levels. To date, Stepping Stones workshops have been conducted in more than 20 African countries, including Gambia, Mozambique and Tanzania and several Asian countries, including India and The Philippines.

#### Methodology

The content of the workshops is grouped into four themes: (i) group cooperation, (ii) HIV and safer sex, (iii) why we behave in the ways we do, and (iv) ways in which we can change. In its entirety, the curriculum aims to increase knowledge of sexual and reproductive health issues, build decision-making and communication skills and improve gender, inter-generational and peer relationships.

The first step is to engage community leaders and obtain their support. Subsequently, the leaders themselves invite members from the community to participate in the workshops. This support lends credibility to the program and ultimately, strengthens the community's commitment to sustaining change.

Participants are organized into four peer groups divided by age and sex—older men, older women, younger men and younger women. The groups are led by facilitators of the same age range and sex and preferably from the same community. The original training manual includes 18 content-based three-hour workshop sessions which are built around four major themes. Sessions are arranged to progressively move the participants toward more challenging discussions. Over a three-four month period, the peer groups participate in the workshops, also convening with the other groups at fixed intervals to exchange ideas and debate issues. At the conclusion of the workshops, there is a community-wide meeting in which the peer groups present skits reflecting what they have learned and make their “requests for change.” This community-wide meeting is a fundamental component to the Stepping Stones package, as it is the moment in which the community is mobilized to create strategies for the changes they would like to see in relation to sexual and reproductive health, gender roles, and overall well-being. Upon the conclusion of the workshops, each group continues meeting to sustain the changes and to serve as a support group to its members.

#### Monitoring and Evaluation

The participatory nature of the program provides a mechanism by which facilitators can continuously monitor the quality of the sessions. Participants regularly provide feedback on facilitation, process and content of the session, as well as discuss their own progress and ideas for new activities.

An external review found that the program had positive effects on knowledge of HIV, communication and decision-making skills, and relationships, particularly in terms of reduced violence and conflict (IGWG 2003). Specifically, the training package includes an entire session on the use of alcohol and its linkages to unsafe sex and gender-based violence. After the workshops, reported drinking has been reduced in various settings.

Findings from other evaluations, which have mainly focused on gender-based violence, indicate increased shared decision-making among couples, application of communication skills to both sexual and non-sexual issues and behavior changes in relation to more equitable income distribution, decreased gender-based violence and increased safer sex.

Finally, the Medical Research Council of South Africa is currently coordinating a large-scale randomized control trial in rural South Africa to evaluate the effectiveness in reducing HIV infection and promoting more gender-equitable attitudes and practices. The intervention entails 13 content-based sessions and three meetings of peer groups. The control is a low-dose intervention of a single session focused on HIV and safer sexual practices. The

research design includes quantitative and qualitative components, with the primary outcome being occurrence of a new HIV infection in the two year period after baseline. The secondary outcomes are knowledge and attitudes related to sexual and reproductive health and gender.

## **CONSCIENTIZING MALE ADOLESCENTS (Nigeria)**

### **Background**

Founded in 1995, Conscientizing Male Adolescents (CMA) engages young men on issues related to gender-based oppression through long-term group education and reflection. The program has grown significantly in the last 10 years, from a pilot group of 25 young men to reach approximately 700 students per year, most of whom are recognized as leaders among their peers. In this way, the program endeavors to develop a movement of progressive men to work as allies in the promotion of gender equality. Though the reach of the program has been to Calabar and Uyo, the program presents a successful model for working with young men to develop critical thinking skills and challenge gender norms.

### **Methodology**

The core of the CMA program is a two-year group education curriculum which emphasizes dialogue, reflection and logical argument. In the first year, Level I, young men participate in weekly two-hour discussions focused on gender and sexism as social constructions, discrimination, sexual and reproductive health and awareness and understanding of violence. The second year, Level II, reinforces these concepts and focuses on further building critical thinking, communication and mediation skills. Participants also discuss other types of oppression, including those related to poverty and ethnicity.

