

WORKING WITH MEN: WHY AND HOW?

Michael Flood (2002) emphasizes the importance of engaging men as partners in development – in other words bringing men into work to transform gender relations to challenge the construction of dominant masculinities that reinforce patriarchal relations in society. 'When it comes to violence against women, men are both part of the problem and part of the solution. In terms of the former, men constitute the overwhelming majority of the perpetrators of violence against women. In terms of the latter, therefore, men's behaviour and attitudes must change if violence against women is to be eliminated. However, physical and sexual abuse is not essentially male. The intimate links between men, masculinity and violence are the product of society and history, not biology.'

It follows therefore that efforts to eradicate gender-based violence must address the socio-political dimensions of such violence. Implicit in this approach is the recognition of the need to challenge societal norms and values that entrench gender privilege for men and marginalise and oppress women. Interventions with men must challenge these dominant attitudes and values, and this points to broader public policy questions regarding gender equity and the need for social dialogue.

Why work with men?

At its simplest level, we should work with men, as men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of gender-based violence, and it is only through addressing and transforming the norms, values and behaviours that create and sanction this violence that we can have any chance of reducing and eradicating it.

[M]ale support is vital to the transformation of societal norms and practices. Men hold the power and control of the resources required for development at all levels; they are the key beneficiaries of gender discrimination; but they are also victims of social systems and structures that legitimise gender oppressions. They hold the key to ending violence, not only against women but also ending ethnic, racial, territorial, political wars and conflict.¹



Working with men to end violence against women is a relatively recent phenomenon. In the last ten to twenty years many countries have begun to look at strategies of working with men as a way of preventing violence. This has usually occurred through mandatory (referred by the courts) or voluntary programmes for male perpetrators of domestic violence.² These programmes have generated much debate, with the general consensus being that programmes for domestic violence are not 'cure alls' and even more importantly, often cannot be clearly proved to be responsible for reductions in violence when they occur. This is partly due to the fact that issues about the methodology of programmes and their location within criminal justice and community interventions are complex.

There has also been an upsurge of theoretical and empirical research on men and masculinity in the past fifteen years.³ More recently, many international development and human rights agencies have begun to look at men as partners in development and in addressing the problem of sexual violence and coercion. In 2000, the United Nations Development Programme began to look at mainstreaming men in development.⁴ UNAIDS declared 2001 the year of working with men.⁵ UNFPA has also identified men as 'partners for women's empowerment'.⁶ From the late 1990s UNICEF has investigated the role of men in relation to women and child abuse,⁷ and commissioned research into this work by sixty organisations across the world.⁸ In 2001, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) implemented a collaborative research project and a virtual seminar series on 'Men's Roles and Responsibilities in Ending Gender-Based Violence'.⁹ The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) sponsored a South African initiative, Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training, in 1997, which conducted educational campaigns in high schools that involve young men and women, educators, and parents in addressing the problem of violence against women in dating relationships. It also funded in 2002 the work of the African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET) which worked with groups in Kenya, Malawi, Namibia and South Africa to establish the Regional Men against Gender Based

Violence Network. This network is helping men to reach men through their political, professional, religious and social networks to promote gender equality. Activities include workshops for male activists, production of an advocacy kit, and media campaigns.

Oxfam is also focusing on men via their Gender Equality and Men (GEM) project, which commenced in 2002. This project examines the need for gender equality in Oxfam's programming, and highlighted the improved impact of poverty relief programmes where both men and women were sensitized to the issue of gender equity, and involved in its implementation as co-partners.

The growing interest in working with men recognises the need to address male attitudes and behaviour in order to prevent violence against women, on both individual and societal levels. However, it is also a relatively new and developing area with different approaches, strategies and mechanisms to 'working with men'. Some of these work, some do not. Some may even retard progress towards gender justice. The actual value of such work for ending gender-based violence must thus be constantly tested.

In particular, we need to guard against feminist understandings of gender-based violence being lost or scarce resources being diverted away from programmes for women survivors of violence. Working with men also takes us into the difficult and challenging terrain of changing and transforming behaviour, attitudes and values. In tracking a programme of 'working with men' in South Africa, it is important to address, and answer, three broad questions:

- How do we understand the relationship between men and violence?
- How can this be translated into effective action to end violence against women?
- What are the actual costs and benefits of working with men?

Understanding men and gender-based violence

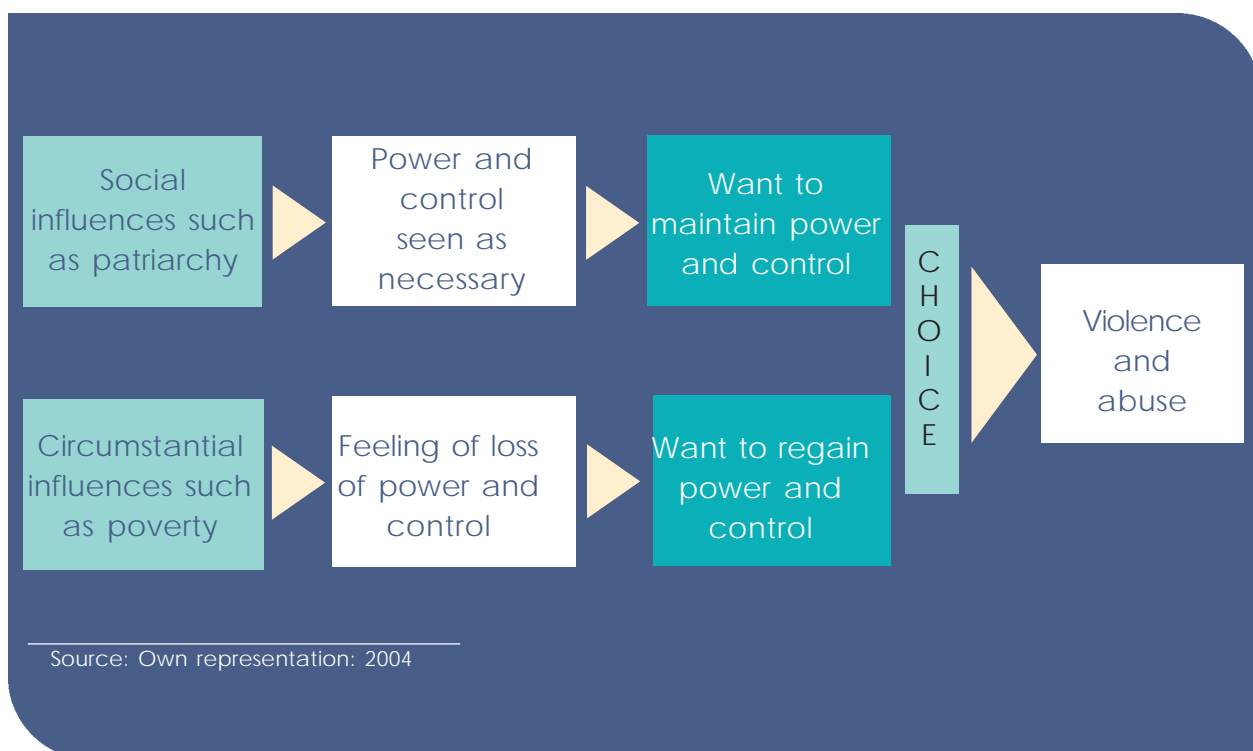
While many would agree that there is a clear connection between men and violence, it is important that we build a common understanding of that connection (in all its diversity) in the field of gender-based violence. This means interrogating the many separate and interconnected individual and structural reasons for, and circumstances of, gender-based violence. Some of this work has taken the form of an exploration of 'masculinity' in different political and economic contexts.¹⁰ Australian academic Robert Connell, writes that boys are 'inducted into many rituals of violence' through socialisation resulting in a culture of masculine violence. This becomes a problem of gender violence because of two additional factors: (i) the underlying inequality of women and men in our patriarchal societies and (ii) because of the absence of alternative ways of learning about human relationships and solving problems (Connell, 2001). Others have pointed to the broad range of structural conditions (the competitiveness of capitalist society, the pressures of globalisation, gender inequalities, poverty); institutional patterns (seen in state power and violence, military institutions) and childhood experiences and learning patterns of boys (play) that may result in male violence.¹¹ A brief causal process for such social and circumstantial issues may be depicted by the representation below:

The issue of choice means that perpetrators are responsible for their abuse, and the move towards legal sanctions over the last few decades means that society is now increasingly viewing gender violence as requiring institutional intervention (Boyle, 1991).

It is generally agreed that there is not one 'masculinity' but several 'masculinities' that are hierarchically related to each other. Some masculinities are hegemonic, others are more marginal. All masculinities are actively constructed through male conduct, and are thus dynamic and able to change, even if some forms of masculinity may be more resistant to change than others (Connell, 1987). Change, however, is not easy as specific forms of masculinity are locked into broader social, political and economic systems. As work on advancing gender equality has taught us, the struggle needs to be conducted on a broad range of fronts.

The key themes in working with men to eradicate violence against women are thus:

- The level at which interventions should be targeted (the individual, the institutional or the societal);
- Treatment/education for perpetrators; and
- Community and societal re-education and re-socialisation.



Source: Own representation: 2004

Are efforts best directed at the men who use violence? At the institutions such as the criminal justice system, which have not always responded appropriately to women, or to developing a society that does not tolerate violence and that promotes gender equity (Laing, 2002:1).



This paper will argue for integrated approaches to working with men to end violence against women. Central to the analysis, and in line with the two themes noted immediately above, are the need for a multi-dimensional understanding of men's violence that moves away from narrow approaches and the need for co-ordinated multi-stakeholder strategies for working with men. The limitations of a purely criminal justice approach will be examined and thereby the need for broad-based intervention strategies through co-ordinated community responses identified. These include women's services, public education campaigns, engaging men in effective partnerships, working with male perpetrators and encouraging social dialogue to understand masculinities and promote gender equity.

In terms of one of the themes above, namely '*treatment/education for perpetrators*', various overarching conceptual models in the field of domestic violence theory can be identified. Healey and Smith (1998) examine three models that govern working with men and examine the associated causes of domestic violence unpacked by these models. They include the feminist or socio-political model, family systems or interactional models, and the psychotherapeutic or cognitive behavioural models. Each of these models locates the causes of domestic violence differently.

