Men as Allies against Violence against Women

A guide for social activists

A project by the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA)

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Compiled by Iyn Ossome

Dedication

To the young men whose courage, honesty and transparency in criticizing, themselves, and the dominant norms and beliefs of their communities on gender relations and sexuality inspired this work, we are grateful. We hope that you uphold their integrity and continue to extend hands to the women movement to end all forms of violence against women and girls.

Hala Alkarib
SIHA Regional Director

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1. Introduction

The idea of working with men on the prevention of violence against women (VAW) is not new, and has gained increasing prominence among women's rights organizations, scholarship on VAW, and among activists. The question regarding whether or not men should be engaged in fighting discrimination and violence against women is more or less settled, and the emerging frontier of this discussion concerns rather the ways in which women's rights and feminist organizations can best integrate the resources that men bring into these struggles, without undermining the agency of women and gaining maximum support among the local communities where this work is being carried out. The question of *retaining women's agency* is a critical one that should inform all efforts aimed towards substantively engaging with men in anti-violence work. These concerns arise from experiences in various contexts in which patriarchal dominance, sexism, religious fundamentalism and dogma, male chauvinism, crises of masculinity, political and traditional power, and misogyny have been shown to actively undermine women's position in society and make it difficult for them to forge bonds of mutual respect and trust necessary for genuinely egalitarian collaborative work between women and men to evolve in the struggle to prevent or end violence against women. It is therefore critical to understand from the onset the particular challenges and difficulties that such collaboration might entail in order to formulate strategies and guidelines which move beyond prescriptive mechanisms towards strategies based on the lived realities of women and girls faced with violence on a daily basis. The challenges and strategies outlined throughout this study seek to engage with various conceptual understandings of the violence in society – the concept of power, masculinity, religion, patriarchy, and misogyny - all of which are critical in identifying the 'what', 'why', and 'how' questions of working with men on VAW.

SIHA Network, in its work on the prevention of violence against women and girls in the Horn region, has sought to contextualize its responses to VAW, and the need to engage men in anti-VAW work has emerged as a particularly important strategy. In the context of Somalia, this need arises in part from the observation of SIHA member organizations, who report that the outcome of the war there has 'led to forced migrations and left many families without a father or eldest son, placing the main responsibility on women to provide for the day-to-day needs of their families.'[1] The implication of this 'war burden' of women is that issues that directly affect Somali women, such as sexual and gender-based violence, tend to receive inadequate responses, or are altogether neglected because of the economic and social responsibilities that are prioritized and which women tend to focus on. Women and girls in the Somalia context are particularly exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, the extent of which remains hidden by the myriad layers of politics, custom and tradition that women have to negotiate on a daily basis. Indeed as Zahra M. Ahmed (2014) observes,

1 Ahmed, Zahra M. (2014), 'Meet Zahra Mohamed Ahmed', Women in Islam, SIHA Journal, Issue 01/2014, p. 13.

"the challenges women face here cannot be written in a page".[2] According to her, Somali women suffer from a lack of education due to cultural barriers and a lack of political and economic participation. They suffer from harmful traditional practices such as FGM and forced and early marriage. In addition to this is the ongoing threat and trauma of rape.[3]

VAW in Somalia is exacerbated by the absence of a coherent legal framework to which women can appeal for justice. As Ahmed (2014) notes, this particular form of misogyny has become rampant, and due to a weak formal justice system, perpetrators often live in impunity. A sexual-violence task force formed by the Transitional Federal Government some time ago is the first form of limited recognition of the crisis in Somalia. Improving access to justice will be key here, as women are frequently harassed and arrested if they report rape to the authorities. The work of civil society organizations in addressing VAW is furthermore, constrained by the challenging environment within which they operate. Threats and constant harassment are just some of the risks that different actors working on legal aid provision and counseling for the victims of sexual violence and more broadly, on women's rights, constantly face. This set of circumstances highlight the need to broaden the scope of strategies employed in anti-violence work, given the limitations faced by women's rights activists, actors and legislative organs that are normally at the forefront of this work. It is in this regard that SIHA has been exploring various strategies and methodologies of engaging men in the work or preventing violence against women and girls in Somalia.

These questions, regarding the rights of women and girls in the Sudanese context, are similarly complex and highly politicized – owing mainly due to the Islamization of the state and the interpretation of sharia laws in ways that exclude, target and harm women and girls, or which "burden women with an interpretation of Islam that deprives them from self-determination and expects nothing but obedience."[4] For instance, there is discrepancy between international law and existing national legislation in many Islamic countries, including Sudan, when it comes to differentiating the act of rape from the act of *zina* (adultery). Islamic penal law (*hudud),* defined as "claims of God" include *Zina,* that is, unlawful sexual intercourse or adultery. According to this law the punishment for unlawful sexual intercourse is 100 lashes if the offender is not married (fornication) and stoning to death if the offender is married (adultery). The international attention on sexual violence has provoked intense discussion in Sudan both among government and non-government actors, organizations and institutions on the penalty of adultery/fornication (*Zina)* in the 1991 penal code, which is to be reformed in accordance with the new constitution of 2005. These issues have politicized the area of violence, provoked debate and engendered activism among Sudanese women in civil society in Islamic law reform.[5] A further problem

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ebadi, Shirin (2014), '*So we Practice Patience: Islam and human rights*', Women in Islam, SIHA Journal, Issue 01/2014, p. 31.
5 CMI (2011), *Gender-based violence in conflict-torn Sudan,* available online at: http://www.cmi.no/research/project/?1472=gender-based-violence-in-conflict-torn-sudan

faced by Sudanese women is the regulation of their dress code – and extension of the Public Order Act and the "Islamic Dress" code being viciously implemented across the country. In evidence laws and many of the *hudud* cases, if a woman cannot prove that she was actually raped (taking into consideration factors related to poverty, lack of understanding medical and legal procedures that need to be conducted immediately after the crime, and the social concerns which often delay rape victims from lodging legal complaints), the case becomes one of adultery, even when the victim is a child under 14 years.[6] Furthermore, as Salah (2014) argues, the current educational system cannot produce an independent, humane and just legal system. Misogyny and disrespect for women has become ingrained in Sudanese curricula and teaching methods. Such reality cannot fail but result in continuing stalking and criminalization of women:[7]

> It is a vicious cycle that needs to be broken through working with the people – the men and women affected by, and affecting, these malformed laws.[8]

SIHA's approach from the onset considered the objective of working with men on the issue of VAW as being a priority, and a number of thematic arguments were identified as forming the basis of this prioritization:

- Firstly because the religious, political and cultural traditions that subordinate and dehumanize women in the Horn region are deeply patriarchal and male-dominated, and as such, activist projects that seek out male perspectives and cooperation have a higher likelihood of dealing with the root causes of violence against women;
- Secondly, because there are contradictions inherent in the fact that violence against women is an outcome of gendered, misogynist and sexist systems of domination, yet at the same time is also a reflection of unequal social and political relations in society which affect both men and women. This is tied to the concern that the institutionalization and woman-centeredness of VAW work has had the effect of obscuring the fact of shared forms of oppression between women and men;
- Thirdly, because of popular misconceptions that women's rights seek to antagonise men, and accompanying perceptions of women's empowerment as being a threat to men's actual or perceived power. A complementary, rather than a competitive approach towards the question of gendered violence in general is beneficial, especially since both male gender rights activists and women's rights activists are both seeking to address questions of power and autonomy, albeit differently.

6 Salah, Walaa (2014), *'Their Cases and my Stories'*, Women in Islam, SIHA Journal, Issue 01/2014, p.48-9.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.

Why involving men in the work of ending VAW is important

- Given that men are deeply implicated in and through the continued sexual and gender-based violation of women in the two country contexts, SIHA's approach is to view the process of engaging men as being also a process of the 'self' emancipation of men: that is, men are also not 'free' until all of society, including women, experience freedom;
- This work of engaging men is furthermore, an important and necessary step in the development, conscientization and creation of a **critical mass** of activists as a necessary component of the social development of communities and societies ravaged by conflict and oppressive political regimes;
- It is a widely acknowledged fact that women *and* men inhabit differing social, cultural and political positions in society, which can be both conflicting and complementary. Similarly to those brought by women, it is also important to draw on the diverse intellectual, social and cultural resources that men bring to bear on anti-violence work is critical in the process of engendering social change;
- On the question of leadership and agency particularly in relation to leading on gender activism, the power relations prevailing in society are an important consideration, and in both Sudan and Somalia (where patriarchy, cultural and religious norms tend to favour men), a more nuanced approach is required. Engaging men in anti-VAW work means acknowledging the ability of *both* women and men to lead a gender agenda. The normative exclusion of women should not be accepted, and neither should the participation/inclusion of men – both need to be conscious processes;
- Related to the above factor is that because men enjoy more strategic positions of influence in the cultural as well as political spheres, and as social leaders respected in society, they are in a unique position to exert influence and pressure for change with regards to ending violence against women and girls.

2. Structural, conceptual and ideological drivers of VAW

Societies everywhere are characterized by a set of normative ascriptions that shape and define the ways in which children are socialized into the age group, family, and community. The socialization process itself does not take place in a vacuum, and is normally influenced in ways that may not be visible, through the structures of the family, state, religion, education, membership clubs, professional associations, gangs, traditional associations, and other cultural spheres of influence. While these structures can function both positively and negatively in society, it is critical to interrogate and understand the ways in which gendered forms of violence become normalized within them. It is equally important to recognize that while direct acts of violence remain the most visible evidence of VAW, acts of violence usually signify underlying problems within the conditions, structures and institutions which people live, and which both enable violence and normalize VAW on a daily basis as women and men interact within these structures. An overview of the ways in which such structures produce and normalize violence against women are highlighted below through a discussion of various key concepts that inform the ways in which violence against women and girls appears in society.