Upon the initiative of young men who had completed the two-year curriculum, there is now a “Level III” group that meets regularly and participates in community activities and discussions on issues related to gender. CMA staff have also recently begun conducting group discussions with university students. The discussions distill many of the topics from the curriculum, with a focus on violence against women due to widespread problems with sexual harassment at the university. Discussions are facilitated by trained “field officers,” who include teachers from participating schools, CMA staff, as well as young men who have completed previous levels of the curriculum.

Additional activities included the distribution of a newsletter, *The Male Adolescent*, in local primary and secondary schools, community-based advocacy related to the promotion of women’s rights and the prevention of violence.

### **Voices of Change**

In the excerpts below, CMA participants commented on how they believe the program has changed them:

I thought because someone is female that they did not have the right to engage in certain things. Now I understand everyone deserves privilege, regardless of gender.

When the program was introduced in my school I did not take part in cooking. Now I understand it is both for women and men. Women do not have a special feature for cooking. I saw girls as nothing, and then I saw their benefits are my benefits, their interest, my interest.

Only when I look within myself can I find the answer. I was somebody easily convinced. I believe in criticism, it is the only way to make change. I felt women were not human beings; I did not interact with them.

It is not easy to transform ignorance. To believe is a gradual process, you don’t force it. Actions speak louder. You use words, and then resort to actions. For example, the kitchen is believed to be for women—we involve ourselves there.

### **Evaluation**

These excerpts point to the powerful impact that the program has on the lives of young men, particularly in terms of helping them perceive their misconceptions and biases. Other anecdotal evidence, such as interviews with field officers, peers and families as well as young men’s personal stories, also suggest a high degree of self-reflection and an ability to transmit messages to peers. There are indications of behavior change in terms of reported and observed helping with domestic chores and relationships with sisters and parents. However, evaluation methods, in general, have not been consistent or systematic. Program staff have received training in evaluation methods and CMA has plans to further develop its capacity and methods for measuring impact.

## **MEN AS PARTNERS PROGRAM (South Africa)**

### **Background**

Men as Partners (MAP) was launched in 1998 as a collaborative effort between EngenderHealth, an international NGO, and the Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa. It strives to engage young adult men in the challenging of patriarchal attitudes, values and beliefs that impact the health and well-being of men, women and children, particularly in the context of the synergistic epidemics of gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS.

The guiding framework for the program is comprised of three core and interrelated elements of constructive male involvement: (i) recognition that men are often the gatekeepers to women's sexual and reproductive health, in that they have the ability to influence and determine the choices of their partners; (ii) traditional masculine gender roles also have a negative affect on men in that they promote risky behaviors as "manly" and health-seeking behavior as frailty; and (iii) men have a personal investment in the promotion of gender-equity as it will lead to positive outcomes for both men and women.

Historically, the foundation of the program was working with young and adult men in small group workshops. The program realized that to ensure sustained change it needed to adapt a more ecological approach—considering both individually-focused solutions and strategies for contributing to an enabling environment. To this end, it has expanded its activities to include more broad-reaching efforts, from community-level mobilization to advocacy.

### **Methodology**

*Educational Workshops.* The program conducts educational workshops with both male-only and mixed groups in diverse settings, including workplaces, prisons, faith-based organizations and sporting arenas. Workshops are typically carried out over a period of four-five days and include a series of participatory activities. The conceptual framework of the curriculum entails guiding men in reflections on the complexities of traditional gender roles and how they affect men's and women's lives. Within this framework, the focus is on violence, sexual and reproductive health, HIV prevention and care-giving. Moreover, activities include the identification and discussion of practical day-to-day strategies for effecting change in personal lives, organizations and communities. There are plans to also incorporate research, organizing and advocacy skills into the curriculum.

*Capacity-Building of Partner Organizations.* As part of its alliance-building efforts, the program collaborates with diverse partner organizations committed to working with young men. It provides training and technical assistance in facilitation skills, leadership, and conflict resolution, with an emphasis on educational workshops, and increasingly, on building organizational capacity for advocacy, community mobilization, social norms campaigns, and policy change. In this way, partner organizations receive support in promoting individual changes and community education as well as support for advocating for the inclusion of positive male involvement on broader agendas.

