

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and rationale

INTERFUND has been supporting many organisations over the past 10 years working in the field of violence against women. In 2002 the organisation identified the need to understand and develop effective strategies for working with men in South Africa. By doing this, it accepted that such programmes *could* have a powerful impact on the eradication of violence against women. The difficult question, however, was what kind of programmes could work in South Africa and, thus, what should INTERFUND and other donors be funding? In search of a meaningful response, INTERFUND commissioned research to explore this question.

The struggle to end violence against women is both a complex and contentious area of work and INTERFUND wanted to use this opportunity to open up the debate around exploring alternatives. One of the key areas of debate has been that of the allocation of resources and as an organisation providing financial support to NGOs and CBOS, it hoped that that this research would influence future programme choices.

Research components

The research was divided into two components; one was a critical analysis of sector responses to the problem of violence against women and the other section focused specifically on some work currently being done with men as an additional / alternative response through case studies.



Chapter summary

Chapter one introduces the research report by sketching the context in which violence occurs and clearly sets the objectives of the research. It states that to date the focus of most organisations has been on the effects of violence and not the causes, and thus this research seeks to find alternatives and holistic solutions.

Chapter two gives a brief overview of the problem of violence against women in South Africa and reflects on the high levels of violence in our society. It continues by unpacking the problem through detailing the historical impact of colonialism and apartheid, which sets the context for how society should respond.

Chapter three summarises the response by the state and civil society. It offers a detailed overview of the positive constitutional and legislative contexts, which the state has created, including the ratification of international obligations. It continues with an overview of work done by two government departments, while reflecting on justice reform as a necessity and concludes by highlighting the challenges for implementation.

Chapter four seeks to explore why organisations started working with men and specifies how this understanding was developed into specific strategies of working with men, namely transforming attitudes and beliefs, bringing men into work as partners to transform gender relations and finally working with men as perpetrators. It then seeks to give some insight into the costs and benefits of working with men.

Chapter five focuses specifically on the case studies and categorises these according to the three key ways in which organisations generally work with men. Although most organisations adopt multiple strategies, a dominant way can usually be identified.

Chapter six details recommendations for working with men in terms of deepening understanding, reviewing the policy and legislative framework and recognising the importance of inter-connected interventions. It continues by making specific recommendations on the three ways of working with men.

In conclusion chapter seven draws attention to the need for integrated and holistic approaches.