2.1 Power and Patriarchy

Violence perpetrated by men against women suggests inequality or imbalance of power between women and men. In societies across the world, real or material power is determined by people's access to wealth (class), property, education, and position. Yet the reality in many communities across Africa, where poverty, exclusion, marginalization and violence mark everyday life, both men and women lack such access to power, suggesting that it is equally necessary to understand the absence of power in addition to its presence. In other words, the actions of men in such impoverished and marginalized societies may be better understood by examining the disempowerment of men (and women), and how this manifests violence within communities. Violence against women should be placed in the social contexts within which men and women exist and it must be understood as a socially constructed problem (and therefore capable of changing), rather than as the outcome of the individual characteristics of the perpetrators of violence (which are assumed to be inherent). A contextual approach towards understanding the nature of gendered violence can further include the study of the social constructions of both 'femininity' and 'masculinity', which as Kordvani (2002) argues, in turn entails considering men's power relations to women, and the social development of boys and men in the general context.

Further, the concept of patriarchy holds promise for theorizing violence against women because it keeps the theoretical focus on dominance, gender and power. It also anchors the

problem of violence against women in social conditions, rather than individual attributes.[9] Patriarchy is about the social relations of power between men and women, women and women, and men and men. It is a system for maintaining class, gender, racial, and heterosexual privilege and the status quo of power – relying both on crude forms of oppression, like violence; and subtle ones, like laws; to perpetuate inequality. Patriarchal beliefs of male, heterosexual dominance lie at the root of gender-based violence. Patriarchy is a structural force that influences power relations, whether they are abusive or not.

2.2 Masculinities

The reproduction of masculinity can be understood as manifesting either as a dominant traditional type, an oppressed traditional type, or emerging new alternative masculinities. Alternative masculinities are the most desirable outcome, as they tend to represent forms of masculinities that are not harmful, oppressive, or hegemonic. Many different versions of masculinity exist and all of them are socially constructed – that is, masculinities are not innate but rather are formulated in dynamic ways through the ways in which men interact with various phenomena in society. Such factors may include the relationship and attitudes that boys and men develop to sexuality, violence, HIV/AIDS, fatherhood, religion, power, and education, among other factors. Masculinities are therefore, fluid and capable of change over time and in different contexts. It is critical to make a distinction between 'manhood' and masculinities, since masculinities can exist without men. The term 'manhood' represents indigenous notions and understandings that are associated with physiology, while 'masculinities' go beyond men's bodies or physiology (manhood) to include masculine expressions also by females.

One approach views masculinities as not only socially produced, but psychologically produced as well. This approach acknowledges the existence of agency, in the sense that the production of masculinities involves some active participation by individual males. Males sometimes choose what kind of masculinity they *perform* within a particular socio-economic context or as a result of the images of specific masculinities they have been presented with.[10] As such, in order to properly engage issues of masculinities in Africa, the connection between the social-psychological experiences of being male and the socio-economic and political realities of Africa have to be taken seriously.

9 Hunnicutt, Gwen (2009), '*Varieties of patriarchy and violence against women: Resurrecting "Patriarchy" as a theoretical tool*', Violence Against Women, 15(5): 553-573.

10 Ratele, Kopano (2008), 'Analysing Males in Africa: Certain Useful Elements in Considering Ruling Masculinities', African and Asian Studies, 7: 515-536.

Example 1: *Performing masculinities*

"In a honeymoon you have to slaughter the cat for your bridegroom…."(a Sudanese proverb that you have to tell your wife showing you are the master)

"I experienced sex the first time when I was twenty years old, with my first wife, when I got married. My wife and I were very happy, I sang to her and she would dance, and vice versa, joking about our first days in the honeymoon and how she was frightened, and she was replying back how I was fierce, etc… and to some extent we were going to understand each other. But suddenly I remembered the "cat slaughtering" and I suspected that this lady will not respect me enough in the future if I dealt with her like that… then I thought of different scenarios to let this woman know herself, as well as to respect me for the rest of her life. Suddenly I got the idea and continued joking with her and said:
Woman! I will beat you?
She laughed and said: "No you can't"

"I can't?!!!!!"
I replied back and still I am joking, and she said,
"Yes, you can't…"
"Ok I will let you know how I can", and I went out and brought two branches of Henna tree, and still I was pretending to be joking because still I was smiling,
I then beat her until she cried and wept.
She collected her bag and went to her family.
In the evening I went to my in-laws' house as if I did nothing, shaking hands with all of them and I was smiling, in their faces I read some surprise but I did not care. Then my father-in-law asked me:
"What is wrong with you and your wife?
"What?!!!" -- I replied back in a very surprised way
My father in law: "She said you have beaten her…."
"Have I? Beaten her?
When did that happen?"
Lastly I hit my forehead and said:
"Oh my uncle I remembered, yes I did so, but it was a joke, and always we were joking like that, sometime she would find me sleeping and pour water on my head, sometimes I hide myself and frighten her and etc…"
When my wife was asked, she said (yes we were joking, but he hurt me)
Both her father and mother cursed her, and advised her, this is not a suitable way to deal with her husband, and it is a shame to complain about joking with her husband.
Since that time she is straight forward, and the message that I wanted to send was passed (if my jokiness is like that, what about my seriousness)."[1]

Others approach masculinity by linking it directly with the existence of patriarchy in society. Chitando, for instance, acknowledges the diversity of masculinities and also the hierarchy of masculinities, with **hegemonic masculinities** being the most dominant and dangerous

form which does not only dominate women but other men as well.[11] According to this view, these harmful masculinities thrive because of the privileged position patriarchy affords men for the simple reason that they are males. Religious and cultural practices serve to sustain patriarchy and the consequent dangerous masculinities which have been socially constructed to place men and their desires above women and children. Numerous theorizations of masculinities in different social, political and economic contexts suggest the difficulty of ascribing a singular dimension to this question, or why masculinities manifest violently against some women. One dimension suggests violent masculinities occur and recur when young men, especially among the poor, can no longer enjoy the privileges of patriarchy. Now more than ever before there is an unequal redistribution of the dividends of manhood, and struggles over access to women are dramatized by high levels of rape and various forms of sexual violation. The central point of this narrative is to suggest how the projection of virility and entitlement to the bodies of women works as the marker of power, and the ways in which women's bodies become the terrain of a patriarchal battle between young (disempowered) men and patriarchs who wield power in society.[12]

Since masculinities have long been viewed as static, a core aim of these debates is to destabilize the notion of masculinities as being static, and rather to raise consciousness among men regarding the ways in which violent masculinities are constructed, are dynamic, and most significantly, that masculinities do not have to be violent and can be transformed. As such, when talking about masculinity, men and women should both be addressed to understand the dynamics and results of why violence is resistant and related to masculinity. Masculinity needs to be presented to the men themselves as being in crisis (masculinities in crisis): that is, men are not born perpetrators (but rather, *become* perpetrators) and women are not born victims. The suggestion here is that masculinities are learned, transmitted and natured (socially constructed) over time. There is thus need to retain new perspectives (positive traditional forms) which encourage non-violent masculinities. Women also need to be educated more about the fact that masculinity does not have to be a negative concept, but rather as something that functions as a gender identity. What we see at the moment is the ways in which violent masculinities are influenced and defined negatively by the cultural set-ups in which they manifest.

How do masculinities manifest themselves as overtly violent and against women?

Part of this crisis relates to men's performance of masculinity without *real* power, and because they do not have it, men manifest their (lack of) power as violence, against women and even amongst each other. Rituals in various communities function in the construction of masculinities either positively or negatively, or both (for example, in cultures of circumcision, war/warrior-hood). It is critical to remember that just as notions of masculinity are constructed, they in turn influence male behavior, attitudes and actions.

11 Chitando, Ezra (2013), 'Religion and Masculinities in Africa: Opportunity for Africanization', in Isabel Apawo Phiri and Dietrich Werner (eds), Handbook of Theological Education in Africa, Dorpspruit: Cluster Publications.

12 This narrative has bee suggested by Achille Mbembe (2012) in 'The Spear that Divided the Nation,' Amandla, 26 May 2012 http://www.brettmurray.co.za/the-spear-opinions/26-may-2012-amandla-magazine-professor-mbembe-the-spear-that-divide-a-nation/

In many African societies, challenging masculinities and and negative male norms can meet with resistance and taboo. In part, this is due to the private/sacred/secret status of many rituals around manhood. An example of this might include rituals around the 'rites of passage' and initiation ceremonies such as circumcision, bodily incisions, and various forms of induction into 'warrior' status, all of which mark for young men, a transition from boyhood to 'manhood'. The fact that in many contexts, older women themselves also act as gatekeepers of these cultural rituals around manhood, weakens the extent to which women may in reality, challenge these norms. The secret/sacred statuses accorded to these rituals also 'mystify' masculinity and may contribute to the normalization of men's violent behavior towards women.

Furthermore, there are incredibly misogynistic ideologies attached to the defense of certain traditional rites (of passage) and rituals practiced by and on men. There also exists a dangerous policing of culture and a way of saying "a woman has no business in the affairs of men". This presents the real challenge of formulating dialogues and programs in which women work together with men towards breaking down regressive cultural, "masculinist" and violent practices. It is necessary to ask in this regard, the basis upon which men might agree to admit women into these coded spaces and languages shrouded in secrecy, mysticism and myth. This focus could be placed on the ways in which institutions and traditional structures enforce discourses of male hegemony/superiority/power – and at the same time, reinforce notions of women's subservience/weakness. Therefore, campaign messaging should seek to question the various premises upon which male power and violent masculinities are constructed.