*Community Action Teams.* During workshops men are invited to plan and join Community Action Teams to collaborate with partner organizations in supporting local efforts to promote gender-equity and health. In addition to supporting such local effort, from health fairs to drama performances, the teams also provide counseling and condom distribution. The teams also provide a continued source of support for the members and by the collective and constructive involvement of men in prevention of HIV/AIDS and violence, the team promotes a social norm of men as partners.

### **Evaluation**

The program conducted a small-scale quantitative impact evaluation in 2002, including pre- and post-interviews with more than 209 male participants in a five-day workshop and 50 female partners. Three month follow-up information was only obtained for 66 percent of the original group. Many of those lost to follow-up were young men. Due to employment insecurity in South Africa, young men are often transient, thus generating programmatic challenges for recruitment and evaluation efforts. There was no reporting on condom use or violence.

Recently, the program initiated a three year quasi-experimental impact evaluation study in Soweto. The evaluation will include indicators to measure changes both at individual and community levels.

## Annex 3: Other Promising Initiatives

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### **Positive Men's Union (Pomu)**

*The AIDS Support Organization (TASO), Uganda.* Originally founded as a support group by eight HIV-positive men in 1993, POMU encourages HIV-positive men to be involved in prevention efforts and in providing care, for themselves, their families and communities. It has chapters throughout Uganda and engages in a range of activities, including support groups, awareness-building, income generation, support and long-term planning for affected families and collaborative meetings with women's organizations to discuss gender issues related to HIV/AIDS.

As in many other African settings, most men in Uganda are still not open to talking about their HIV status, including to their spouses and children. Often, they do not want to be seen as weak or sick or needing support. POMU members recognize the importance of men talking to other men and for this purpose, organize community groups to create awareness about testing and support groups for HIV positive men to share experiences. In these groups, men often want to discuss broader issues such as unemployment and poverty, but their participation has also led to increased health-seeking behavior and improved communication with their partners.

### **The Fatherhood Project**

*Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa.* The Fatherhood Project strives to promote positive images and expectations of men as fathers and to create a programmatic and policy environment for supporting men's greater involvement with children. The project is centered on a traveling photo exhibition of more than 100 images portraying the possibilities and challenges of men's closer engagement with children. At each community launching of the exhibition, various stakeholders, representing local government, private sector, civil society, community and faith-based organizations are in attendance. In tandem with the launching, the host community also develops and coordinates activities around the theme of fatherhood, including workshops, drama performances and essay competitions. The project also includes efforts to disseminate existing information for advocacy and program purposes, initiate and publish new research about men and fathers, and promote public discourse on the need for men's greater involvement in children's lives.

### **Climbing Into Manhood Program**

*Chogoria Hospital, Kenya.* For young Meru men in Eastern Province Kenya, the male circumcision ritual continues to mark the moment in which they move from childhood to adulthood. After receiving the "cut," the young men enter a period of seclusion during which they receive information and advice from the elders on "the ways of men." The cutting ritual traditionally took place in a field or near a river and the seclusion period in a hut in a forest. However, due to increasing fears of HIV/AIDS and the risk of infection from shared unsterile circumcision knives, more families are opting for hospital or clinic circumcision.

Since both families and young men still view the ritual as an important moment for teaching on sexual matters and life skills, it represents an opportune time for education on issues related to relationships and HIV and violence prevention. Moreover, the degree of individual commitment and community expectation fosters an environment where behavior change is possible.

To this end, the Chogoria Hospital, developed and implemented a pilot education program for young Meru men during their stays. The intervention themes were developed in the tradition of imparting information to the initiates on manhood, including the physical, psychological and social changes in puberty and circumcision, interpersonal relationships, HIV/AIDS and STD's community expectation, substance use, peer pressure, school and maturation. The intervention also attempted to challenge stereotypical male roles, particularly in relation to the acceptance of violence. In line with the traditional circumcision ritual, older Meru men were selected from the community and trained to work as the educators.