POSSIBLE CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND MODELS OF INTERVENTION

| Cause | Model | Methodology |
|----------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Society and Culture | Feminist/Socio-political Model | Resocialisation |
| In the family couple | Family Systems/ Interactional Models | Communication/ Negotiation skills |
| Individuals | Psycho-therapeutic/Cognitive-behavioural Model | Individual and Group Therapy |

Source: Adapted from Healey and Smith, 1988

The feminist or socio-political model is one of the oldest models and locates the cause of violence within society and culture. It arose in the 1970s and was a departure from the traditional medical model that saw the causes of domestic violence as located within the pathology or psychological problems of the individual (Laing, 1992:7). Central to this perspective is a gender analysis of power that holds that domestic violence is one means of maintaining male power in the family. Because domestic violence is seen as a common rather than a rare event, the focus is on the social conditions which support it rather than focusing on the characteristics of a small 'deviant' group of men (Laing, 1992:7). In addition, the theory examines society through the lens of gender, power and control, believing that violence is an important tool of maintaining dominance, whether it is used premeditatedly or spontaneously. Feminist education programmes aim to raise consciousness about sex role conditioning and to promote egalitarian relationships based on trust instead of fear. However, despite the wide acceptance over the years since the 1970s of the socio-political explanations for domestic violence, most interventions remain at the level of the individual, with very few interventions aimed at a socio-cultural level. Eisikovits and Edleson (1989, cited in Laing, 2002:3) speculate that:

It may be easier and less threatening to society to target individuals and families for change rather than the norms or values that are part of an intricate web of social order.

This makes sense politically, given that the major institutions in society are dominated by men, e.g. parliaments, criminal justice systems, sporting codes, multi-national companies. Dominant elites do not normally voluntarily programme themselves into equitable balances of power. Challenges to the dominant conceptual paradigm would therefore be channelled, controlled and diverted, rather than acknowledged and directly addressed. This means that any attempt to progressively restructure gendered mindsets on a societal level will have to be consciously and strategically implemented on a range of fronts, and target key stakeholders and nodes of power. Examples of such actions are public education campaigns, informed by research into the construction of masculinities.

The family systems, interactional or systemic model regards problem behaviour as a manifestation of family dysfunction, and intervention involves improving communication and conflict resolution skills. These theories focus on the patterns of interaction between couples. Interventions are often at the level of the couple and focus on solving the problem rather than identifying causes.

Psychotherapeutic and cognitive behavioural models focus intervention at the level of the individual. Psychotherapeutic thinking states that personality disorders and early traumatic experiences are believed to predispose some people to violence. Group or individual therapy tools are therefore employed to address the problem by uncovering the batterer's unconscious problem and resolving it consciously. The cognitive behavioural model, on the other hand, concentrates on modifying the way individuals behave and think by focusing intervention on the present rather than past events and challenging thinking and assumptions. It is often more prescriptive and normative, given its focus on behaviour modification. It is based on social learning theory, i.e. that gender roles are socialised and that violence is learned and sustained in many social contexts. The cognitive behavioural model is often used in parallel with the feminist model. Socio-political explanations for violence are incorporated into work with individual men as part of the larger process of social change (Dobash *et al*, cited in Laing, 2002:3). This usually finds expression in pro-feminist or gender-based group work.

Each of these models has been the subject of critique. The feminist model is criticised for over-emphasising socio-cultural factors at the expense of traits of the individual, for example, growing up in an abusive home. It has also been criticised for politicising the issues involved. It is often seen as too confrontational an approach with possible polarising effects of a 'good guy' versus 'bad guy' phenomenon, alienating perpetrators and with the effect of transmitting information without deterring behaviour. Men may see their condition as unchangeable, because of negative labelling, with the implicit assumption that to be a man is to be an abuser of women (Williams, 1992, cited in Hurst, 2002:10).

The family systems, interactional or systemic model has been strongly criticised on the grounds that couple counselling may jeopardise the woman's safety because she is made vulnerable to retaliation through disclosures made in the therapy situation (Laing, 2002:8). It is also critiqued for implying that the problem is mutual and that as a contributor, the woman must also change. It is seen as focusing on saving the relationship rather than directly addressing issues of power and control.

Psychotherapeutic approaches are seen as limited, as they ignore socio-cultural dynamics and do not challenge patriarchal concepts of gender relations.

They are also seen as too focused on the individual perpetrator, possibly at the expense of the victim's perspective – in the sense that previous traumas and abuses experienced by the perpetrator are seen as causal factors for present violence, which can lead to avoidance of responsibility on the part of the perpetrator, and which can neglect wider issues of power and control. The main concern is that a focus on providing treatment for men's psychological problems can reinforce the sense of entitlement and self-righteousness often associated with men who batter women (Gondolf, 2002a, cited in Laing, 2002:7).

This approach of tackling individual pathologies (psychological problems) is supported by research which notes that different perpetrator sub-types may exist, i.e. there may be different types of perpetrators, who display different characteristics (Laing, 2002:6). Such groups could, for example, range from men who only abuse in the family, to those who also engage in criminal, highly anti-social activities. In theory it may then be possible to both identify risk factors for such groupings and tailor interventions to match the sub-types, thus increasing effectiveness (Holzworth-Munroe *et al*, 2000, cited in Laing, 2002:7). Proponents of this approach believe that the adoption of 'one-size-fits-all' models can reduce the effectiveness of interventions, and see the widespread usage of the Duluth model as an example of a generic model being uncritically applied. A point to note is that targeted interventions may cost more than the so-called 'generic' interventions. However, there has been little applied research that has clearly identified such typologies 'on the ground' and even less that has tracked the possibilities of implementing such matching in practice.

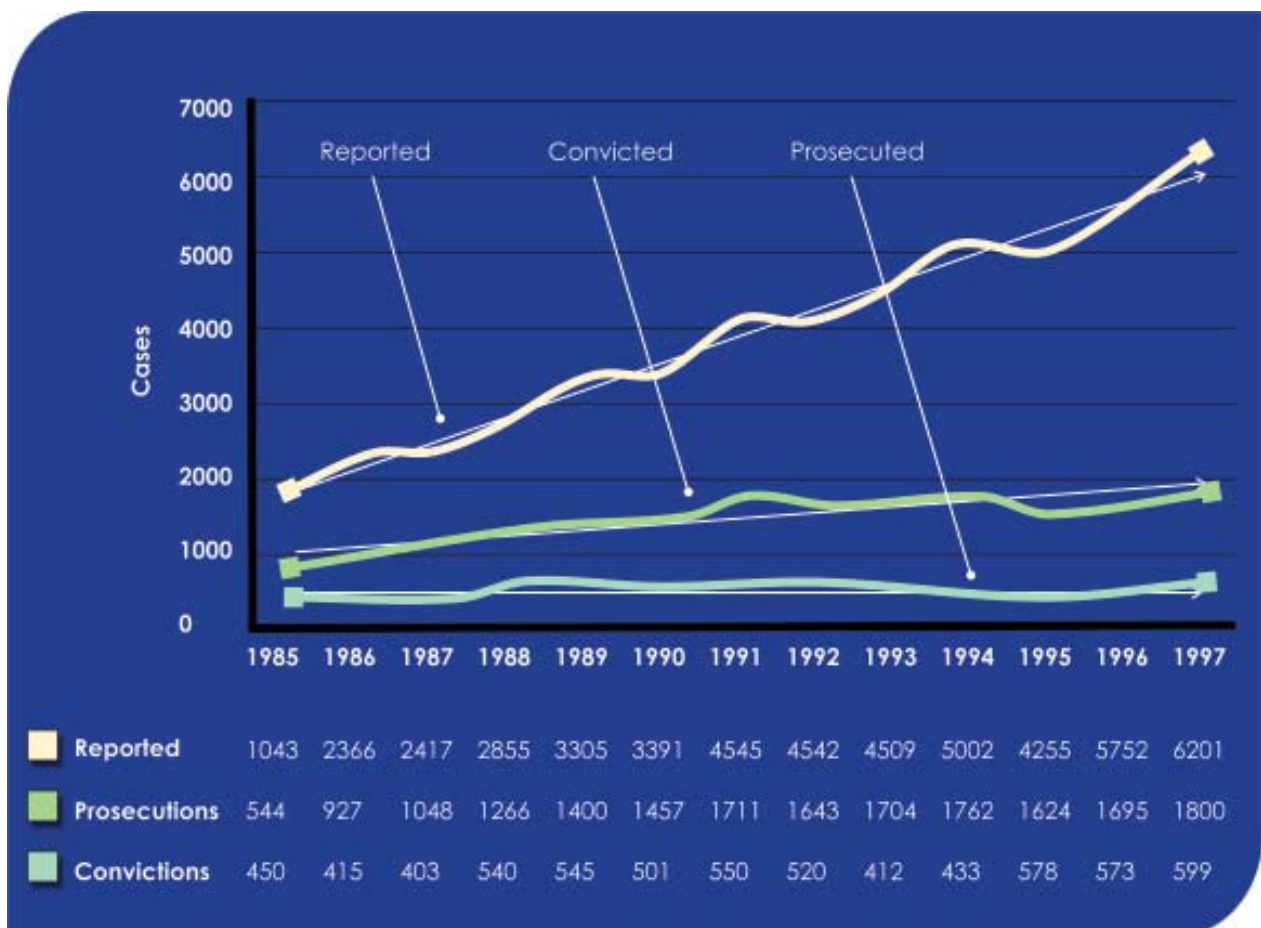
Cognitive behavioural approaches emphasise a social context and seek to stop the violence rather than focus on individual therapy. However, they also have to be balanced with a social framework to guard against their becoming too psychological. If they focus solely on skills such as anger management and assertiveness training, they can imply that violence is just about better self-control (Connolly, 1991:4), and perhaps is even provoked by the victim (Gondolf, 2002a, cited in Laing, 2002:5). They are also criticised for generic approaches to men's behaviour change programmes by importing programmes without adapting these to local contexts and cross-cultural realities.

A more detailed discussion of the implementation challenges associated with perpetrator programmes in general is provided in the section on male perpetrator programmes below. Many of the more widely used formats, for example in the USA (e.g. the Duluth model), Australia and South Africa are based on a combination of feminist educational models, incorporating cognitive behavioural techniques (Healey & Smith, 1998:6). The research points to the need for such an overarching approach to treating and preventing violence that is multi-dimensional and based on an understanding of causes and intervention strategies that is informed by all three models as opposed to narrower constructs.

Professor Liz Kelly examines the complex question of domestic violence and its many manifestations.

Central to her findings is the recognition that despite the presence of strong criminal justice systems in many western countries, these countries experience a continued increase in the reporting of rape to the police. In addition the system is less effective in prosecuting rape than 20 years ago, with increased attrition rates for reported rapes in England, Sweden and Ireland (2002:13). This shows again the need for a holistic approach where multi-level interventions assist the criminal justice system, and it also reveals that the underlying currents that drive domestic and gender violence are deeply rooted even in countries that have been exposed to debates and progressive interventions around issues of domestic violence. Furthermore, in many countries violence against women is no longer hidden and 'unspeakable', yet it continues to be redefined and minimised within institutional responses (Kelly, 2002:12).

The graphs below give an indication of the scale of the problem of increased divergence between reporting and successful prosecutions for rape, with England and Wales as examples.