Progressive/Transformative Masculinities – masculinities that set men and others free:

This involves the search for elements of 'crisis' inherent in the ritualization of masculinities. *Remember:* Crisis has the power not only to provoke anxiety, but also to demand attention and response. Opportunities exist for presenting young men to themselves as being in crisis – in other words, to get them to critically interrogate their own complicity in generating violence and to translate their internalized masculinities in more positive ways. This might be termed as a process of reflection or introspection. Creating projects within which men can contemplate their ritualistic norms as being in crisis (masculinity in crisis). One critical approach might be to instigate dialogue that can articulate problems inherent in the construction of masculinity and male sexuality under unfavorable conditions. For example, in the instances of both Sudan and Somalia, the particular histories of colonialism and decades of war have a dehumanizing effect on the people in general. In addition, for men raised with the notion of being breadwinners and 'heads of households', the social and economic exclusion under capitalism may be experienced as degrading and manifest in men exhibiting violent and anti-social behavior.

The possibilities of producing positive forms of masculinity are at present, limited by neocolonial bonds of patriarchy – that is, through its own oppression, masculinity itself

has become oppressive. It is of critical importance to foreground the historical roots of the production of violent masculinities – otherwise it becomes perceived as something that emerges from thin air, and constructs men as perpetrators and women as victims. In this way, it removes incentive for men to want to be an active part of deconstructing masculinity and cooperating in work aimed at developing more progressive ways of 'being a man' in society. In this regard, the struggles to emancipate colonized and neo-colonized societies as a whole, and the struggles for social justice that seek to dismantle the prevailing social and economic structures of oppression are critical for the freedom and emancipation of men. The hope is that while addressing these underlying problems, such struggles would also problematize fixed positions or male perspectives that are learned, transmitted and naturalized by ways of traditional and socio-cultural practices. If well thought out and implemented, such a dialogue process should be able to address the construction of (traditional) masculinities and male sexuality, and new or alternative forms of contemporary male sexuality could be negotiated and (re)invented, but without discarding positive and useful traditional forms.

2.3 Religion

Although the link has been drawn between gender-based violence and religions across the spectrum, we focus here on the two country contexts of Somalia and Sudan. In so doing, it is necessary to interrogate the ways in which women living under Islamic law and practices become vulnerable to violence that is perpetrated in the name of religion. In other words, what is the link between religion, gender and violence? How are men implicated in this ideological matrix that seeks to impose limits on what is considered as acceptable female morality? In what ways do women themselves (considering the point above about masculinities that are not restricted to men) become complicit in entrenching religious dogma in ways that inhibit progressive gender and feminist politics? In what ways can men be engaged towards challenging these ideological constructions that undermine the rights of women? Scholarship highlights unequal power relations between women and men, which is deepened by pervasive patriarchy and the dogmatic rise of Islam. Gender-based violence is further sustained by a misinterpretation of Islam, conservative political discourse, and discriminatory family laws prevalent both in Sudan and Somalia. Furthermore, both religion and politics are utilized towards maintaining male control over women through patriarchy.

The answers to the questions posed above are neither simple nor straightforward. The weight that these questions carry have, nonetheless, been considered over time by many men and women scholars of Islamic thought, and have historically formed the basis of activism for Islamic thinkers such as Taher Haddad, the Tunisian thinker whose book *Our Women in the Sharia and Society* (1930) confronted the vexed issue regarding certain interpretations of religious texts by counteracting the traditions of a social organization based on discrimination against women and those of the religious establishment that perceive women

in negative terms.[13] Haddad's life in a sense enacts one of the most significant ways in which men can become allies and engage in the work of ending the violence imposed by religion upon women. His sustained writing, advocacy and activism amid persecution and ostracism planted seeds for the greater autonomy of Tunisian women in future generations. Based on his thoughts, Tunisia came forward with one of the most progressive Islamic Family Laws of our time. Providing a new approach to interpreting religious texts, his book paved the way for the issuing of the Personal Status Code of Tunisia in 1956 that granted women legal rights, which most Arab women still do not enjoy today.[14]

2.4 Culture

Culture has been used to justify gender inequality and violence by evoking traditional cultural beliefs about how women should be treated. The defense of the culture of a place, country, religion, etc., is in fact a defense of the culture of patriarchy in that country, religion, identity; and the culture of violence everywhere. The culture of patriarchy is not static, and manifests differently in different historical, social, political and economic contexts. Culture does more than just create broad environmental conditions that foster gender-based violence. It also shapes the interpretations we make about it. Society continues to be more caught up with the victim's choices than with the abuser's actions. And because the questions we ask drive the conclusions we draw and the resources we allocate, this can prohibit an understanding of how gender-based violence is, to varying degrees of severity, so pervasive that it trumps any one decision by women to stay or go, report or stay silent. That is, the choices that women make are not the reasons why they experience violence from men. Women are physically and sexually assaulted by men because of the choices certain men make, and the cultural powers that allow this type of violence to run rampant.

The role of culture and power is especially obvious when examined through the lens of poverty, race and ethnicity. The use, for instance, of rape as a weapon of "ethnic cleansing" has been argued in many instances. Ethnic cleansing through the rape of women functions to 'destroy the victims' culture'; to inflict trauma and through this, to destroy family ties and group solidarity within the enemy camp - suggesting not only a "metaphor for invasion and then occupation" but also a "metaphor for a defeated community";[15] and also aims to destroy the enemy's progeny with the aim of creating culturally, religiously and linguistically homogenous nations. Women as the 'markers' of the boundaries of nations are thus rendered vulnerable to gendered forms of violence where the aim is to assert new forms of identity or destroy existing cultural forms.

13 Al Sayed, Al Sir (2014), 'Our Women in the Sharia and Society: A book review', *Women in Islam*, SIHA Journal, Issue 01/2014, p. 84.
14 Ibid.
15 Diken and Laustsen (2005), '*Becoming Abject: Rape as a Weapon of War*', Body and Society, 11: 111-128.

2.5 Economic drivers of violence against women

Again, analyses of gendered violence in the context of war and conflict have offered the most useful insights into the dynamic of violence against women that is structurally driven. The idea of a political economy of gendered violence, including sexual violence, was initially expressed through the view that in the course of civil war there are transfers of assets from the weak to the strong – whether large assets such as mines and plantations or personal assets such as labor power and possessions (ultimate control of large assets depends on who wins the war).[16] According to this view, systematic rape and sexual abuse are among the strategies men use to wrest personal assets from women. Concern for women who were victimized and impoverished by conflicts has overshadowed analysis of women's value to men in civil wars. One of the reasons women are central to civil war strategies is because they have sought-after personal assets which are needed for the execution of the war. The argument made here, which has important policy implications for women, is that in civil wars, armies and militias (such as in the case of Somalia) use rape systematically to strip women of their economic and political assets. Women's assets reside in the first instance in their productive and reproductive labor power and in the second instance in their possessions and their access to valuable assets such as land and livestock.[17]

The issues highlighted in this section point to the multiple and intersecting ways in which gender-specific violence is connected to general social contexts, and therefore, the need to situate our analysis within a wider social milieu. This is also true for the strategies that are eventually developed for engaging men in anti-violence work. Patriarchal systems are bound up with other systems of domination, therefore this concept must be situated within fields of hierarchy where old dominate young, men dominate women, men dominate men, Whites dominate people of color, developed nations dominate developing nations, and humans dominate nature.

> Patriarchies serve as models of dominance for other hierarchical institutions, including the state, criminal justice systems and mainstream religions.

16 Turshen, Meredeth (2001), 'The Political Economy of Rape: An Analysis of Systematic Rape and Sexual Abuse of Women During Armed Conflict in Africa', in C. Moser and F. Clark (eds.), *Victors, Perpetrators or Actors: Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, London: Zed Books.

17 Ibid.

3. Contexts and lessons learnt from men's interventions in VAW

Apart from the broad conceptual interpretations above associated with violence against women, it is also critical to recognize the fact VAW ought to be understood as being specific to or emerging from different social, cultural and economic contexts with which men engage on a day to day basis, and therefore, the potential of engaging men within these spaces. Violence against women must be engaged as an ongoing phenomenon based on the concrete lived realities of both women and men, and as being intrinsic to the decision making process at the level of the household, workplace and broader cultural community. Related to these contexts, several approaches have emerged in the development of best practices in engaging men in the work of preventing violence against women, through which it is possible to begin to think about the connectivity that can be drawn between different social contexts and VAW; the interconnectedness between different centers of power and social life, and their relationship to VAW, and finally; in reflecting on the ways in which men, and sometimes, both women and men, are implicated in cycles of gender violence through their connection with these spaces and contexts.

3.1 Engaging fathers -

Men in their role as fathers constitute a critical constituency at the interface between the family/household, local community, and the broader (social, cultural and political) society. The notion of fatherhood itself is imbued with notions of power, responsibility, masculinity, authority, control or conversely, freedom, egalitarianism and stability. Fatherhood is therefore a place where a stage for critical intervention exists and should be exploited. Fathers, as men, are a ready-made constituency and model group of men working with women against VAW. Yet, men's activism and consciousness of their positions in this regard cannot be assumed or taken for granted. The household is therefore, one context which ought to be taken very seriously as a primary site for reflection on, interrogation of, and behavioral change of men, by men, with regards to violence against women. Achieving this form of reflexivity and positive transformation in male attitudes to violence can act as a powerful challenge to other men in the community and motivate individual initiatives against VAW that are more organically linked to men's own interpretations of their positions of power, complicity, privilege, and power to confront gender-based violence.