Although the project has not been subjected to a rigorous, full-scale evaluation, post-intervention discussions with the community trainers and initiates indicate improved knowledge of adolescent health issues and positive attitude changes in relation to peer pressure and unsafe sex. These results reinforce the potential of traditional cultural moments, such as circumcision rituals, as powerful opportunities to implement education and behavior change interventions.



**Inter-Faith Mediation Center (Nigeria)**

The organization was founded in the early 1990s by two former religious militants and one-time rivals, James Movele Wuye and Muhammed Nurayn Ashafa. After violent clashes in which Wuye lost his right hand and Ashafa saw his spiritual mentor killed, both men underwent a period of soul-searching. In seeking guidance, they turned to religious texts and discovered that both the Bible and Koran called on believers to be peacemakers. Moving forward from this commonality, the two men decided to use their influence as leaders to bring together the two militant youth groups in a public forum, thus beginning their mission of promoting reconciliation and better understanding across ethnic and religious barriers.

The Center offers conflict management workshops for youth, mostly young men, and for traditional, religious and community leaders. It also engages other key stakeholders including police and military and provides conflict prevention and resolution training. During threats or outbreaks of violence, Wuye and Ashafa work directly with religious leaders to end the turmoil. After starting work locally, their workshops and outreach efforts now extend locally and nationally, and the co-founders estimate that 20,000 youth have participated in program activities. Since young men have been the principal perpetrators and victims of violence, they are the main target. However, staff say that more recently there has been a shift in the gender dynamics of the violence as girls and young women have become more actively involved at the forefront. In response, the Center is in the planning stages of developing trauma counseling services for women, both as victims and as aggressors. They also seek to add a vocational/livelihood skills component to their work to address what they call the root causes of violence in Kaduna—poverty and joblessness.

Although the Center's activities do not include an explicit discussion of gender, the staff is cognizant of the various links between gender socialization and involvement in violence. This understanding serves as an important backdrop for their work with both young men and young women. Moreover, Wuye and Ashafa offer two visible examples of non-violent and more-equitable male role models.

## Annex 4: List of Program Visits and Key Informant Interviews

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### **BOTSWANA**

#### **The Men Sector, Botswana Defense Force, Chairmanship**

Mooketsi Ditsela, Social Welfare Officer

#### **Men, Sex and AIDS**

Macdonald Maswabi, Project Coordinator

#### **Ministry of Health, Community Health Services**

#### **Youth Health Organization**

Site Visit & Focus Group

### **NIGERIA**

#### **Academic Associates Peaceworks**

Dr. Judith Burdin Asuni, Executive Director

Roberto Lopez, Project Officer

#### **Action Health, Incorporated**

Nike O. Esiet, Director

#### **Adolescents in Nigeria (Centre For Development and Youth Action)**

Emmanuel Etim, Executive Director

Ehizua Imohimi, Senior Program Officer

Ogbodo Victor, National Program Officer

#### **AIDS Prevention Initiative Nigerian (APIN)**

(Harvard School of Public Health)