In the United States, prosecution rates for domestic violence cases have been typically low (Edleson & Tolman, 1995:2). This may be partly explained by the fact that police are reluctant to arrest perpetrators as they see the likelihood of legal action as small. Victims also perceive police and prosecutors as unwilling or unable to protect them, and they fear increasing the perpetrator's rage by pressing charges. Thus in a sense the parties reinforce each other's inaction. Finally, the offence of battering may itself not be classified as a major crime, leading to its trivialisation.

Professor Kelly questions the conventional model that assumed that as women became more equal – economically, socially and politically – violence against women would decline. Data from Sweden suggests this model may be too simplistic. The country that on a state policy level has done most to establish formal equality between women and men has the highest level of reported rape per head of population in Europe. (Kelly, 2002:15) The implications for social policy are many and profound. We need to be aware of simplistic approaches and the need for multi-faceted sustainable strategies that target all levels of society (individual, family and community) if gender-based violence is to be eradicated. Political and economic liberation by themselves will not eradicate such violence. Social norms and values that underpin and perpetuate such violence need to be challenged and eradicated. The discourse on gender equality needs to become the everyday language of society.



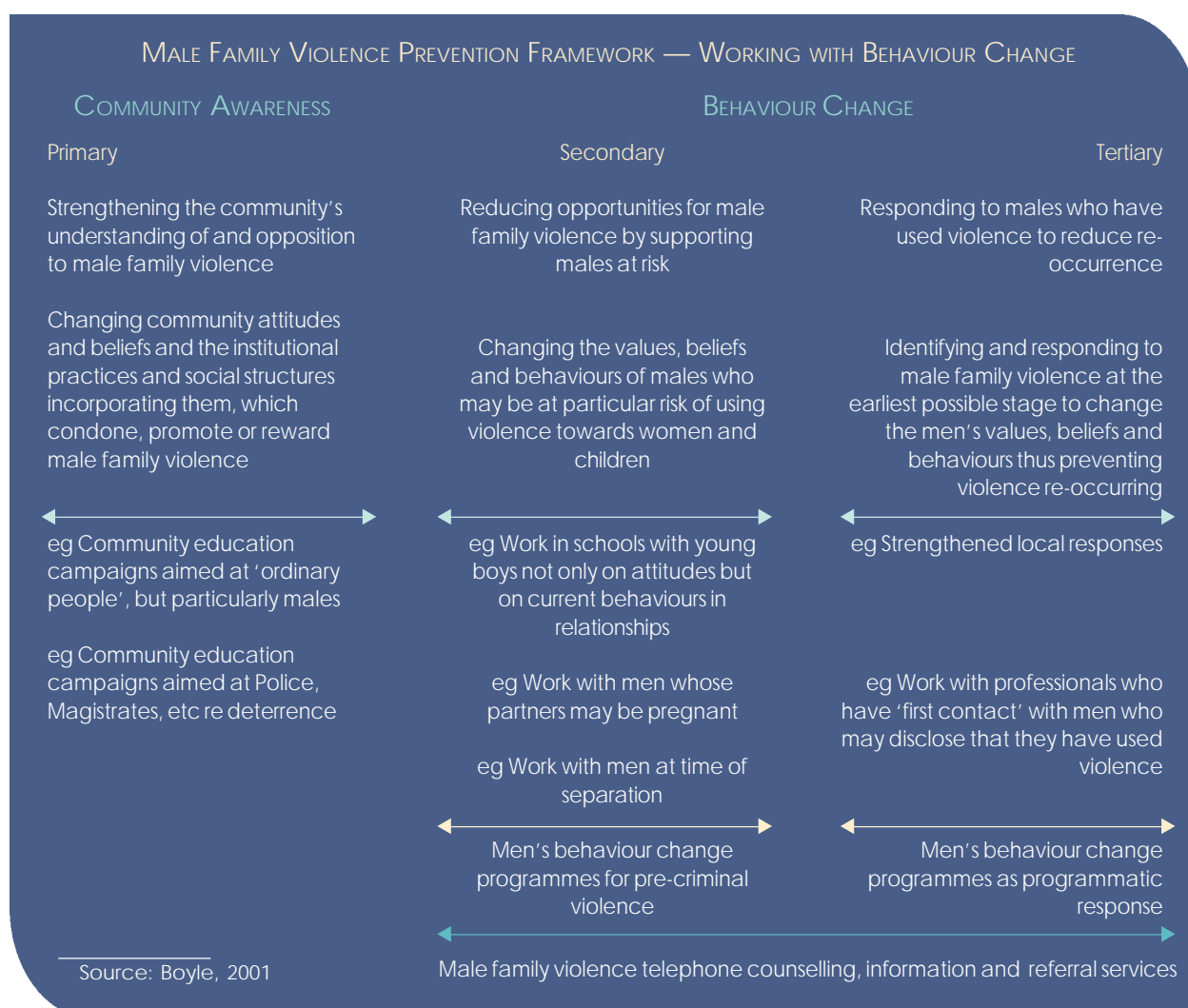
Translating understanding into effective action to end violence against women – ways of working with men

Understanding the causes and context/s of male violence is critical in alerting us to specific points of intervention and strategies for change. There are several overlapping levels at which one can work with men. These include:

- Working with men to redefine and transform attitudes and values around gender relations, through research and interventions dealing with masculinity, and public education in communities and society.
- Integrating men into work to transform gender relations (as partners to end violence, promote reproductive health, access to welfare etc.)
- Working with male perpetrators in individual or group contexts.

Another theme in the field of working with men noted above, namely *'the level at which interventions should be targeted'* (the individual, the institutional or the social), is well summarised by Mark Boyle from the Male Family Violence Prevention Framework, who provides an example of such a framework with a focus on primary, secondary and tertiary levels of intervention aimed at community awareness and individual behaviour change (see diagram below). This locates perpetrator programme interventions within a wider context of community and societal change, including the role of men as partners, and attempts to change values and attitudes. This report highlights all three approaches to violence against women, although comparatively more detail is provided in terms of perpetrator programmes, given their relatively limited implementation so far in South Africa, and the possibility that they may become more widespread.

Boyle locates men's behaviour change programmes as a 'tertiary' intervention and emphasises the importance of primary and secondary levels of intervention aimed at community awareness, i.e.



'...strengthening the communities' understanding of and opposition to family violence, supporting men at risk through community education campaigns targeting ordinary citizens and agents of the criminal justice systems (police, magistrates, probation officers etc.).'

The key elements of working with men who use violence must be included to ensure increased safety for women and children, extension of support services to the whole family, ensure clear guidelines and standards for evaluating and monitoring programmes, provide multiple pathways to men's entry, be accountable to women and children's experience of violence, build good case management, promote access and equity, provide professional training for workers with appropriate skills and experience, engage men in a change process and provide opportunities for peer learning and leadership.

For Boyle, a key component of any men's behaviour change programme is its engagement with men in the change process. In addition, the ability to engage men in a manner and discourse with which they can relate must avoid minimising the impact of their violent behaviour as well as avoid colluding in their avoidance of taking responsibility for their behaviour (Boyle, 2001:5).



Every person, unless struggling with severe mental illness, is able to make choices and moral decisions that influence his or her actions. Thus, most efforts at working with men seek in varying degrees to promote accountability and responsibility for one's actions, at the same time as exploring the underlying pressures or circumstances that have exacerbated the mental and emotional state of the perpetrator. The fact that research has shown prompt, certain accountability to be a key ingredient in the success or failure of interventions shows that perpetrators make conscious decisions about whether they will be held accountable, which means a process of moral discernment and choice is occurring.

'No to Violence', an Australian NGO has applied the framework devised by Boyle as containing key guiding principles to inform its programmes with men and recognises the need for broad-based intervention strategies that highlight the need for individual, institutional and societal change in sustainable efforts to eradicate gender-based violence. They see working with men as a process that produces agents of change (Boyle, 2001).

TRANSFORMING ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Perhaps the ultimate goal and the ultimate strategy in working with men is to achieve the transformation of those values, attitudes and beliefs that ferment and reinforce gender-based violence. This section considers some of the issues and strategies around 'working with men' in the sense of targeting men for change through engaging values and attitudes. Particularly important here is work that challenges dominant and other cultural and religious attitudes that sustain gender roles that lead to violence. Most organisations use this focus as part of an integrated approach.

STRATEGIES

In general, the strategies for engagement on values and attitudes are standard activist knowledge. Examples of these include:

- Advocacy or educational campaigns can target men as responsible partners, fathers or members of their community;
- Legal/legislative campaigns can be aimed at encouraging men within and without the system to support, write and pass gender-appropriate laws;
- Public campaigns such as marches, rallies and concerts can be used to publicise men's roles in ending violence against women;
- Working in schools to target children and youth to instil different ideas about gender; and
- Engaging prevailing attitudes around masculinity through research, public events, campaigns, and components of individual programmes.

GETTING THE MESSAGE RIGHT

It is important to find the correct language to engage values and attitudes. Often this will be the language of rights and justice. But it may not always be. It may be language of personal change, cultural programming or cost to society.

FIND APPROPRIATE PLACES OF INTERVENTION

Working in schools, amongst religious groups, within traditional communities etc. These interventions can therefore be grouped loosely into two categories:

- Those that address change via public education; and
- Those that address change via re-programming perceptions of masculinity.

PUBLIC EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

Dr Lesley Laing exposes the challenge of addressing dominant cultural norms and values and the paradox of gender-based pro-feminist socio-political analysis of violence against women. Despite the wide acceptance of socio-political explanations for domestic violence, most interventions with men who perpetrate violence in their intimate relationships have been individualised (2002:3). Foster points out that in order to sustain a democratic society, public education campaigns are required for the widespread teaching of human rights and the principles of democracy. Teaching human rights would mean instilling a deep-seated set of values that would be a foundation for responsible citizenship (1999:5). Education around gender issues and violence against women would form an integral part of human rights training. South Africa 's challenge is to move forward now that legislative foundations have been set in place, into measures that transform society.

This points to the need to address the broader social context in efforts to eradicate men's violence. Michael Flood (2002) like Laing provides examples of the role of public education programmes in engaging men as agents of social change to challenge the use of violence against women. The New South Wales (NSW) programme – Violence Against Women – Its Against All Rules, targets men via their interest in sport and invites them to be agents of social change in challenging the use of violence against women. For Cheetnam, the campaign is an example of innovative partnerships with communities to challenge men's violence. The campaign sought to develop partnerships with non-traditional partners in the form of sports clubs and associations. It recognised the role of sport in the culture and the potential impact for change. The NSW campaign highlights the importance once again of the socio-political context, and the need to design programmes that address local realities.

In the case of Australia, sport was the vehicle for engaging men and the broader community to challenge and address the issue of violence against women. The campaign targeted all levels of society and groups, including national and regional campaigns and a host of multi-media strategies (radio, television, posters, banners, billboards, t-shirts, sports cards). An evaluation of the campaign indicated that 93% of the sample followed sport, 76% reported being actively involved in sport themselves, 83% of

the respondents reported that the message of the campaign was that violence against women is 'not on' and 59% could recall the campaign slogan. For Cheetnam the active involvement of men in the implementation of the programme was a significant step.