Example 2: Yes, fathers can break the cycle of violence

'One man I know personally was requested to give his daughter to one of their clan leaders in Mogadishu. In our context, if you reject such requests you break from the unbreakable traditions and values and in some cases you cause huge damage to the honor of your clan if that request comes from someone of your clan. The father told his daughter about the request and she accepted unconditionally. A few days after consultation with other family members the father came back to his daughter and said "look my daughter, I don't have to put pressure on you to accept that marriage proposal, I just wanted to tell you that the request came from that gentleman, but it is up to you whether to accept or not. The only thing I need for you is a happy life with anyone you are satisfied with." The daughter replied, "Thank you very much daddy for allowing me to do what I want or not, the only reason I initially accepted your request was that I was afraid of your curse and that my refusal would be disobedience to my family, but I never dreamt of that man and I don't want to marry him." Now this shows how the culture of silence can be broken if support comes from men, this also shows the power and the influence that men have over their female family members which means they oppress them until the chain is broken and their attitude/behavior is changed and then can become allies in breaking this silence.'[2]

3.2 Sports and recreation -

The rigid gendered division of social spheres (sports and recreation being one), means that the processes through with women and men are socialized and integrated into society, and also the ways in which gender ideologies are formed and entrenched, proceeds in two separate spheres that rarely interact with each other. Within sports and recreational spaces, men mainly socialize with fellow men, and similarly, women socialize with other women – rarely do these separate spheres interact collectively, and as such what is lost is the opportunity of teaching both women and men how to develop a common humanity and shared struggles for a just and equal society. The realm of sports and recreation is one area in which the work of confronting negative masculinities can be very productively (or counter-productively) developed. Because of men's almost exclusive access to these spaces, strategies for fighting against violence against women need to be tailored into the types of interactions that men have with each other in these spaces, and the ways in which these spaces can be brought into relation with women's social spaces.

Example 3: *Women's access to men's recreational clubs can make a difference*

The ultimate goal of initiatives such as those undertaken by SIHA in working through men's clubs is to influence the local society in the identified project locations regarding their attitudes and behaviour that tolerate forms of violence against women by addressing men aged between 19-40. Projects such as these seek to encourage and develop alternative progressive voices and concepts that counter the dominant woman-repressive discourse.

An example of such a club is the Al Dim men's group in Khartoum, which is comprised of about 15-20 men depending on levels of attendance. The group is part of Aldiom Ashargia social club. In August 2013, a meeting was held with 2 mentors from Al Dim and an action plan was agreed. Later, a meeting with the group took place and they were briefed about the project objectives, scope, and duration, and the plan of action. In September 2013, an awareness-raising session took place in Aldiom Ashargia Club. There were 12 attendees and the session mainly focused on the pattern of violence against women. Al Dim is an old working class neighborhood of Khartoum, an area that is known as being a place for traditionalists and activists. However like other parts of Sudan it is a conservative setup. For example, women are not usually members of social clubs, although in Al Dim women can enter social clubs if public events have been organized. For this reason, the group has great transformative potential. For instance, within the group, women's participation in public through employment or political participation is accepted. However the Al Dim area has been impacted by economic difficulties and this factor has influenced the gender relations, whereby the prevalence of VAW has increased in the area. During one of the events at the club, a film entitled 'Stoning Thoraia' was shown, which generated a very controversial discussion among the men. The film addresses the corporal punishment of stoning to death for committing adultery based on militant religious beliefs, which unfortunately Sudan has adopted.[3]

3.3 Peer relationships -

The influence that male peer groups exert on each other's behavioral choices is immense and a powerful factor driving the formation of masculinities and male attitudes and perceptions of women. Best practices across the world show that peer groups are fundamental spheres of engagement in seeking to influence and strategize around working with men on VAW. Peer groups are not formed randomly and do not exists in a vacuum. Rather, human beings, and especially young people, are drawn towards each other based on their perceptions of various social issues and their own experiences as members of society. Here then, it is critical to ask how it is that peer relationships are being shaped and influenced by the cultural, economic and political context. For instance, young people experiencing the structural violence of governments that are fundamentally unable to create jobs are likely to experience society itself as violent. Their own violation and feelings of low self-worth and lack of self-esteem is likely to render them insensitive to the suffering and violation of other members of society, especially women. Women's experience of violence should therefore, also be understood as both directly and indirectly correlated to the social pressures being faced by the perpetrators of violence. It is necessary then, for men to interrogate the gendered discourses through which they constitute themselves into peer groups, critique the actions/reactions generated through these discourses, and interrogate the exclusivist nature of their solidarity groups, such as peer groups, asking for instance: who is being excluded/included through these peer relations?

In what ways does the violence of exclusion translate into other forms of violence, including gender-based violence and VAW?

Example 4: *Peer relationship initiatives*

School-based initiatives – including school policies, programs and practices – seem to be a focal point for work in this area. These include the promotion of safe environments free of sexual harassment, sexual assault, homophobia and other forms of bullying and violence. An important objective is to create environments where traditional masculine constructs such as strength can be re-envisioned by young men to include social responsibility, respect for women and girls and leadership in violence prevention.[4]

3.4 Men as cultural allies -

Culture and ethnicity have been used by men in many contexts globally, and especially in the two countries in which this study focuses on (Somalia and Sudan), and deep cultural prejudices continue to undermine men's ability, efforts and willingness to become allies in anti-violence initiatives. Best practices have emerged from other contexts in which culture was also seen as an obstacle to engaging men in ending violence against women. Groups may use history and traditional ways to teach men and boys about the ways in which men and women coexisted before colonization and slavery. Furthermore, culturally specific groups teach boys and men that violence against women is simply not part of who they are as a people; *it is not inherent or traditional.* These messages have been reinforced through many different means in both formal institutional settings to informal settings. Stereotypes, prejudices and different forms of oppression, including segregation practices, lack of access to education, healthcare, housing, internalized oppression, etc. are a result of these beliefs ingrained into our communities as a whole. Reframing those perceptions from the perspective of honoring community's histories and tradition can result in changes in behaviors and attitudes. Culturally specific groups teach boys and men to be proud of whom they are - it builds self-esteem and creates positive buy-in into the cultural group. Boys and men who are members of marginalized communities may experience a sense of shame as a result of the oppression they encounter in the world around them. Creating spaces where people can be proud of their identity and use that identity as a point of departure to discuss healthy relationships can be a powerful experience for group participants and trainers alike.

Redefining masculinity – The group process in this setting may lead to redefining masculinity in ways that are more respectful of people's culture and inclusive of what group members deem to be "masculine" qualities. The impact of such work can be transformative.

3.5 Role of men at the workplace –

The formal workplace is the site of much discrimination against women, which may be based on gender biases, sexism, misogyny, class and ethnic discrimination, and in general, ideologies that sustain the lie that women are less superior, less qualified and less suited for the workplace than men. Such forms of discrimination are usually practiced as a cover up to deny women equal opportunities to men - for instance, promotion, salary increases, denial of sufficient maternity leave, and in some cases, putting in place policies that may discourage women from raising children and having a family life. Such forms of discrimination perpetuate an environment of violence against women, both directly and indirectly. In direct ways, discrimination and structural violence at the workplace places women in positions of disadvantage, for instance, it is more difficult for women to access decision-making positions and therefore to influence changes in organizational structures that are gender discriminatory. Indirectly, discrimination and structural violence at the workplace also contributes to the perpetuation of violence in the broader social, cultural and political context. For instance, a majority of African women are still locked in a cycle of poverty due to low paying, exploitative and often, the unpaid or under-remunerated reproductive work they perform both in the households and in the kinds of jobs they are able to access outside the home. Even though many women contribute to the household incomes and sustenance of communities, still, a lot of the work performed by women is not recognized. Such domination and failure to recognize women's work contributes to their exclusion, low social status and low self-esteem, thus rendering them more vulnerable as targets of indiscriminate cycles of violence against them.

4 Key dynamics in specific country contexts

The case studies in Sudan and Somalia highlighted some specific issues and questions that have emerged from initiatives and collaborative practices in those contexts aimed towards reaching out to men in the community to build their capacity and unpack their understanding of their gender relations, their understanding of masculinity and women's rights as human rights. The concepts explored here include: power, masculinity – hegemonic masculinities; alternative masculinities; and building a critical mass/constituencies in activism against VAW (in society, state, religion, schools, communities, families).

4.1 Sudan

The case studies of Sudan reveal the range of questions with which gender activists are concerned. Core to these concerns is the politicization of religion, the repression of women under Sharia law, and in relation to religion, the existential question regarding what it means to be a 'good Muslim' versus a 'good human being', two positions which people may, including some activists, view as being in conflict. Other issues include: harmful traditional practices such as FGM and the new legislative proposal aimed at dropping the article that criminalized FGM from the 2010 Act; gender activism in the context of persistent threats and repression of activists by the state; the Public Order Law and corporal punishment provisions within it; and the struggles to outlaw *zina* – defined as sexual intercourse between a man and woman outside a valid marriage (*nikah),* the semblance (*shubha)* of marriage, or lawful ownership of a slave woman *(milk yamin).*[18] The lived realities of violence against women in the Sudanese context highlight the fact that these issues are not mutually exclusive, but rather, are intertwined by the lack of separation between the state and religion, the public and the private, and the immorality of laws which rather than affirm the rights of women, function as a monolithic instrument that is anti-women.

Further to this, key questions and areas of concern arising from case studies in Sudan include:

- The need to understand the interface between women's rights and human rights, the understanding that exists of both, and whether a clearer articulation of these concepts can help men in understanding women's rights as being also human rights;
- The potential influence that men working on gender violence prevention can have on other men in fighting VAW. In this regard, the need to examine the kind of tools and strategies that could be applied in different contexts;

18 Hosseini, Mir Ziba (2014), *'Criminalizing Sexuality: Zina laws as violence against women in Muslim contexts'*, Women in Islam, SIHA Journal, Issue 01/2014, p. 72.