Olubunmi Amoo, Special Assistant

#### **All Nigeria United Nations Students and Youth Association**

Chijike Ndukwu, National Secretary

#### **Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH)**

Grace Ebum Delano, Vice-President/Executive Director

#### **Care and Action Research**

Bala Dogo Ph.D, Coordinator

Site Visit & Focus Group

#### **Centre for Democracy & Development**

Mohammed Ibrahim, Program and Research Officer

John G. Ikubaje, Assistant Program Officer

#### **Conscientising (Nigerian) Male Adolescents**

Eddie Madunagu, Founder/Director

Site Visit & Focus Group

#### **DFID - Department for International Development**

Fiona Duby, OBE, HIV/AIDS Programme Co-ordinator

#### **Inter-Faith Mediation Centre (Muslim/Christian Dialogue Forum)**

Pastor James Movel Wuye, Executive National Coordinator

Father Usman and Hakuma Yokuba, Executive Coordinating Team

#### **The MacArthur Foundation**

Kole A. Shettima, Ph.D, Director, Africa Office, Co-Chair Africa Task Group

#### **Ministry of Youth, Sports and Social Development**

Mike Awopetu, B.Sc, B.B.S. ACIM, Special Assistant to the Hon. Commissioner

#### **The New Society Project**

Andy Ike Ogara, Executive Director

Bola Nuga, Head of Programmes

#### **Pathfinder International**

Eremutha A. Francis, M.P.H., Associate Director, Programs

Mike Egboh, Country Representative

#### **Positive Impact Network**

Temitayo O. Etomi, Program Coordinator

#### **The Society for Family Health**

Bright Ekweremadu, Managing Director

#### **The World Bank**

Jane C. Miller, HIV/AIDS Specialist

#### **Youth Action Rangers of Nigeria (YARN)**

Imayi Moses, Executive Director

#### **Youth Empowerment Foundation**

Iwalola Akin-Jimoh, Programs Director

### **UGANDA**

#### **Action Aid Uganda**

Auma Florence Apuri, Project Coordinator

#### **African Youth Alliance – Path**

Richard Odindo, Senior Technical Officer

#### **Ave Maria Vocational Training & Youth Development Center**

Quilinous Otim, Director

Site Visit & Focus Group

#### **CEASOP – Collaborative Efforts to Alleviate Social Problems**

Site Visit & Focus Group

**Herbert Muweka, Circumcision Committee, Mbale**

**Ministry of Health Local Director of Health Services and HIV Focal Point – Lira**

**Family Planning Association of Uganda**  
Diana K. Opolot, Gender and Youth Coordinator

**Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development - Programme to Promote the Welfare of Children and Youth - GTZ**

James MacBeth – GTZ Technical Advisor to Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

**Nagaru Teenage Information and Health Centre**  
Site Visit & Focus Group

**National AIDS Programme**  
Joyce Namulondo, Interim Director

**Ndere Troupe**  
Stephen Rwangyezi, Executive Director / Founder

**Slum Aid Project**  
Allen Norah Kuteesa, Program Officer

**The AIDS Support Organization (TASO)**  
Alex Coutinho, Director  
Phillip Sparks, Program Assistant

**Uganda Program for Human and Holistic Development (UPHOLD)**  
Nosa Orobato, Chief of Party  
Lydia Clemons, Deputy Chief of Party / Technical

**Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL)**  
Site Visit

**Youth Alive**  
Site Visit & Focus Group

### **SOUTH AFRICA**

**African Men Health Organization**  
Site Visit & Focus Group

**Center for Conflict Resolution**  
Chris Giffard, Coordinator, Prison Transformation Project

**Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation**

Kailash Bhana, Gender-Based Violence Program, Senior Researcher  
Bheki Zulu, Researcher, Youth Program

**Hope Worldwide**

Mokgethi Tshabalala, Program Manager  
Focus Group

**Human Sciences Research Council, The Fatherhood Project**  
Linda Richter, Executive Director

**The Medical Research Council, Gender and Health Group**  
Dr. Rachel Jewkes, Chief Scientist and Director

**Men as Partners Program**  
Dean Peacock, South Africa Program Manager

**Loveline (Office & Youth Center)**  
Kgapa Mabusela, National Director: Youth Centres  
Zweli Dlomo, Information Assistant  
Site Visit & Focus Group

**PACSA, Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness, Men and Gender Desk**  
Moeti Oa Montsho Lesuthu, Men, Gender and HIV/AIDS Fieldworker

**Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa**  
Tukisang Senne, National Programme Director - Lifeskills

**Population Council, Frontiers in Reproductive Health**  
Dr. Jane Chege, Program Associate

**Sabelani Life Skills**  
Lalas, Program Director  
Site Visit & Focus Group

**Soul City Institute, Health and Development Communication**  
Langi Mphelo, Series 7 Co-ordinator

**Survivors of Violence KZN**  
Mduduzi Molefe, Midlands Co-ordinator

**Targeted AIDS Intervention**  
Gethwana Makhaye, Director

**UNAIDS**  
Sisonke Msimang, Regional Support

**University of KwaZulu-Natal**  
Robert Morrell, Professor of Education

**University of Western Cape, HIV/AIDS Programme**  
Juliana Davids, VCT Counsellor  
Rodney Fortuin, Gender Trainer

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1818 H Street, NW  
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