Michael Flood on the other hand, warns of the associated dangers of using sports personalities in public education campaigns. For Flood, the use of sports personalities can reinforce dangerous stereotypes about men and women. 'Sporting culture is one social force among many which contributes to the construction of violent masculinity as a cultural norm' (2002:7). It seems dangerous, therefore, to use masculine sporting culture to challenge violence and foster non-violence. Such strategies run the risk of colluding with, and intensifying forms of, understanding and practice among men that are already troubling for some feminist critiques. Others argue that educational approaches that tackle masculinity directly may have less effect in shifting men's violent practices than strategies based on simultaneous complicity and challenge. In other words, using masculinity against itself.

The Freedom from Fear Campaign is another example of a public education campaign that emphasised a positive message and did not focus on women as victims but rather targeted male perpetrators and men as being at risk of perpetrating domestic violence. The campaign organisers sought to craft a message that would be personally relevant to men, challenge their behaviour, and encourage them to seek help and be accountable for their violence. An evaluation of the campaign found that it had a profound effect in communicating to men the damaging consequences of domestic violence on children, and that help is available.

Ideally, South African public education campaigns would be co-ordinated across government and between government and NGOs, for example the work done by the Women's National Coalition in drawing up the Women's Charter of Effective Rights.

MASCULINITY INTERVENTIONS

These are usually comprised of attempts to redefine what masculinity is and how it is conceptualised. The theory behind it is that society has constructed masculinity within narrow parameters in order to facilitate the use of men in warfare and in order to reinforce issues of male dominance and control within society. This narrow conception sees emotional

sensitivity and conceptions of sharing and consensus with women as vulnerability, not strength. Just as traditional ideas of femininity have influenced the way women behave, and the way they are expected to behave, men are subjects and even victims of similar expectations (to be controlling, aggressive, physically strong). Most societal forums reinforce this perspective and propaganda, from business to sport to media.

In theory, the extensive media violence depicted as part and parcel of what it means to be male forms part of modern cultural constructions of masculinity as well. Education and advocacy campaigns would need to target existing media to make their products less violent, and to encourage the transmittal of alternative messages.¹²

The concept of altering values and attitudes around gender and masculinity within society is not as far-fetched or ambitious as it seems. The intimate links between men, masculinity and violence are the product of society and history, not biology (Flood, 2002:2). If the current conditioning was instituted under human institutions and within communities, then human abilities can be harnessed to progressively re-programme such structures within communities and even societies. In the same fashion as South Africa is attempting to re-programme society and culture to be tolerant of racial difference, it is also increasingly attempting to instil new conditioning around progressive conceptions of gender. This process must now be taken further by identifying perceptions of masculinity and their construction as necessary targets for progressive change. Without simultaneously tackling masculinity within the context of gender power relations, it will be extremely difficult to impact positively on society's treatment of women. This involves the state as an agent of social change in the struggle for gender equity.

In South Africa we face a further legacy of Apartheid, but one also caused by our re-entry into the global economic system at a time when globalisation is rampant. This challenge is massive unemployment. This is largely a result of labour and educational policies under Apartheid, which have left workers surplus or redundant to the needs of an increasingly open economy in South Africa, creating structural or long-



term unemployment. As firms have struggled to come to terms with sudden global competition and a sluggish growth rate, combined with high interest rates due to the Reserve Bank's inflation targeting policy, they have laid off millions of workers over the last decade. This has removed from many men one of the primary elements in their sense of who they are.

For most men, the concept of self is structured around work as an activity. Worklessness can lead to a feeling of worthlessness (Webb, 1998, cited in Hurst, 2002:3). With long-term unemployment now the norm for many job seekers in South Africa, with 41% of those unemployed in 2002 having been job-hunting for over 3 years, this emotional and psychological stress can increase the levels of violence in the home and within society, as poverty and crime rise. Men who lose employment, or never gain it, lose a sense of control of self and are particularly vulnerable to mental health problems, including domestic violence issues (Hurst, 1991:3). Therefore traditional conceptions of masculinity need to be examined to decrease the potential for negative social fallout if high unemployment is going to remain a possibly persistent fact of life in South African communities. Examples of this and parallels to our context may be found in the experiences of indigenous Australian communities (Hurst, 2002:16)

An example of the links between conceptions of masculinity and the potential effectiveness of perpetrator programmes is that most men are not used to talking about being a man, what it means to be a man, and therefore what a healthy (non-violent) man might look like. Part of traditional masculinity is that men just 'do it', they don't critically talk or think about it. Experience has shown though that many men in a variety of cultural contexts are both anxious and curious to talk about being a man, particularly given current global and historical changes (Hurst: 2002:16). Once provided with the opportunity and

tools and information to understand masculinity, men can be deeply impacted by carefully designed programmes.

BRINGING MEN IN TO WORK AS PARTNERS TO TRANSFORM GENDER RELATIONS

Even in the most patriarchal of societies, there are many men who are totally convinced that there can be no peace, no social justice, no development and no social harmony, as long as gender inequalities persist. Many of them are willing to come out, declare and commit their support to the struggle (Wainaina, 2001). There is a growing international recognition that men must be engaged as part of the solution, and not just seen as the problem (Hurst, 2002:6). Men are seen as agents of change and not merely objects of blame (Grieg *et al*: 2000, cited in Hurst, 2002:6).

Another strategy of working with men is therefore to bring men into 'women's' or 'feminist' work to enhance capacity, voice and understanding. In this way, a critical mass of gender activists, political champions and stakeholders could be created to address gender-based violence at all levels.

Bringing men in as partners can occur at a number of levels:

- Between individual men and women;
- Between women's groups and pro-feminist men's groups;

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- Between different actors in the community, including service providers, leaders and law enforcement agencies, to create a more cohesive and holistic response;
- Partnerships forged through national and international activism, including partnerships with trade unions, professional organisations, development and human rights NGOs;
- Partnerships forged across differences with the common goal of ending violence.

Partnerships can be developed towards a variety of goals, including:

ENHANCING VOICE (ADVOCACY)

- Men can be identified to be political champions of ending violence against women;
- Men and male partner organisations can engage in advocacy to lobby key male role-players, policy-makers and high profile public figures especially to buy into campaigns;
- Men can be made more visible in public campaigns such as marches, rallies and concerts that call for an end to violence against women;
- Women can establish networks with men to end gender-based violence.

Given the fact that South Africa suffers from historical political and economic oppression, it is necessary to harness the work of men's organisations in order to tackle the violence and trauma that society faces. The gender relations in the country are exacerbated by these historical factors, which impact negatively on both men and women. The violence evident against women is not just the product of patriarchy but of the historical legacy of Apartheid, and thus cannot be fought in the same way as gender struggles in countries without a similar past. Networking can be used to ensure legislative implementation and

compliance and to 'build... a culture of zero tolerance to domestic violence' (Wainaina, 2001). An example of this is the Network against Gender Based Violence in Malawi.

ENHANCING CAPACITY

Bringing men in as partners expands capacity to address gender-based violence. Such partnerships can be developed with men within and outside of the state.

- Training men to be more effective in implementing and enforcing law;
- Men and men's organisations can be made part of developing more cohesive and holistic responses within communities.

For example, Rozan, a Pakistani organisation focusing on training, education and direct services for women's psycho-social health identified men as 'essential partners' in assisting women to report gender-based violence. This resulted in a training programme for police officers.

ENHANCING UNDERSTANDING

Working with men as partners can deepen women's and men's understanding of gender-based violence. This is illustrated in the comments of former chair of FEMNET, Njoki Wainaina (cited in Hoff, 1999):

'Gender analysis ... tends to be male bashing as the disparities are unearthed. The presence of males in comparative numbers helps to ease the male bashing, but also to bring up some male perspectives that females do not always know about or appreciate. The fact that male oppression of women is a burden that is placed on men by society often comes out in gender discussion groups that are balanced. These issues are clearly articulated and it becomes clear that men too are sometimes as much victims of socialisation as beneficiaries.'

Deepening understanding across gender and other differences is an important goal in and of itself. It also develops capacity for understanding the position of others and for creating effective intervention strategies.

As Kimmel notes – in exploring difference we see that we may have different relationships to violence and different perceptions on how to end it. Some are victims and survivors, care givers. Perhaps some are or have been violent and are trying to understand and heal. We are concerned individuals, family members, students, academics, and practitioners. For many, violence is part of their everyday reality, and for others ending violence is a vocation and a commitment.

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE AN 'EQUAL' PARTNERSHIP?

One of the concerns of women working with men is that this may shift the focus from the position and oppression of women and children to men, or that it will be controlled by men and thus biased for their benefit. These are real concerns that require the partners to define the terms of collaboration from the outset and address theoretical and conceptual differences. Some have argued that 'an explication of differences' is the 'true starting point for building trust and alliances.'



'To ally yourself with someone who is different from you, even on a temporary basis, and even on only very narrow terms, takes an act of the imagination in which the difference between you is resolved (Kimmel, 1999).'

Partnerships thus require ongoing work to ensure that they are effective. There is also a school of thought that argues that women should always be in charge of the movement against gender-based violence. Men Stopping Violence, an Australian NGO concluded:

Interventions [by men alone] could, and often did, do irreparable harm to the struggle against violence against women. The reasons for this are manifold, but have at their root the socialised need that men have to dominate social movements. The

Examples of men as partners in development include the work of men's anti-violence groups and organisations. Through public education campaigns, rallies, marches, work with perpetrators and workshops in schools, prisons and workplaces, men's anti-violence activism attempts to develop non-violent masculinities and challenge constructs of masculinity that entrench gender privilege. Strategies adopted focus on violence prevention and violence intervention. The White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) is one example. The idea of the campaign was very simple, to encourage men to show opposition to men's violence against women by purchasing a white ribbon. In pinning on the ribbon men pledge themselves never to commit, condone or remain silent about, violence against women.

The campaign sought to raise men's consciousness regarding violence against women and their role as potential agents of change. It demonstrates that violence against women will only cease when men join women to put an end to it and that men can take collective public action to oppose men's violence.

Michael Flood warns that mobilising men collectively can entrench gender privilege and is evident through the anti-women, anti-feminist backlash emerging from conservative wings of men's movements in the US – thus undermining the gains won by women in the movement for gender equity. Given these dangers it is imperative that a partnership model be adopted. Men's anti-violence efforts should be done in partnership with women. It allows them to learn from existing efforts and also lessens the risk that men will collude in or be complicit with dominant and oppressive forms of masculinity (Flood, 2002:6). More radically, many pro-feminist men's groups position themselves as accountable to feminist constituencies. They consult with women's groups before initiating campaigns, do not compete with women's groups for funding and other resources and build strong lines of communication, for example 'Men Stopping Violence'.