- The widespread influence of social relations and interpersonal relations (familial, marriage, friendship), and the potential that these hold for destabilizing/stabilizing gender roles and norms. In what ways can men engage with such social networks?
- Locating men in the public context (such as markets, offices, clubs and public campaign areas), which have been shown as being sites in which discrimination, sexism, misogyny and harassment of women is prevalent;
- Understanding the prevailing social and political dynamics in Sudan – the impact of Sharia laws, its status as a post-war society, prevailing political instability, ongoing rural/urban and north/south (Sudan) migration is critical because violence against women manifests differently in different contexts,
- Understanding masculinities as a dynamic and fluid concept that is embedded in an ever-changing society. In Sudan, this point is particularly important because men too, are being socially affected, marginalized, emasculated and threatened by the evolving social and political climate;
- The political economy of violence against women – i.e. linking the prevalence of violence with shifting notions of citizenship (the state as an institution that often disregards the rights of its people, and the people's shifting of loyalties from the state towards the group – male groups/ethnic/kin groups – and normative reconstructions of what it means to belong or to 'be').
- Interrogating religion - what is the difference between a fundamentalist approach and dogmatic application of religion and what is faith?
- Culture and traditions – why are they relevant, how do they shape and influence our world views, how can we better co-exist with them? Cultures such as *zina* should be interrogated, asking for instance, why does women's sexuality pose such a threat to men?
- Revisiting positive traditional practices, which historically affirmed women's position in the society (even through patriarchal institutions of land and property inheritance) – e.g. highlighting the fact that women in some communities could be bequeathed land through their fathers or husbands.
- Interrogate the external influences (like neo-colonialism) that at present shape or undermine discourses that can promote progressive traditional practices such as those mentioned above.
- Which channels can be exploited for integrating women into society in ways that do not antagonize men's sense of manhood (e.g. the example of women's participation in Al Dim club in Khartoum)?

- Which groups, individuals, and organizations of influence in local communities ought to be targeted as frontline collaborators in the struggle to reaffirm women's humanity, dignity and respect and to prevent VAW?
- In what ways can men – themselves often *de facto* leaders in these groups and organizations – be held accountable for their actions and guided towards deepening their own consciousness about their subjective and advantageous positions in society? In other words, how to essentially *de-center* privilege and power for the greater good of women and society in general?

4.2. Somalia

The case studies of Somalia also highlighted a number of issues and questions unique to this context. Firstly, the high levels of violence and insecurity in the society necessitates the question regarding whether violence against women is deliberate/intended, or whether it is collateral to the generalized violence and conflicts affecting the broader society (e.g. the threat and terror of Al Shabaab might target especially women, but women are not the only ones affected, as men, children and the elderly are also oppressed under militia rule). Consequently, it is necessary to ask what strategies are available for working with men in dealing with VAW in contexts such as these, where it is difficult to categorize violence against women as being unique, and where men are also experiencing various forms of violence and insecurity affecting society and social life as a totality.

- Because of insecurity and militia violence, alternative modes of conveying messages against VAW need to be utilized, including media, posters, and billboards. How can these be utilized more effectively?

Example 5: Context-specific utilization of media campaigns (Somalia)

Messages against VAW could be conveyed by broadcasting the message at the appropriate times, for example, when people are at home, through listening to entertainment and news from popular media outlets. Somali communities spend their time listening to radio news much more than reading newspapers or magazines, therefore airing advocacy messages on ending violence against women at these times would be essential. Social media campaign can also be useful with appropriate message since majority of the youth are now using these networks (such as Facebook and Twitter). Hash tags and short messages against VAW through SMS service and social media can be used to reach community at wider perspectives. Currently almost every Somali citizen living inside Somalia uses mobile phones as a means of communication with his/her family and friends. As such, taking advantage of this opportunity and disseminating anti-VAW messages among them would be advisable. Traditional stories about preventing VAW in the history of Somalia can be also aired through radio programs and roles played in TV programs as well. Somalis used to be famous for drama and radio programs promoting culture of peace, co-existence and respect for women and young girls. Previously recorded popular theatrical shows can be re-released again on television.[5]

- The issue of discrimination (in education, health, jobs, decision-making) against women and how this translates to VAW – how can men get involved in addressing the question of access for women in ways that link the two issues (of violence and structural discrimination)?
- The practice of *Godob tir* (exchange of women for peace purposes) is still common in Somalia, especially in rural areas when conflict arises between two clans. What alternative models can substitute such practices that violate women's freedoms and liberties?
- What is the possibility of engaging the existing political and security structures (e.g. the warlords, District Commissioners, religious leaders, clan elders, traditional leaders) in the work of preventing VAW, through building on initial ideas put forward by these men of authority?
- Is it an unrealistic or unachievable goal for this struggle be taken directly to the Imams in the mosques – with male gender activists engaging them in various (re)interpretations of the position of Islam on women?
- The link between drug use and violence against women – what kinds of avenues and practices are being used by individuals and organizations in combating drug use among youths in Somalia? Sensitivity regarding the context is important.

Example 6: *In the war against drug-use and violence, context matters*

There are grassroots awareness campaigns and media interventions undertaken by a few civil society members/ organizations and individuals in Somalia for countering the use of ***Khat***. The role of the government is not very effective since a majority of politicians (roughly 60%) themselves use ***Khat***. Majority of Somalis believe that ***Khat*** is the root cause of all sorts of violence. However, they likewise believe banning ***Khat*** from the country will double the prevalence of violence and the reason is that people who use ***Khat*** are more violent when they don't have it. This has been seen number of times when the government tried a couple of times to increase taxes over ***Khat*** businesses and the ***Khat*** dealers increased the price as result. Soon after, the government troops and other non-state armed militias started robbing civilians, seeking money to buy that expensive ***Khat***.[6]

- In what ways can male gender activists get involved in the existing programs, or use knowledge from these programs to develop new innovative models that are centered on the particular strengths of male gender activists?
- The culture of silence and gendered violence as a taboo subject – can men's engagement on the issue break with this view and encourage more open discussions on the subject of VAW? Where and how to begin the

discussion – what opportunities and entry points exist for men to engage differently?

- The need to interrogate the notion that men's engagement in VAW should be based only on men's self-reflexivity in relation to their own mothers, sisters, daughters, wives (female relations). This notion falsely reasserts the idea that violence is largely a 'public' and anonymously driven phenomenon, yet we know from the literature that a majority of cases of VAW are firmly rooted in the initial relationships that men develop at home.
- From a general perspective, there is need for alternative approaches that instill in men the fact that it is simply wrong to violate women in any way, regardless of the context. Perhaps human rights, humanist-centered approaches?
- The need for approaches that seeks to target young boys at school level – by integrating men's activism in VAW prevention into the school curriculum.

5. Institutional mechanisms

Working with men on gender violence prevention ought to be integrated into institutional structures and developed as part of the organizational culture. The overview below is especially useful as a framework for guiding grassroots and community-based organizations in assessing the impacts and extent to which their activism is enabling or impeding men's work against VAW. Presented here as a set of guiding questions; women's organizations and community activists can review their work and conduct regular assessments based on their responses to these questions, and improve on their areas of weaknesses as far as working with men is concerned. These guiding questions are meant to offer points of reflection and can be modified and applied to suit different situations and contexts.

5.1 Outcomes of VAW activities

- In which types of anti-violence activities have you directly or indirectly involved men in your organization/community, and what is their frequency of involvement?
- What tangible or visible outcomes have been recorded or observed in cases where male activists were involved a) directly? Or b) indirectly in anti-violence work?
- In what ways can the positive outcomes of working with men be broadened to enable continuous review and strengthening as part of the organizational culture?
- What lessons have been learned from the negative experiences and outcomes of working with men on VAW prevention?

5.2 Distribution and utilization of resources for VAW work

- Who (between women and men) decides on the allocation and distribution of resources dedicated to ending VAW, and how are gender considerations built into the processes of resource allocation and distribution?
- In what ways can resource allocation and distribution within the organization and within grassroots communities enhance the integration of men into gender programs to end VAW?
- What are the prevailing attitudes and biases (amongst women and men) with regards to how resources for VAW prevention are utilized? Do these attitudes impact the effectiveness of collaborating with men?

- How do resources or lack there of, influence or affect the ways in which men are being integrated into/joining struggles around VAW prevention/ gaining access to/ being prioritized for work that women's rights organizations are doing to end VAW? Namely, is the funding environment itself a factor in deepening men's engagement in VAW? How?
- Are there more radical ways of organizing and distributing resources dedicated towards working with men on VAW prevention without undermining or diverting resources away from other women's rights activities?

5.3 Decision-making structures

Campaigns, strategizing and activist work of any kind necessitates the taking of decisions that affect the future and directions of the issues. In campaigns against VAW that seek to integrate men, the structures of decision-making become a critical factor in the success and effectiveness of the process. A number of important questions ought to be addressed in this process, including:

- How are women and men differentially involved in decision-making processes at the organizational level and at the local community level where activities are planned and executed?
- Distinction should be made between the decision-making processes that lead to the involvement of men and those that focus on working primarily with women. In other words, can we learn something more about working with men by examining the division of labor (in decision-making) between women and men? Consequently, how may we prioritize VAW work on a gendered basis?
- Can we learn something more about the power dynamics, potential for mutual cooperation, and the limitations of such an approach to VAW prevention work by examining the decisions taken when women and men work together or work separately?