WORKING WITH MALE PERPETRATORS

Working with male perpetrators is the most prevalent form of working with men, with many countries having programmes for this. These may be part of the



negotiations [with women] that were at the initial starting phase of [the organisation] has informed their work since. The recognition that women must always be in charge of the movement, and that their voices determine the direction of the interventions – with men and women – forms the core philosophy of Men Stopping Violence (MSV, 2001).

EXTENDING PARTNERSHIPS BEYOND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Most contemporary work on masculinity and violence argues that the causes of male violence are both individual and structural. Working with men to end violence against women therefore also needs to pay attention to the structural causes that ferment violence. Consideration also needs to be given as to how to bring men into programmes addressing the wider issues of gender inequality and development.

criminal justice system (compulsory sentencing of offenders) or they may be voluntary programmes outside of the justice system, or they may be a combination of the above where offenders are referred but participation is voluntary. Programmes may follow a number of formats, which are underpinned by the three differing theoretical explanations for offenders' behaviour, as alluded to earlier.

The framework or understanding most commonly implemented is a gender-based, cognitive behavioural group work approach, i.e. a mixture of feminist (socio-political) and individual (cognitive behavioural) approaches. Although the intervention is at the level of the individual, the overall emphasis is on understanding how societal power relations are structured between men and women. The programme or intervention focus is on stopping the violence, abuse and controlling behaviours, rather than providing a therapeutic response to the individual's psychological problems. A central idea is that the man/woman must accept responsibility¹³ for the abuse, for its effects and for stopping violence (Boyle, 2001 and Hall, 2001, cited in Laing, 2002:4). An example of this model would be the Duluth model.

The individual/psychological understanding focuses interventions at the level of the individual, and seeks to understand the psychological nature of the violence, i.e. the roots of the violence in the individual's psychology. They are generally not accompanied by a parallel focus on the victim.

Family or systemic models attempt to address the problems through counselling both parties in couple counselling. This approach has, however, been reduced in the US because of concerns around the safety of the victim.

The main discussion around intervention has been whether the response to perpetrators should be therapeutic treatment to overcome a psychological problem, or re-education and punishment to interrupt criminal behaviour (Laing, 2002:8), i.e. a gender-based, cognitive behavioural approach versus an individual/psychological approach. This debate can only be resolved through conducting well-designed studies that evaluate the outcomes of the different types of interventions (see below for more detail on evaluations themselves).

Nearly two decades of experience of this work has generated both successes and failures. Civil society and government researchers in a number of countries have remained divided on the merits of this form of intervention. In addition, some countries (United Kingdom and Canada) have in the past terminated state-sponsored programmes as a result of poor results, while others have shown some success or argued that it is too early to make a definitive judgement on the value of these programmes.

A brief discussion of events in two countries that acted against state-funded programmes will serve to lead us into a more detailed discussion of what appears to work and what is of concern with regard to the usage of perpetrator programmes in general.¹⁴ The UK case study is summarised here to illustrate the ambiguous approach to perpetrator programmes. In the same country within a few years, the government was both cutting funding to such programmes on one level at the same time as conducting research into their future implementation on another. This reflects the opposing viewpoints regarding such interventions.

In 2000 the United Kingdom Home Office terminated a state-sponsored programme after an evaluation of the programme showed poor results,¹⁵ with only 25% on average of offenders completing the programme. However, counsellors felt that the evaluation methodology used to substantiate this termination decision may have been faulty (see also Harrell, 1991, cited in Tolman & Edleson, 1995:9). However, various districts in the UK continued to utilise perpetrator programmes, and in 2001 the United Kingdom National Probation Directorate (NPD) and the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate commissioned a process and outcome evaluation of the Duluth Domestic Violence Programme that had been implemented as a pathfinder in West Yorkshire and London. The programme was implemented in conjunction with the national Correctional Services authority, the courts, police, probation services and various women's groups. By 2003 the programme was known as the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP), and operated in an infrastructure of inter-agency risk management with accreditation given in October 2003 by the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel.

In an apparent revision of the earlier 2000 decision, the evaluation aimed to describe priorities for effective implementation of the programme within England and

Wales. The evaluation was completed in 2003,¹⁶ and examined implementation issues rather than success rates.

The Duluth model was chosen above various local models due to its previously evaluated status internationally. In essence, the Duluth model in its original format comprised a comprehensive, community-based programme designed to intervene in domestic violence cases. It attempted to co-ordinate a response with the many agencies and practitioners who typically respond to domestic violence cases in the community. The programme exists in the context of an integrated community response, featuring a pro-arrest policy and mandatory attendance at group education programmes as part of

sentencing (Keys Young, 1999, cited in Laing, 2002:4) An additional component of the project was the 24-week non-violence programme, designed to reduce the likelihood of offenders, who were court-ordered to the programme, from re-offending. This programme focused on challenging attitudes and beliefs associated with domestic violence and teaching social skills and enhanced victim empathy. The project also contacted the partners of the men and offered a women's support group. Women who were arrested for using violence were also ordered to attend non-violence classes.



The Duluth model comprises a comprehensive, community-based programme designed to intervene in domestic violence cases.

The UK Home Office evaluation raised important points regarding implementation that can be noted by South Africans. These points show the depth of conceptualisation, resourcing and planning involved in the implementation of such programmes. It illustrates the complexity of such initiatives and the need for caution in a national context such as South Africa where the foundations of effective criminal justice functioning and victim support are still being laid. Key points drawn from the highlights and challenges of the pilot programme were:

- A co-ordinated programme linking the various elements of the criminal justice system can effectively increase service delivery and enhance the outcomes of perpetrator programmes;
- Such co-ordination requires specific planning and support from senior levels in the various bureaucracies for it to be effective;
- Training of officials involved in all aspects of programme implementation must be thorough and concluded prior to implementation;
- It is advantageous for officials involved to have had exposure to previous efforts at domestic violence prevention;
- Staffing levels need to be adequate for the implementation of the overall programme, given the existing workload of NGO and criminal justice personnel;
- Co-ordinated efforts such as this are 'admin hungry', to quote the Programme Implementation Officer, and as such require additional personnel and support;
- The delivery manuals for use by trainers and facilitation were found to be unsuitable for minority groups, as the model was largely imported unchanged from the USA;
- Local service providers and NGOs who felt that a political decision had overridden their more appropriate indigenous initiatives criticised the adoption of the programme;
- Communication protocols must be negotiated and established prior to the launch of such a programme. These must include data sharing and collaboration protocols;
- Clear identification of domestic violence as a distinct offence is necessary in order to facilitate sentencing and referral, and to prevent abuse of plea bargaining provisions.

In the case of Canada, it is argued that programmes in Quebec have also shown poor results according to Martin Dufresne of Montreal Men against Sexism.¹⁷ The programme density by 1995 was very high, with 48 programmes running for a population of seven million (Dufresne, 2001:GLG). However, the programmes are criticised for basing their work not on feminist analysis of power relationships but on 'men's identity' politics, in other words, a focus on the psycho-educational model, rather than a socio-political model. This is seen as leading to a blurring of rights between victims and perpetrators, with resources directed at

interventions to understand and support men. The overarching concern expressed by critical analysts is that these programmes only 'work' in allowing wife-beaters to not only obtain reduced sentences but to often avoid charges and sanctions altogether, tying down many women in support of their much-touted 'recovery' and maintaining patriarchal privilege in a system too eager to re-privatise (i.e. de-criminalising the sanctions for violence and placing the burden on civil society by making violence a 'private matter' as it was in the past) conjugal violence (Dufresne, 2001).

With these examples of limitations, it is useful to examine some criteria for the possible success of such programmes.

WHAT APPEARS TO WORK WITH PERPETRATOR PROGRAMMES?

The growing literature on the successes and failures of these programmes can be accessed to develop programmes for South Africa. Some salient points about what works include the following:

- **The policy and legislative context in which these programmes occur is important.** An Australian research project suggested that perpetrator programmes are most effective when implemented in the context of enhanced resourcing of support services for women and children and a strengthened criminal justice response. This includes strong pro-arrest policing, strong penalties for re-offenders, victim advocacy and support and mandatory counselling programmes for perpetrators.¹⁸ In other words, perpetrator programmes are complementary or possibly secondary to criminal justice and victim support responses, a view noted previously in Boyle's framework of interventions.
 - **A holistic response including state agencies, NGOs and CBOs enhance effectiveness.** This is illustrated by the Duluth Minnesota Domestic Abuse Programme (see Case Studies section). Treatment for offenders or batterers must be one component of a co-ordinated community response to battering, which includes the criminal justice system response as well as services for battered women and their children (Tolman & Edleson, 1995:1). Within the criminal justice system itself, internal co-ordination must also be enhanced. For example, merely arresting perpetrators has been shown to be less effective than arrest as part of a co-ordinated criminal justice strategy involving police visits, sentencing and treatment programmes.¹⁹ To this co-ordination can be added community and societal level interventions aimed at changing attitudes and values in regard to domestic violence and gender. Ideally this must occur within a wider societal context involving legislative change; however, as a minimum, co-ordination must occur at community level between the respective service providers. Encompassing intervention systems of arrest, court action, victim services and
- probation monitoring may substantially affect programme success (Gondolf, 2001, cited in Laing, 2002:12). Lower recidivism has been linked to the cumulative effects of successful prosecution, probation monitoring, receiving a court order for counselling and attending and completing counselling, (Murphy *et al*, 1998, cited in Laing, 2002:17). Interestingly, the core of the Duluth programme is not education, but institutional change to co-ordinate community responses to domestic violence.
 - **There is no single and effective preferred approach.**²⁰ The approach may depend on specific contexts, circumstances and target groups. Interestingly, a study of three programmes in Hawaii (feminist and rights-based, religious and cultural/traditional) found that all ultimately deployed similar therapeutic strategies around self-esteem and self-development of male perpetrators.²¹ Of course, each was based on very different ideas about men, women, relationships and the family. The approach most often utilised incorporates social learning (via cognitive-behavioural methods) and pro-feminist content. An example of this is the Duluth model, which like some others also incorporates victim support.
 - **A 'whole of family' approach** can be a useful framework for service provision. This is where a comprehensive range of services is provided to all family members in contrast to an approach of separate individually streamed services. Thus support groups for victims, adolescents and children are provided in conjunction with perpetrator programmes (Boyle, 1991).
 - **Pre-acceptance assessments.** This methodology is utilised by many service providers to assess the suitability of a perpetrator for inclusion in a treatment programme. Issues such as motivation, denial and acceptance of responsibility are tackled. The perpetrator must display a positive awareness of all of these before he can be accepted. If he fails the assessment he is referred back to the courts for immediate sentencing (Boyle, 1991). It may be that the perpetrator approached the programme voluntarily, in which case he is merely not accepted, but follow-ups may be made within the community.