6. Best practices in working with men to prevent VAW

The literature on prevention suggests that effective prevention programs have a number of characteristics that are independent of particular issues or topical areas. In particular, effective prevention programs are comprehensive, intensive, relevant to the audience, and deliver positive messages.[19]

Comprehensiveness: Comprehensiveness addresses who participates in the intervention. In a comprehensive program all relevant community members or systems are involved and have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Linking activities that are normally separate and disconnected can create positive synergy and result in activities that are more effective in combination than alone. A comprehensive program views the target population as the whole community and emphasizes creating meaningful connections with colleagues. This can foster awareness of what others are doing, develop a common prevention framework, and provide information and messages that are mutually reinforcing and integrated. Within various activist initiatives aimed towards prevention of domestic violence, comprehensiveness has been encouraged through the development of coordinated community responses to men's violence and its prevention.[20]

Interactivity: Interactivity is a function of what happens within a program activity. Programs should offer learning opportunities that are interactive and sustained over time with active rather than passive participation. In general, interactive interventions are more effective than those that require only passive participation. Interactive programs that are sustained over time and which have multiple points of contact with reinforcing messages are stronger than programs that occur at one point in time only. Providing meaningful interactions between men that foster change is a critical element of successful violence prevention programs.[21]

Relevance: Relevant programs are tailored to the age, community, culture, and socioeconomic status of the recipients and take into consideration an individual's peer group experience. Creating relevant programs requires acknowledging the special needs and concerns of different communities and affinity groups. The relevance of a program is strengthened when group-specific information is used in place of generic statistics. Relevance can be accomplished by designing programs for general audiences that are inclusive and acknowledge participant differences, or by designing special programs for

19 Berkowitz, Alan, D. (2004), Working with Men to Prevent Violence Against Women: Program Modalities and Formats, p. 2.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.

particular audiences. Relevant programs pay attention to the culture of the problem, the culture of the service or message delivery system, and the culture of the target population. Differences in these three cultures must be addressed in the design of programs.[22]

Positive messages should build on men's values and predisposition to act in a positive manner. ***Men are more receptive to positive messages outlining what can be done than to negative messages that promote fear or blame.***[23]

To design a program that incorporates these elements may seem like a daunting task. It is important, therefore, to focus on **quality** and **process** rather than quantity. A few interventions that are carefully linked, sequenced, and integrated with other activities will be more powerful.[24] It is at the same time necessary to focus on the factors that constitute effective violence prevention for men. Effective violence prevention programs are based on a number of assumptions that may vary across different contexts, including that:

- Men must assume responsibility for preventing men's violence against women;
- Men need to be approached as partners in solving the problem, rather than as perpetrators;
- Preventative programs are more effective when conducted by peers in small, all-male groups because of the immense influence that men have on each other and because of the safety that all-male groups can provide;
- Discussions should be interactive and encourage honest sharing of feelings, ideas and beliefs;
- Opportunities should be created to discuss and critique prevailing understandings of masculinity and men's discomfort with them, as well as men's misperceptions of other men's attitudes and behavior;
- Positive anti-violence values and healthy aspects of men's experience should be strengthened, including teaching men to intervene in other men's behavior;
- Work with men must be in collaboration with and accountable to women working as advocates, educators and prevention specialists.[25]

The common element in successful prevention programs for men is the opportunity to participate in an experience where men are encouraged to honestly share real feelings and concerns about issues of masculinity and men's violence. The opportunity for men to hear

22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid, p. 2

the attitudes and views of other men is powerful, especially because it empowers men who want to help and provides them with visible allies. This strategy encourages the majority of men to take the necessary steps to avoid perpetrating and to confront the inappropriate behavior of male peers.[26]

The composition of groups to facilitate engagement with men on VAW prevention is also an important consideration. The debate is drawn between all-male groups and mixed groups of men and women to facilitate engagement of men. While there are advantages to programs facilitated by men, skilled female facilitators can also be very effective in working with men. While women working with men risk reinforcing the commonly held assumption that violence prevention is a "women's issue" that is of no relevance to men, they must also be careful to guide participants away from the view that honest dialogue is only possible because of the presence of a female. **It is also beneficial for men to see women and men co-facilitating in a respectful partnership**.[27]

One of the main arguments for separate gender workshops is that the goals for violence prevention are different for men and women.[28] Despite this being true in some settings, it may be necessary or more appropriate to offer violence prevention in mixed groups. Trainers must still take into account the gender differences that make such separation desirable, avoid the polarization that can occur in mixed-gender groups, avoid potential victim-blaming, not give information about victim-risk that could be useful to perpetrators, and avoid approaches that are blaming of men.[29]

Working with women to prevent VAW should be based on mutual relationships of partnerships with women and accountability to women. Attention to men's roles in preventing violence against women is only possible because of the decades of tireless work and sacrifice by female victim advocates, social activists, researchers, academicians, survivors, and leaders. Women have successfully challenged society to take notice of this problem and to begin to fund efforts to solve it. Men's work to end violence against women must therefore include recognition of this leadership and must never be in competition with or at the expense of women's efforts. Thus, prevention programs for men should be developed to exist alongside of victim advocacy, legal and policy initiatives, academic research, rape crisis and domestic violence services, and educational programs for women. Male anti-violence educators must recognize that they are accountable to the women who are the victims of the violence they hope to end, and must work to create effective collaborative partnerships and alliances that provide a role for women in men's programs (Flood, 2003).

26 Ibid, p. 3
27 Ibid.
28 Schewe, P.A. (2002). Guidelines for developing rape prevention and risk reduction interventions. In P. Schewe (Ed.), Preventing violence in relationships (pp.107-136). Washington, DC: American Psycho- logical Association. See also Berkowitz (2004).
29 Ibid. Berkowitz, Alan, D. (2004), Working with Men to Prevent Violence Against Women: Program Modalities and Formats.

Doing this requires an understanding and exploration of men's privilege, sexism, and other biases, and openness to learning from women and to working with them as allies.[30]

It is equally important to acknowledge that numerous challenges and barriers stand in the way of men working on violence prevention. This is because men who work to end violence against women are, in effect, challenging the dominant culture and understandings of masculinity that maintain it. It is therefore the case that male activists are often met with suspicion, homophobia, and other questions about their "masculinity". Men and women who feel threatened by this work often discredit male activists' efforts and persons. In contexts such as Somalia, participants narrate experiences of receiving threats for their participation in anti-VAW programs, given that militias are very much embedded within the community. At the same time many men are grateful for the example set by male activists and for modeling a different way of being male and experiencing manhood. Men who do this work are also frequently and unfairly given more credit for their efforts than women who do similar work. Men engaged in violence prevention need to personally recognize these challenges and take responsibility to change these dynamics both personally and professionally.[31]

30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.

7. Suggestive models for working with men on VAW

A number of models applicable in both Somalia and Sudan can be developed from the foregoing discussions, which highlight the roles and standpoints that men can take towards preventing violence against women. As Berkowitz (2004) argues, men can prevent VAW in three main ways: a) by not personally engaging in violence; b) by intervening against the violence of other men; and c) by addressing the root causes of violence. The models/frameworks suggested below develop broad perspectives regarding the roles men can play, focusing on the structural dynamics of violence against women, the intersectional dynamics between VAW and questions of class, ethnicity, religion, gender, and the lived realities of the affected communities. The models are based on the empowerment of both women and men. These models highlight the challenges involved in anti-VAW work, and offer suggestions for overcoming them in various contexts. Men's involvement, according to Berkowitz (2004), can take the form of **primary** or **universal prevention** (directed at all men, including those who do not appear to be at risk of committing violence and those who may appear at risk for continuing a pattern of violence), through **secondary** or **selective prevention** (directed at men who are at risk of committing violence), and/or through more intensive **tertiary or indicated prevention** (with men who have already been violent).

Model 1: Engaging men in confronting the structural dynamics of VAW

Problem	Context/ manifestations	Strategies for activism/entry points for men
■ Religious conservatism ■ Regressive laws and policies ■ Repression, generalized violence as a result of the breakdown of law and order (e.g. under Al Shabaab)	■ Sharia law ■ Zina, Godob tir ■ Shaming of women and restrictions under religious edict ■ Marital status as a basis of denial of medical attention	■ Traditional and religious are among the most influential and respected men of the Somali community, they can be engaged through lobbying and advocacy programs so that they can influence other fellow men; ■ Engaging religious leaders and traditional leaders through male participation in dialogue and reinterpretation of religious texts; ■ Engaging with men as fathers, for instance, regarding decisions on marriage partners for their daughters;

		■ Closed forums for discussions and debates between female and male experts of Islamic texts. Such gatherings should encourage groups to pose questions and seek interpretations based on the actual lived contexts within which Sharia is being applied. ■ Collaboration with male professionals in the medical field, education, legal fields to approach issues of discrimination and violence from the perspective of human rights violations. ■ Men interrogating their own assumptions and male power positions with regards to the Qur'an, and to seek ways of substantively relating the notion of human rights to an interpretation of human freedom as carried within the Qur'an, in such ways that do not place limitations of which rights women can or cannot enjoy. This can be initiated through activists working among small groups of men. ■ Community mobilization of men around questions of accountability – which men are responsible/ how can they be accessed/ what methods can most effectively be used in holding them to account for violations against women/ which men are best suited to take a leading role in such accountability measures? ■ In Somalia – Engaging local authorities (chiefs, councilors) in early prevention against VAW. This can be done through forums with district commissioners and building their capacities on preventing VAW at district level. From these discussions, embark on a process of establishing community-based prosecutors who will act for the community in prosecuting criminal cases particularly cases of sexual abuse and other forms of violence against women. ■ In both Sudan and Somalia – men can lead efforts aimed towards addressing prevailing insecurity circumstances as one of the causes of increased VAW. Given the masculinist nature of the state and its security organs, this can be done by engaging state security agents and justice institutions in national level forums to address the insecurity problems and improving accessibility of justice for the affected victims of violence.