- **Interventions with men seem to be most successful when they are rooted in an understanding of context: cultural, religious, social, economic, racial and geographic.** In addition, comprehensive community-based responses provide the holistic approach and long-term follow-through required to ensure the success of the programme. Practitioners who are located within the communities they serve seem to be able to build high levels of trust, and to slowly change the systemic issues within their communities that create gender-based violence. Building community, rather than individual accountability, is an important part of such effectiveness. The Blackfeet Nations Tribal Court Domestic Violent Offender Programme is an example of this, as is the Duluth Minnesota Domestic Abuse Programme.²²
- **Voluntary programmes that are neither punitive nor adversarial appear to work best.** Programmes that proceed from a concept of normative labelling, or apportionment of blame and punishment through negative labels or accusatory facilitation, can inhibit the willingness of participants to open themselves to interaction, and hinder therapeutic methodologies. In other words, calling men batterers and pushing for acceptance of blame from the outset undermines the redemptive ethos inherent in perpetrator programmes. i.e. if the aim was just to accuse and punish offenders, then mandatory sentencing would be more effective, but if the goal is to rehabilitate, then a redemptive approach increases the potential for repentance

and change.²³ Contrary to expectations, men who abuse often seek out help voluntarily. They also seem to want the violence to stop. This is understandable if it is borne in mind that men are not one-dimensional, but are capable of conflicting and contradictory attitudes that enable engagement (Hurst, 2002:13). Seeking help does go against traditional masculine imperatives to be in control. However, a recent study suggested that a mandatory approach may also be successful (Gondolf, 2002a, cited in Laing, 2002:16). This research seems to suggest that mandatory referrals build a sense of accountability.

- **Group programmes** over a substantial period that focus on educational, attitudinal and behavioural change may be more effective than individual or couple-based approaches.
- **Structure may be important.** Groups that utilise a structured design, incorporating an educational element, appear to be more effective than those using an unstructured, non-educational self-help format (Edleson & Tolman, 1995:10).
- **Programmes work best where men are motivated to seek help in relationships,** where the emphasis is on 'relationships' rather than domestic violence, and where the design includes a 'male perspective'.²⁴
- **Programmes must be victim-centred.** The key goal of interventions must still be to protect the victim



and improve responses and services to the victim. This must be carried through to the sources of measurement and evaluation, i.e. victim responses, and input must be a central measure of the programme's effectiveness. Another noteworthy point is that even where perpetrator programmes have not been able to totally eliminate violence in the relationship, they often empower victims through giving them information, validating their realities of abuse and increasing their trust in their own abilities. This gives them space to think, and confidence to act, to the point where they can make informed decisions about whether to stay in the relationship (Austin & Dankwort, 1999a, cited in Laing, 2002:21).

- All programmes should be **evaluated for ongoing effectiveness**, including feedback from, and follow-up of, participants. In most cases, evaluation is not built into the design of the programme, and is not linked to specific criteria or outcomes. In addition, few evaluations track the effectiveness of programmes over long periods of time, e.g. 12 to 18 months at least. Agreement on what constitutes effectiveness is, however, not widespread, ranging from statistical methods to personal transformations.

WHAT AREAS OF CONCERN CAN BE IDENTIFIED AROUND PERPETRATOR PROGRAMMES?

However, there is also research that casts some doubt on the efficacy of these programmes:

- Australian and American research note that it is unclear as to which is more effective in stopping

male violence, e.g. whether perpetrator programmes or strong arrest and prosecution practices or outside support for battered women are more effective in stopping male violence.²⁵

- As noted in the section on criminal justice system reform, arrests are seen as partly effective, but their effectiveness is increased significantly when arrests are used as part of a co-ordinated intervention by the entire criminal justice system and civil society (e.g. perpetrator programmes and victim support). Similarly perpetrator programmes are seen as significantly less effective when utilised in isolation. Bennett and Williams even argue that it is difficult and undesirable to try to distinguish the effects of perpetrator programmes from the impact of co-ordinated responses in which they are located (cited in Laing, 2002:12). However, the main point to be noted here is that there is still active disagreement over the relative merits of the various interventions. Broadly, agreement exists on the overall merits of the various criminal justice and men's programme components, but methodological (this refers to the method and process used in the research) difficulties have proved persistent in preventing clear-cut supporting evidence from being assembled in most cases (see below).

There is some empirical evidence to suggest that support for battered women is most often the key to real change in men's assaultive behaviour.²⁶ This argues that the 'psychologising approach' is actually counter-productive.

'The pattern of outcome results does not clearly support psychological intervention as the *primary* active ingredient in changing men's abusive behaviour. The relative success of drop-outs for treatment is problematic for those advocating treatment of men who batter. In all likelihood, positive results purported to be due to a particular intervention are the result of multiple systems of factors. The success of efforts to effectively change institutional responses also supports continued efforts in that area' (Dufresne,2000).



Where consensus seems to have emerged, it is that these measures can be considered as most effective when used in conjunction with each other, i.e. their sum becomes greater than their parts. A related difficulty of assessing their effectiveness is that it is hard to isolate one measure's effectiveness from other interventions, as there is usually more than one intervention in action, and there are often informal civil society interventions by churches, family and community members occurring in parallel. Perpetrators are often part of a broader intervention system, and as such, evaluation should be of the 'perpetrator intervention system' rather than of 'perpetrator programmes' (Gondolf, 2002a, cited in Laing, 2002: 13). For example, in some programmes, penalties for non-attendance by the court are minimal or even absent, thereby undermining the programme, but the fault is at a system level, not necessarily programme level. This can call into question the legal system's commitment to the victims of abuse. Such lack of accountability can lead to increased violence and is a characteristic of situations where men have inflicted even more harm on their partners.

- Therefore linked to this is [whether sufficient incentives or sanctions exist for perpetrators to remain within programmes](#), and complete the course. In some cases, sentence suspension is linked to completion of the programme, or probation is breached if perpetrators drop out of programmes. In some cases fines are automatically imposed by the courts if non-

attendance occurs. Sustained, certain, rapid accountability is seen as a key ingredient in changing behaviour. This means that the criminal justice system must work closely with the programmes, and that monitoring for drop-out, and attendant sanctions, must be a rapid and collaborative affair (Connolly, 1991:4 and Edleson, 1995).

- [Defining effectiveness itself with regard to perpetrator programmes is also widely debated](#), with no agreed definition. An important point here is what indicators of effectiveness are used, and as a separate but related issue, how rigorous or methodologically sound the evaluations of perpetrator programmes are (see below). Some examples of indicators used to define effectiveness are:
 - [Change in abuse](#). Studies either use cessation (complete ending) of abuse, or reduction in violent behaviour in judging the effectiveness of efforts. Others go further and see reduction or ending direct or indirect threats of violence as also essential. Indirect threats can also include threats against children, friends, breaking furniture, displaying weapons. Reduction alone as a measure of success has been questioned because it will only reduce a climate of oppression and fear rather than eliminate it (Edleson & Tolman, 1995:4). Even minor threats can reinforce a sense of insecurity and a fear of eventual full-scale violence.



However, the source of measurement of data, and the reliability of such data on abusive behaviours is vital to any measure of effectiveness. This is especially relevant given that a concern regarding perpetrator programmes has been that offenders may just substitute and increase other, non-physical forms of abuse to maintain their coercive control over their partners (Laing, 2002:15).

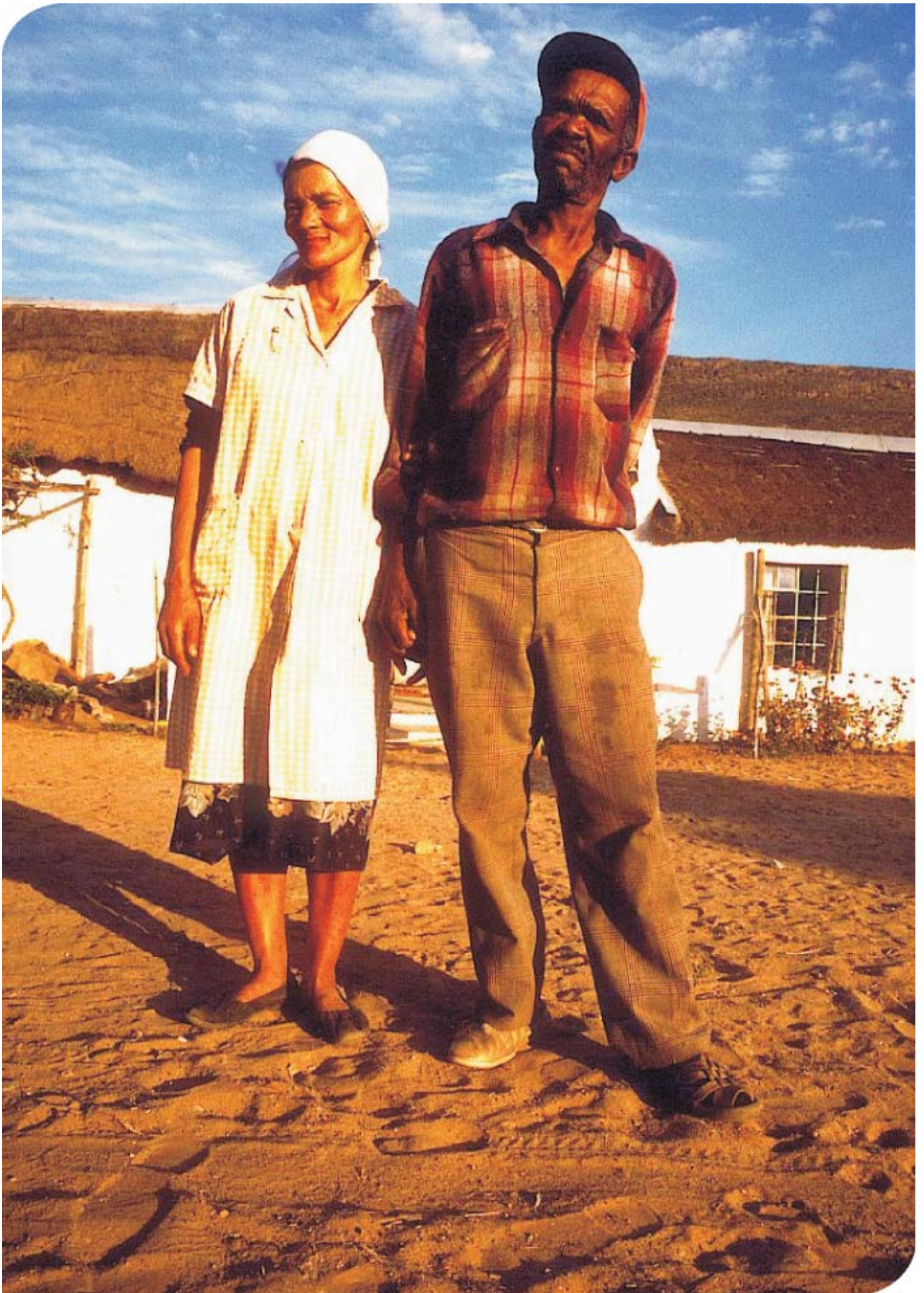
- **Sexual abuse.** Successful offender interventions should have as a goal and success indicator the elimination of sexual abuse. It is a relevant indicator, as the majority of rapes, for example, are actually believed to occur between acquaintances or intimate partners (Kelly, 2002: 8). Sexual abuse can range from sexual jokes or demeaning comments to demands for sex to rape itself. However, this form of abuse is not always targeted during interventions or effectively captured during post-interventions follow-ups (Finkelhor & Yilo, 1982, cited in Edleson & Tolman, 1995:5)
- **Psychological maltreatment.** Offenders may also use a range of abusive and controlling behaviours. This can go from harsh, angry speech to deliberate psychological 'torture' and 'brainwashing'. Among offenders, psychological maltreatment often accompanies physical maltreatment. Both are used to establish dominance and control over the other person (Edleson, 1995:2).
- **Separation abuse.** Violence can continue after separation and after divorce. This can impact on custody and visitation safety. If these incidents are not included, then a falsely positive picture of rehabilitation can occur.
- **Improved positive behaviour.** Measurement of positive, caring or equitable offender behaviour is necessary to capture positive behaviour changes, which may result from intervention. Most programmes include positive behaviour training in their interventions, but may not evaluate it. It sounds obvious, but can escape detection if only negative measures of effectiveness are used.
- **Improved quality of life for victims.** As noted above, victim well-being does not automatically improve with cessation of overt abuse. Psychological symptoms of abuse must also reduce for interventions to be regarded as successful. As an overall 'rule of thumb', a victim-centred foundation to effectiveness measurement is more likely to fulfil the central goal of interventions, namely stopping all forms of abuse, and restoring the quality of life of victims. A programme cannot be seen to be successful if violent or overtly abusive behaviour decreases or stops and yet women continue to live in fear.