		■ Challenging zina laws and the criminalization of consensual sexual activity from within Islamic legal tradition. Mobilizing men to speak out publicly against zina. Collaboration with women may involve drawing on approaches from Islamic studies, feminism and human rights to campaign against zina laws. Critical discussions should involve exploring the intersections between religion, culture and laws that legitimate violence in the regulation of sexuality.
■ Political violence and gender discrimination	■ Gender-biased laws and policies ■ Grassroots activist structures and spaces that exclude and violate women ■ Male political patronage	■ Men can act as allies in the realm of activism by highlighting issues of abuse and discrimination and publicly shaming men found to be violators; ■ Laws and policies should not only focus on women as victims (which is at the end of the spectrum), but rather also on the processes through which women become victimized. That is, laws and policies should be cognizant of the particular contexts, histories, and cultures that enable violence against women in the context of political participation. This is a long-term and gradual process of sensitization directed towards lawmakers and policy makers. ■ Self-reflexivity among men means that men become more aware of the ways in which power relations in the household and society structure gendered relationships and their dominance in society. As such, for men to understand that violence against female politicians takes place along a continuum of violent attitudes that begin in the home.
■ Economic drivers of VAW	■ Poverty and inequality ■ Joblessness ■ Substance abuse	■ Mobilizing resources in collaboration with NGOs and CBOs for engaging especially young men in community service work. The value of community service is that it instills values of cooperation and gives men a sense of their usefulness in society; ■ Men can develop mentorship programs, through which rehabilitated men or men with deep community networks can reach out to young men engaged in drug and alcohol abuse. Such outreach programs can be done door-to-door, or organized regularly for groups. Such programs should be based on incentives that encourage men to see the dividends of both supporting fellow men to overcome drug use, and to participate in rehabilitation;

		■ Outreach and rehabilitation programs should be grounded in a gender analysis that shows the link between economic disempowerment and greater propensity for drug abuse and VAW. ■ Because organizing public campaigns against certain issues is very difficult in Somalia especially when people gather in public arenas and streets as there might be possibilities of suicide bombs and other attacks, other methods are more favored. ■ To address economic drivers of VAW, events can be organized through various existing media outlets so as for the public hear and see, and on the other hand stickers, flyers and billboards can be used to relay the message using the local native language so that many people can access the message.[7] ■ Youth groups in Sudan suggest that violence against women for example can be addressed by organizing events in schools, universities and other learning institutions. It can also be added into the national syllabus/ curriculum so that students learn at an early stage and in turn they can transfer their knowledge to their parents and neighbors while girls will be well equipped with adequate knowledge on their rights.
■ Masculinity	■ Domestic violence ■ Rape and sexual harassment ■ Patriarchal domination	■ One key strategy of transforming negative or violent masculinities is to present young males to themselves as being in crisis. This can be done through dialogue articulating the construction of masculinity/ male sexuality under unfavorable conditions (for instance, the role of neo-colonial bonds of patriarchy and oppressive masculinities); ■ Teaching men based on the historical fact that men are not born perpetrators of VAW, and women are not born victims of VAW. Therefore, that violent behavior is learned, transmitted and naturalized. ■ Encouraging male gender activists to engage fellow men on the concept of progressive or transformative masculinities – that is, masculinities that set men and others free.

■ Cultural beliefs	■ Early marriage ■ Exclusion through division of labor ■ Exclusion from public sphere of society ■ Favoring of male children	■ Engaging men, particularly traditional leaders and elders, in the interpretation and reinterpretation of cultural practices and beliefs. In Somalia, public events play a very important role in ending violence against women because large numbers of people often gather for such events. The most respected persons within the society, whose words are accepted by the community, can use such platforms to address the public on women such as politicians, religious elders, clan leaders, therefore acting as strong advocates for women's rights and drawing the community's attention towards curbing violence against women. ■ Seeking to influence men within the family and household, especially fathers and brothers – to bring and engender alternative perspectives to the gendered division of labor which subordinates women and girls and creates a different value system between boys and girls from an early age; ■ The core message should be that both men and women benefit from building a society based on mutual respect, shared responsibility and open interactions and dialogues. ■ Focusing attention on already existing social spaces in the community, where women and men interact freely without the artificial separation of spheres between public/private or male/female spaces. The value of doing this is to highlight the essential equality between men and women, and encourage dialogues that seek to question the separation of spheres;

Model 2: Engaging men through intersectional strategies against VAW

Issues intersecting with VAW	Challenges of intervention	Entry points for men
■ Class, ethnicity, gender race, age, sexual orientation, religion, etc.	■ Men may share common experiences of socialization and expressions of what it means to be male, but there are significant differences in terms of their identities that must be taken into consideration when addressing VAW prevention. ■ The question of relevance is also critical – it would be a mistake to adopt prevention programs designed by more dominant groups, and which have little connection and understanding of the particular cultural contexts being addressed. Cultural relevance is critical for the effectiveness of VAW prevention; ■ The predominance of stereotypes and myths regarding the "type of men who violate women" may hamper rather than support prevention programs. Not all men are violent, and not all violent men fit a particular description or set of characteristics. A more open approach that appreciates differences amongst men and the different contexts that produce and reproduce men would be more useful.	■ Developing programs which are relevant to and respond to the needs of particular groups and are cognizant of differences among men within those groups;
		■ Promotion of gender equality principles from traditional and Islamic principles: both Sudan and Somalia have traditional practices that in some way promote the rights and the dignity of women. Researching on and enlivening such values and teaching those to today's generation would increase protection for women and girls from being violated. ■ Strengthening peace building and reconciliation programs and engaging with women in these interventions may result in creating opportunities for women to be at the forefront as peacemakers as they were before, increasing their representation in state-building and peace reconciliations efforts will support them to address women's concerns and challenges.

Model 3: Engaging men in the lived realities of women

Women's lived realities	VAW in the 'lived' context	Entry points for men
■ Household	■ Physical, verbal and emotional abuse ■ Marital rape ■ Denying education to daughters ■ Unpaid work and reproductive labor burden	■ Focus programming on highlighting men's responsibility in preventing violence against women and girls. ■ Programs can address specific forms of violence such as sexual and physical abuse, domestic violence, rape etc., or may be more broadly oriented towards addressing men's violence in the broader society; ■ Programs may also address the issue of violence indirectly by teaching men relationship, parenting and fathering skills, how to manage aggression and anger, how men are socialized, and by providing positive re-socialization and bonding experiences for men.
■ Politics	■ Using religious doctrine to exclude women ■ Sexual, physical and verbal abuse during campaigns ■ Public shaming and alienation of female politicians ■ Ignoring or failure to acknowledge the different roles that women and men play in society and seeing these roles as antagonistic rather than complementary, thus generating violence.	■ Civic education campaigns should be gender aware and highlight the specific experiences of women participating in politics (as political candidates at local and national level, and as voters). ■ Men should actively engage in identification of specific gender-based abuses associated with political participation, and devise educational materials to raise awareness among men – by raising men's consciousness regarding their actions and how these impact on women. ■ Collaboration with government institutions and officials, such as electoral commissions, local chiefs, area Members of Parliament, police and other security organs. Such collaboration can ensure that gender awareness and a focus on violence prevention are mainstreamed into the activities of these individuals and institutions.

		■ As in the case of Somalia, sensitizing men to acknowledge the fact that women have the right to participate in politics and can chair responsibilities in both civic and parliamentary (they can be MPs, ministers, Prime Ministers without undermining their role as mothers.) This can be achieved in both Somalia and Sudan through joint community efforts like organizing campaigns, media awareness and district orientation.
■ Work (formal and informal labor)	■ State's harassment of women in informal sector ■ Insecurity at women's workplaces ■ Discrimination at the workplace	■ Men should be involved in the development of codes of conduct criminalizing gender-based violence and gender discrimination at the workplace. ■ Expand the concept of the 'workplace' to include also the public sites of informal labor, in which many women petty commodity traders are vulnerable to violence and harassment, including from state security officials; ■ Devise mechanisms for reporting and accountability at the workplace (whether formal or informal), through which both women and men can discuss, resolve or forward for prosecution, cases involving violence against women.

Model 4: Working with men towards mutual empowerment

Shared gender experiences of VAW	VAW activism in collaboration with men
■ Common oppression under existing political regime	■ Engender the understanding among men that men can also be oppressed by patriarchy, state paternalism and other oppressive regimes of social and political exclusion. Rather than an approach that views anti-violence work as a favor being 'done for' women, men need to be encouraged to view women's struggles as shared, intersecting and working to change the overall oppressive structure of societies.

■ Shared experiences of trauma resulting from VAW	■ Create shared spaces of consciousness raising and sharing of experiences of trauma, building on the narratives/messaging that there is not singular victim of gender violence – but rather that violence against one woman has exponential impacts on both women, men and society at large. ■ Work with healthcare experts and hospitals to expose men to the realities of violence against women. Sometimes visual evidence can act as a powerful reminder and exposure for men regarding the impacts of their actions.
■ Impact on family and communal networks of support	■ Gender stereotypes and insecurities around family stability and insecurities should be interrogated as a pathway to encourage men's participation and collaboration in anti-violence programs; ■ For instance, in Somalia, when participants were asked which one of his close female family/relative members he would choose to see empowered, who she would be – most responded that they would like to see their sisters, daughters and mothers empowered. Asked why wives are not favored for empowerment in the same way as other family members, the response of one of the participants was that "the two partners might divorce and the relationship might come to end."[8]
■ Loss of societal value system affecting both women and men	■ Value systems are taught, learned and internalized as part of the socialization process through which young people and members of groups (familial/relatives) learn to relate with each other and with society at large. Such can include a culture of violence, of disrespecting women, and of male superiority, which all manifest in gendered forms of violence and exclusion; ■ Any value system that is learned can also be ***unlearned.*** The process of unlearning requires social rules, norms and behavior is a long-term process of conditioning, mentorship and dialogue, all of which are processes in which men and women can work together; ■ Collaboration between men and women can be most fruitful in the identification of ***ideal*** value systems for the community, and devising methods and strategies through which to reach out to community members on an ongoing basis; ■ Because of the difficulty of recognizing change in the value system (its intangible quality), it is necessary to view such processes as being long term, intergenerational, and infinite. However, a set of indicators can be used for regular assessment to gauge the people's capacity for change or willingness to change.