- **How rigorous or methodologically sound are evaluations of perpetrator programmes?** This is related to the issues of effectiveness, as problems with evaluation of programmes can undermine attempts to ascertain or measure their effectiveness. Evaluation is often seen as the weak link in the field of perpetrator programmes, with most evaluations criticised as methodologically weak. As noted in the first bullet point, it is very hard to isolate scientifically the programme merits and possible outcomes from other events or interventions. Thus the success of the programme may be in part due to another simultaneous related intervention. With research showing more apparent positive results from programmes that are implemented as part of an overall community strategy, and less from those that attempt to tackle the issues in a stand-alone fashion, it is obvious that researchers would have to go to great lengths to devise innovative research methodologies to isolate the impact of perpetrator programmes. This is a very important task though, as without rigorous defensible evaluations, both victims and offenders are essentially being exposed to possibly weak and possibly counter-productive types of programmes. Some of the key methodological issues related to evaluation are:
 - **Source of measurement.** Studies use police reports, offender self-reporting, and victim reports. Police data probably under-report, as they define success as the absence of reported crime rather than the absence of abuse. Offender self-reporting is even less indicative of what may be occurring, as denial or minimisation can occur in reporting. Victim reports are seen as more accurate. But in many cases it is harder to obtain such reports, both during and after treatment. It is also important to track whether only initial partners have been interviewed, as abusive behaviour may simply be transferred to new partners. A victim-centred approach to evaluation methodology, is more likely to generate an accurate portrayal of the success or otherwise of the intervention, with the main measure of re-assault or re-abuse the victim reports (Gondolf, 2002a, cited in Laing, 2002:14).
 - **Items measured.** For an evaluation to be comprehensive it must cover sexual abuse, psychological abuse, child abuse, abuse during separation,²⁷ increases in positive treatment, and the overall outlook of the victim.
 - **Completion and follow-up issues.** In most studies that have been evaluated, there is a marked decrease in the numbers of evaluation participants as one traces the path from referral or initial contact, to attendance at an initial session, to completion of the course, to those who can be contacted for post-treatment evaluation follow-ups. This means that evaluation is conducted on a small sample in most cases. It also makes it harder to compare groups of participants, and undermines the real picture of success, as it not possible to ascertain whether the percentage of re-abusers is higher or lower in reality than the figures obtained (Edleson, 1995:5). Ideally follow-ups should also be frequent to assist with locating participants and partners, and to assist them in remembering incidents. In addition, evaluation needs to run for at least 6 months post-treatment, and up to even 18 or 24 months, in order to ensure that new behaviour patterns are sustainable. New partners should also be included in the follow-up insofar as they can be identified.
 - **Research design.** In most evaluations, a major methodological shortcoming in assessing group treatment is the scarcity of experimental evaluation studies. This is where a separate 'control' or comparison group is used to parallel the group involved in the intervention. Often it also involves the random assignment of participants, in order to preclude selection bias (Laing, 2002:9) Without this methodology it is harder to say with certainty that the particular intervention was responsible for any observed improvement in perpetrator behaviour, because there is no similar, untreated group to directly compare the treated and improved group against. Many studies use 'quasi-experimental' research design, involving non-random comparison groups or 'non-experimental' designs that have no comparison

groups. Even existing experimental studies of perpetrator programmes are often weak in the following areas: they need to include men from the general population so results can easily be generalised; the sampling frame must not be limited to men who volunteer or who are assessed by others as suitable to participate in a programme; participants must be exposed to the same external variables such as criminal justice supervision, monitoring and contact (Feder & Dugan, 2002, cited in Laing, 2002:12).

- **Site coverage.** Multi-site evaluations are more likely to reveal patterns and comparisons. However, sites should use a common format and structure in their programmes, programmes should be well established and co-ordinated within other community initiatives, and uniform intake procedures should be implemented at each site. Sites should use the same assessment tools and compile similar records about issues such as attendance and drop-outs. This reinforces sample size (Gondolf, 2002a, cited in Laing, 2002:4)
- **The risk of re-assault may be at its highest when men are first in the programme.** This is possibly due to the limited impact of programmes on perpetrators in the initial stages, and the initial dynamics released by the process within perpetrators. With progress through programmes, re-assault tends to drop (Gondolf, 2002a, cited in Laing, 2002:15). This has implications for the intensity of the programme offered (high intensity early in the programme may be advisable), the intensity of the legal supervision of the men and the level of support offered to women in the early stages of the programme (Connoly, 1991:4).
- **It should be noted that in a minority of cases, victims can be worse off after interventions than before.** This figure may be as high as 6% (Gondolf, 2002a, cited in Laing, 2002:16); however this must be evaluated to make sure that accountability and sanctions are still being applied post-programme.
- **A victim-centred approach is essential.** It must not be forgotten that the key goal of such interventions must still be to protect and empower the victim. This can be achieved by adopting a victim-centred approach in all facets of the programme, from providing victim support, to victim safety, to victim input in evaluations. The need for this is further highlighted by the finding that very few women partners of men in perpetrator programmes access assistance for themselves (Gondolf, 2002a, cited in Laing, 2002:22). Not all men's programmes contain a victim support element, and where they do it may not be resourced to the same level as the primary perpetrator intervention.
- **Women who abuse men are not supported by most interventions.** Female abusers are often not catered for or supported by perpetrator programme interventions. Very little research has been conducted on female abusers specifically, and men who are abused are usually not covered by victim support service structures. That female abuse exists is known from statistics in, for example, the United States, where a third of overall domestic abuse assaults are apparently perpetrated by women. This has implications for violence within society and against children as well, because of the correlation between violence in the home and violence against children.
- **Perpetrator programmes should not take funding resources from services for victims of violence.** Whether through existing or new sources of funding, government or private funds, perpetrator programmes should not be funded from the same direct pool of funds allocated for victims. This would undermine existing efforts to care for and protect victims of domestic violence (Connoly, 1991:5-6). A system whereby the perpetrator pays a small portion of the costs could be used, and is consistent with the perpetrator responsibility focus. Likewise, perpetrator programmes should not compete for funding from existing efforts at community or societal education around attitudes and values, or funds which support advocacy and lobbying efforts aimed at the adoption of progressive laws and systems around gender violence.



- **Culturally specific interventions may be required.** Research from Australia and the US demonstrates that models currently widely in use such as the Duluth one do not often take into account the specific needs of culturally different communities, i.e. they are often alienating to those not from a white, Anglo-Saxon background (i.e. mainstream US, UK, Canadian and Australian culture). At the same time minority communities in these countries often display intergenerational traumas associated with historical cultural and ethnic oppression. Interventions thus have to be de-constructed and then re-constructed with community participation to take into account cultural differences and cultural variations on issues such as patriarchy and masculinity for example, without compromising the aims of intervention (Laing, 2002:21). The use of the criminal justice system, for example, may exacerbate existing hostility within the community to institutional interventions.
- **Couple-based treatment may be counter-productive.** Couple-based counselling is not popular in the USA, where it is felt that the risk to the victim is increased by the process of disclosure and discussion. The victim may be placed at greater risk for 'speaking out' in front of the perpetrator. Recidivism rates appear to be higher for couples exposed to this form of intervention (Edleson & Tolman, 1995:11).
- One of the key debates surrounding perpetrator programmes has been the **feminist critique of programmes that do not base their work on a feminist analysis of power relationships**, but on men's identity politics, redefining abusers as 'men in difficulties' or even 'battered men'.²⁸ This reverses women's gains and has even become part of the 'backlash' against women, in that conservative men's groups have been able to argue that men are as much victims as women, and that to deny them fully fledged programmes to address their perceived victimhood is unfair.

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SO DO PERPETRATOR PROGRAMMES WORK?

Unfortunately inconclusive answers at best can be drawn from research (Bennet & Williams, 1998, cited in Laing, 2002:12). Even research from the experimental evaluation design literature suggests that there is still not conclusive evidence displaying the effectiveness of interventions aimed at violent individuals via perpetrator programmes. Evaluation showing successful and unsuccessful intervention can be found in most categories of interventions, such as arrest, court action, probation, mandatory versus voluntary participation, structured versus unstructured formats, stand-alone (perpetrator programme used in isolation from courts and victim support) versus integrated programmes. Positive and negative results can likewise be found using experimental, quasi-experimental and non-experimental evaluation design methodologies. However, the ongoing debate around evaluation methodologies as highlighted above means that any claims to significant success or non-success must be treated with caution. This means that although evidence does exist favouring certain interventions and formats, the widespread use of such programmes is probably due less to their undisputed potential than to the public and state desire for an immediate solution to the problem of domestic violence.

This said, it is possible to draw from the literature some outline of what a potentially successful intervention model could look like, based on utilising positive aspects and avoiding negative aspects (see above) that have been repeatedly noted in evaluations, even if the jury is still out as to the exact causal links behind their success. Likewise it should be noted that there is some evidence in the literature that perpetrator programmes can end violent and threatening behaviours in at least a third to half of the participants who complete a prescribed programme. The alleged percentage reduction or elimination rises across various contexts and models (Laing, 2002 and Edleson, 1995).