Model 5: Exploiting available networks

Networks	Advantages and benefits	Potential contribution of men
■ Peer groups	■ Peer groups are formed based on a sense of equality between the group members, therefore enabling mutual respect and exchange of ideas; ■ They may be considered as 'safe' spaces within which group members can openly and freely discuss issues considered taboo, including violence against women; ■ Membership is based on a shared perception of values and interests, and therefore group members may be able to overcome feelings of guilt or mistrust, and accept help/ mentorship/advice from other group members.	■ Make anti-violence a core focus of peer group discussions; ■ Invite gender experts to be part of regular discussions among men, to educate, advise and mentor peer group members; ■ Conduct regular reviews of the peer group with the aim of highlighting missing elements of engagement and to encourage deeper interrogation and reflection on issues of VAW.
■ Social clubs and networks	■ Social clubs and networks are groups formed for deliberate reasons, around professions, class alignment, interests and objectives; ■ For this reason, they usually serve as spaces in which members socialize, exchange ideas, build on already existing networks, and seek both individual and collective growth.	■ Men can support VAW work through social networks by engaging in a selective process of only admitting to social clubs or networks, men who are socially conscious, gender aware and who are invested in a particular kind of society that does not violate or exclude women; ■ Group solidarity should be based on a common understanding of 'wrong' or 'right' with regards to the treatment of women, and where violence against women is viewed as wrong and therefore, not to be tolerated.
■ Civil society networks	■ Civil society is a community of citizens linked by common interests and collective activity/ activism;	■ The civil society network is one in which men and women work together towards common goals, and is therefore a natural space in which to deepen anti-violence campaigns;

	■ The issue of violence against women has found the greatest support and responses with the civil society space in each country; ■ The power of collective action lies in the kind of pressure that civil society can usually bring on those responsible, and to demand political action and enact change.	■ Highlighting the intersection of social justice questions is a key way through which to collaborate on or find links between causes that are important to men and those that are important to women; ■ For example, linking struggles for economic justice with struggles for sexual justice in such a way that it becomes impossible to speak of justice in one area without first of all securing justice in the other area.

Model 6: Engaging men in institutional reforms

Sectors for reform	Gaps for collaborative work	Potential impacts of working with men
■ Education	■ Raising awareness among school-going children; ■ Integrating gender awareness and VAW into curriculum	■ Integrating anti-violence education into curriculum for school children at primary and secondary level ensures that a new generation of men grows up with sufficient awareness regarding VAW.
■ Civil society (Non-governmental organizations, community based organizations)	■ Funding for VAW; ■ Programme planning and implementation	■ Increasing funding dedicated to anti-violence work and campaigns, and in particular, for anti-VAW programs which involve men as collaborators; ■ Mainstreaming men into anti-VAW programme planning and implementation to ensure participation.
■ Police	■ Gender education and responses to VAW	■ Many violations against women go unreported or are underreported due to the stigma and re-victimization in the hands of law enforcement agents; ■ The police force, especially policemen, should receive training regarding how to address victims reporting sexual and gender-based violence;

		■ Because security forces are highly masculinized, men working on VAW might be in a better position of influencing the attitudes of policemen towards female victims of violence.

Model 7: Community-based approaches

Actionable points	Examples of interventions	Potential for change through working with men
■ Role playing	■ Cultural interventions including drama, music festivals ■ Interrogation of intra-household privileges and relationships	Example of role playing in action: ■ Ask participants to sit in groups of 3 or 4 persons (those who are most familiar with each other's cultural patters/or come from the same country; ■ Each group should identify at least one culture in their tradition which is exclusively for men; ■ Each group should discuss both the positive and negative aspects of the norm identified;

		■ The groups should seek to answer the following questions out of their discussions: *In what ways was this particular cultural practice historically beneficial to the community?* *In what ways has this practice evolved into a negative norm, and what have been the causes of this evolution?* *What negative, violent practices are associated with this cultural norm?* *In what ways are women and girls being affected by these violent manifestations of cultural norms?* *If you were to dramatize/explain these effects so as to explain to men the harmful nature of these cultural practices, how would you explain it/ what would you do?* Please note, the objective should not be to alienate men, but rather, to seek men's cooperation towards changing cultural norms and traditional practices that are harmful to women. Key to such exercises is to develop subtle campaign messaging; focus on institutional and traditional structures; interrogate premises of male power and construction of masculinities.
■ Community participatory approaches (example of Somalia)	■ Drawing on existing examples in the Somali context, facilitators remind participants that promoting gender equality must become an essential part of the Somali peace process as well as community transformation practices, whereby justice and equality is exercised and all opportunities are shared equally regardless of the sex;	In a community participatory approach, the participants deeply or substantively discuss GBV causes, and its consequences to the survivor and the community at large as well as the ways in which GBV rate can be reduced at district level by engaging men and young boys. The following steps have been discussed in the Somalia context: ■ Continuous awareness raising sessions to males at IDP camps and among the host community; ■ Religious leaders to educate and address women's rights issues within the community from a religious context; ■ Community initiatives aimed towards transformation;

	■ More so there is need for girls to be taken to schools, colleges and universities as they have equal right with boys, all these factors need to be addressed at the community level by all.[9]	■ Measures taken to prosecute all gender violence offenders by the law; ■ Pushing for the GBV policy in the Constitution to be fully implemented; Building the knowledge base of women with regards to their rights and the rights upon them.[10]
Mentorship programs	■ Youth mentorship of young males; ■ Training of mentors ■ Mentorship and rehabilitation of drug addicts; ■ Mentorship and rehabilitation of known or convicted violators	■ From both the Somalia and Sudan case studies, we learn the power of training mentors who continue conveying the messages they get from their training to the rest who did not have the opportunity to participate in training; ■ The male mentors make a promise and are committed to addressing issues which violate women's rights at all times, and ensuring that gender equality is exercised in all aspects of life.
Public campaigns against VAW	■ Posters, billboards, graffiti and mobile campaigns ■ Involvement of government officials and relevant departments ■ Collaboration between activists and Imams ■ Seeking to influence community leaders and elders	■ Men can be at the frontline of these campaigns by volunteering their faces for public campaigns, mediating collaborations, and leading discussions between community members and leaders/elders.

Model 8: Positive male role models

Vision	Entry points	Strategies for working with men
Nurturer	Fatherhood	■ Instead of only viewing abuse of their daughters as shameful, fathers can also share stories of their struggles to support child victims of early marriage, and turn tragedy into inspiration for other men/ fathers to follow; ■ Anti-violence mentorship and conditioning/ sensitization of fellow fathers, with the aim of forming a critical mass of men who share a common interest in preventing VAW.
Visionary	Politicians	■ Male politicians should use their political platform to speak out against VAW in public rallies and campaigns, make anti-violence a core campaign message; ■ Male members of parliament can support legislative processes aimed towards passing laws against gender violence. The way voters perceive of politicians should likewise, be based on the quality of the bills that legislators support in parliament.
Spiritual guidance	Imams	■ Spiritual leaders wield a significant amount of power and influence over religious adherents. They command a large following and are therefore well positioned to use their positions as a basis for conveying messages against gender violence.
Emancipatory politics	Community organizers	■ As part of their campaigns, male community organizers should advocate for both a positive message around VAW, and work to oppose negative messages that infiltrate anti-violence campaigns; ■ They should seek to reinforce unity and minimize divisions among fellow men and women, who may not agree on the best modes of organizing the community against VAW; ■ Male activists should seek advice from women activists on how to frame and ask questions in ways that are sensitive to the experiences of VAW victims, and in ways that compel people to think critically about the question of violence against women;

		■ Male activists should remain aware of how easy it is to slide from lending a hand in organizing a community to taking over and becoming the leader or spokesperson of the community. Women should ultimately be the leaders of their own struggles.

Model 9: Women in the frontline of engaging men against VAW

Leadership position	Strategies for working with men
Professional leadership positions and positions of service (teacher, nurses, doctors, social workers)	■ Women occupy certain key and formative positions in society, and often have the opportunity to mold and mentor young people (e.g. as teachers), and interact with community members in very close proximity (e.g. as activists, nurses, doctors and social workers); ■ Women can utilize these positions as a platform for engaging men on the question of violence against women. For example, through schools, hospitals and community gatherings which usually bring women and men, girls and boys together around common and shared interests; ■ These forums can be utilized towards sensitization, awareness raising, exchanging ideas/sharing experiences and as healing forums for victims of gender-based violence; ■ Men should be encouraged to speak up and speak out against VAW through such forums. Some ways of doing this is through reporting of known cases of violence, participation in investigations, and encouragement of survivors.
Breadwinner of the household	■ In many instances, it is women, through their labor in the informal sector and household reproduction, who support whole families, educate children, and ensure the survival of the family. Yet often, women are made to look at their roles as a female obligation, rather than as a real basis of bargaining power; ■ Through their roles as breadwinners, women should build a sense of their own power, and utilize it towards influencing men's attitudes on gender-based violence.
Community leadership	■ Women become community leaders though appointment and election to various local committees, being spokespersons of various local projects, and through their visibility in various social and political campaigns that are in the interests of the community; ■ Because women serve on these committees and on the leadership trail at par with men, they should take advantage of the available spaces and opportunities to speak out against VAW, and more importantly, to seek to influence the mindsets or attitudes of their male peers.

(Footnotes)

1 SIHA Network (2013), *Young Men for Women's Rights Project,* Baseline Survey.

2 Interview response from a grassroots male gender activist in Somalia.

3 An internal review of the SIHA pilot project, ***Y****oung Men for Women's Rights: Men as partners against violence against women,* 2013.

4 SHIFT (2013), *Engaging Men and Boys in Domestic Violence Prevention: Opportunities and Promising Approaches,* p. 22

5 Interview with Abdifatah Hasan Ali, gender activist in Somalia

6 Ibid.

7 SIHA Network, *Standing together: Engaging men in preventing and combating sexual violence in Somalia,* Youth Groups Weekly Meetings Report, February 2015.

8 SIHA Network, *Standing together: Engaging men in preventing and combating sexual violence in Somalia,* Youth Groups Weekly Meetings Report, February 2015.

9 SIHA Network, *Standing together: Engaging men in preventing and combating sexual violence in Somalia,* Youth Groups Weekly Meeting Report, February 2015.

10 Ibid.

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