SUPPORT FOR WOMEN THE HIGHEST PRIORITY?

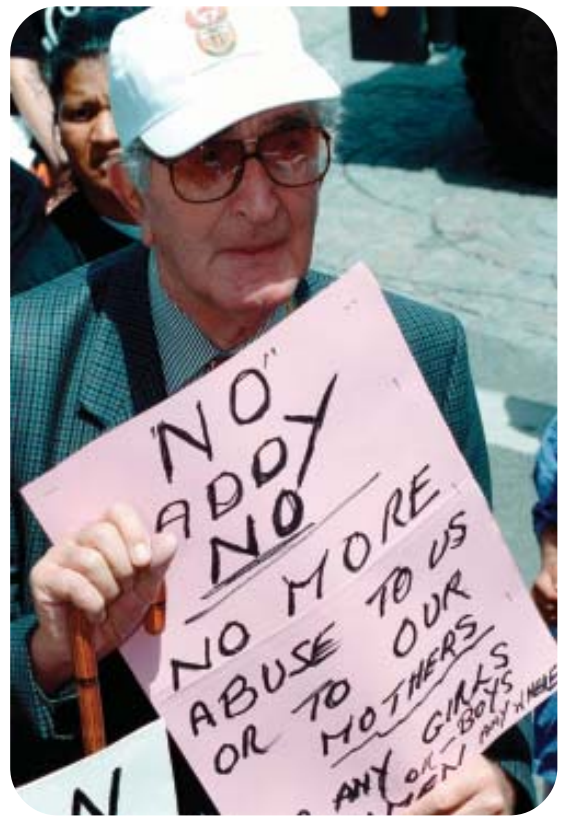
Thus many argue that programmes for victims are 'obviously the highest priority, and to the extent that they empower women to take court action, to separate, or otherwise to take action in their relationships, they may help stop men's violent behaviour' (Dufresne, 2000) Such activities are also more likely to empower women and enhance their choices, giving them the means and the right to reclaim control of their lives. The accountability of the offender is reinforced by the direct action such programmes allow women to take.



WAY FORWARD

Many agree that treatment programmes are still in their infancy and that we are still learning what works. While these programmes can be high resource, high risk strategies, they also need to be considered as one way of preventing domestic violence. However, this consideration needs to take account of the available resources and their current distribution, the nature of the support and services available to women and the kind of model being used. Ongoing rigorous longitudinal evaluation for both positive and negative effects is essential. However, evaluations of the effectiveness of programmes have proven to be methodologically complex.

As noted, researchers have pointed to the limitations of men's behaviour change programmes that target intervention at the level of the individual. For Pearce, important questions of social change and effectiveness remain. 'Assisting individual men to stop using violence has little impact on the social context in which violence occurs. Given that violence against women is borne out of systematic gender inequalities, eradicating these is the fundamental way to end this violence. In other words changes at the level of social structures, institutions and cultural processes are necessary, and only they would constitute a substantial prevention strategy' (Pearce, 2000:10)



Therefore behaviour change programmes should be but one part of a holistic intervention strategy, and criminal justice intervention and cultural change strategies cannot be neglected. A scenario where perpetrator programmes are implemented as stand-alone initiatives limits their broader impact, as the underlying community and societal issues will conspire to minimise, cancel out or defeat the outcomes envisaged.

In South Africa there has been strong support and action around legislative and criminal justice change that is aimed at ending the use of illegal violent abuse by men. There have been successful steps taken to equalise the opportunities available to women in employment and employment benefits. However, the same level of consensus does not yet exist across wider society (in contrast to legislators, activists and the state) for large-scale social interventions that seek to change society's perceptions of patriarchy and gendered relations in the home and community. When that consensus is reached, it will have to be implemented through broad social change initiatives, rather than at the individual level. In essence perpetrator programmes are but one element of an effort at societal re-programming or engineering, and as such are at their most effective and coherent when

identified and located within a broader terrain of intervention.²⁴ A practical way forward for South Africa would be to build a consensus-based research and implementation design that results in a pilot programme incorporating the results of existing local efforts as well as 'best practice' from international programmes and international evaluations.

Costs and benefits

Despite the real importance of working with men, it is always important to be aware of the possible costs and benefits of doing this. Some of these are:

DIVERTING RESOURCES

The optimal recommendation from international experience seems to be to combine programmes of assisting and supporting women and children who are survivors of violence, with the more long term programmes of working with men to end violence. The difficulty lies in achieving this balance in a resource-scarce environment (Connolly, 1991:8). Sometimes, money can be diverted from women's programmes to men's programmes. Choices about working with men may be dictated by resources in South Africa, especially in the state sector. A possible way forward is to construct and evaluate a best practice pilot from local and international research, and use this to prevent an inefficient proliferation of models across various branches of government and civil society itself (Connolly, 1991:8).

ISSUES OF IDEOLOGY AND CONTROL

International experience has shown that working with men can be fraught with problems. It can also be part of the backlash against women in that men manipulate the ethos of the interventions to legitimate their violence as expressions of their own victimhood as forced upon them by entrenched societal ideologies of patriarchy and dominance. In addition, it can serve to legitimate male calls for an equal focus on violent women to the detriment of existing interventions. These statistics are debated, but for example, a US men's website gives a US government figure of 835 000 battered men a year.²⁹ In that victim programmes and perpetrator programmes are seen as biased, the reaction by men's activists in these areas has been to overcompensate and influence debate in the opposite direction. This can lead to confusion amongst funders and legislators, as occurred in Canada in the 1990s. It can trigger a defensive reaction by touching on sensitive roots of patriarchal ideology and construction, without simultaneously providing enhanced protection and support for victims.³⁰ Or it can reinforce conservative and paternalistic responses to gender-based violence, i.e. communities must mobilise to protect women, reinforcing the concept of diminished 'agency' or independent action and choice by women. In some countries the use of the term 'survivor' rather than

¹ N Wainaina, 'Women Networking with Men to end Gender Based Violence'.

² See Castelino and Compton, 2002

³ For example R. W. Connell (2000) *The Men and the Boys*; Robert Morrell (ed) (2001) *Changing Men in Southern Africa*; Michael Kimmel (2000) *The Gendered Society*; Michael Kaufman's 'The Seven P's of Men's Violence' can be found on two websites: www.michaelkaufman.com (under "books/articles") and White Ribbon Campaign, www.whiteribbon.com. See also (2001) 44:3 *Development on the 'Culture of Masculinity'*.

⁴ UNDP (2000) *Men, Masculinities and Development: Broadening our work towards Gender Equality*. www.undp.org/gender/programmes/men/UNDP_Men_and_Masculinities.pdf

⁵ UNAIDS (2001) *Gender and HIV/AIDS - fact sheets* www.unaids.org

⁶ UNFPA (1997) *A New Role for Men - Partners for Women's Empowerment* www.unfpa.org/modules/intercenter/role4men/index.htm

⁷ UNICEF Gender Partnerships and Participation Programme: *Ending Gender Violence and reaching other Goals: What do Men and Violence have to do*

with it? www.unicef.org/programme/gpp/profiles/masc.htm www.unicef.org/programme/gpp/profiles/masc1.htm

⁸ Ruth Finney Hayward. *Some Organisations working with Men & Boys to end violence against women & girls*

Special Project on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, Gender, Participation and Partnerships Section Programme Division. www.unicef.org/programme/gpp/profiles/docs/group.pdf

⁹ *Partners in Change: Working with Men to end gender-Based Violence* INSTRAW, Santo Domingo 2002. See also <http://www.un-intraw.org>

¹⁰ E.g. R Connell: *Masculinities: 1995*.

¹¹ United Nations INSTRAW Virtual Seminar Series on *Men's Roles and Responsibilities in Ending Gender-based Violence 2001* <http://www.un-instraw.org/en/index.html>

¹² Pan American Health Organisation Fact Sheet on *Women, Health and Development*.

¹³ The *Emerge* programme in Boston is a good example of how to document accountability (Adams: 2000, 319, cited in Laing, 2002:5)

'victim' of domestic violence is promoted, to diminish the concept of women as subordinate or weaker emotionally than men, even in their experience of support and change. In addition, it can take control of the agenda away from women, or from survivors of violence, in that legislative and criminal justice systems are dominated by men, who then may implement change based on a patriarchal conception of the nature of change.

KNOWING WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE

The possibilities of working with men are extremely seductive: addressing cause rather than effect. Instead of removing or protecting women from the fist or the gun, we are removing that fist or gun from women. It seems an inescapable conclusion that we should work with men. At the same time it is a relatively new area with questionable success rates. In weighing the costs and the benefits we should tread slowly, always be aware of what we are doing and why we are doing it, and never be afraid to adjust interventions or stop if it does not work. The possibilities of such programmes must be subordinated to the necessity of completing the reform and renewal of South African legislative, welfare and criminal justice systems and processes, as part of the ongoing process of repair, following the years of dysfunction in the decades prior to 1994.

¹⁴ Although nearly all aspects of perpetrator programmes are contested by various researchers and research initiatives, some clear, substantiated trends, both positive and negative, have emerged from thorough evaluations of such programmes. It is this body of research that has been drawn on to underpin the following discussion.

¹⁵ The Observer, 28 May 2000.

¹⁶ United Kingdom Home Office Online Report 29/04.

¹⁷ End Violence Against Women List Archive, 12/19/01 http://www.edc.org/GLG/end-violence/hypermail/Dec_2001/0043.html

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Sherman 1992, cited in Edleson and Tolman, 1995:3

²⁰ Meta-Evaluation Bulletin #3, February 2000, reporting on a major review of National Crime Prevention, the Keys Young Report, Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, 1998.

²¹ S Engle Merry. 'Rights, Religion and Community: Approaches to Violence Against Women in the Context of Globalisation' (2001). 35 Law and Society Review 39.

²² See accompanying case studies report.

²³ The violence is never condoned, but a dynamic tension between accountability, responsibility and potential change is maintained.

²⁴ Research by Partnerships Against Domestic Violence, a programme co-ordinated by the Office on the Status of Women, Australia, 'Working with Men: Key Findings' June 2000.

²⁵ S. Engle Merry, 'Rights, Religion and Community: Approaches to Violence Against Women in the Context of Globalisation' (2001) 35 Law and Society Review 39.

²⁶ Tolman and Bennett, cited in Laing, 2002.

²⁷ Because offenders may be separated from their partners just prior to or during interventions, these abuses can go unrecorded if not evaluated, thus leading to a false statistical representation of rehabilitation.

²⁸ Email correspondence with M. Dufresne.

²⁹ <http://www.batteredmen.com/batdulut.htm>

³⁰ However, some programmes that work with men now seek to build into their methodologies parallel interventions aimed at the victim and the children, e.g. NICRO, South Africa (See case study report).