

# Going against the grain: Experiences of male survivors of GBV

Padare/Enkundleni/Men's forum on gender

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# About Padare

- ▶ Padare's work is rooted in promoting the role of men and boys in promoting social justice through the promotion of gender equality, prevention of gender based violence, promotion of SRH rights for women and girls including male involvement in Family Planning and responsible parenthood
- ▶ We use a gender transformative approach that actively strives to change gender norms and change the common perceptions around masculinity.
- ▶ We believe discourse on gender has largely been targeted at, and applied to women. A situation that has resulted in less accountability or responsibility for men in the area of gender transformation. At Padare we are convinced, men and boys must be involved in gender transformation and are part of the solution. Leaving them out might result in delays in achieving gender justice.

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# Our Work

- ▶ Over the years, together with our partners we have designed and implemented programmes that work with men and boys for gender justice.
- ▶ We have developed a model for working with men and boys that we call Padare Men and Boy in Action (PaMBIA) which looks at ways of confronting and challenging harmful cultural practices and social norms that promote negative masculinities.
- ▶ The above is achieved through contextualised engagements with men and boys that focus on gender, masculinities , power and advocacy.

# Our Work

- ▶ **We engage men as facilitators of positive change in their communities.** Padare has been able to take advantage of already existing positive contributions that men and boys make to society and building on them. We believe men can and do change and are capable of being loving, caring and nurturing.
- ▶ **We create spaces where men are free to explore their fears and anxieties about gender equality.** Community based self-sustaining entities that advocate and promote women's rights. E.g. We help identified men to set agenda such as localised GBV prevention and response activities
- ▶ **Offering services that support transformation, e.g. We offer free family therapy services and in and out of prison counselling for gender based violence perpetrators and survivors.**

# Our Work

- ▶ We empower men to challenge harmful cultural and religious practices that hinder them from embracing positive masculinities through challenging negative stereotypes. For example, men have emotions which in some cases they are expected to display such as anger and aggression and are ridiculed for feeling pain and compassion. Some of the consequences of these social expectations is men engaging in negative behaviour including being violent.
- ▶ In our interventions we even present to men and boys some of the negative impacts of patriarchy for both men and women. For example the issue of how men should be breadwinners, household leaders, independent etc
- ▶ We also engage young boys in and out of school on the negative effects of patriarchy, especially on women and girls

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# Working with Male GBV survivors

- ▶ On average Padare counsellors assist 60 men per month
- ▶ Our clients come to us after extended periods of time suffering abuse, mainly because of social norms.
- ▶ The late reporting is largely because of shame and at time lack of knowledge
- ▶ Men rarely make decisions to come and seek help on their own. In most cases they are pushed or referred by relatives, friends, the courts or by other civil society organisations
- ▶ Most of our clients are married men in the 30 to 60 years age demographic

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# Working with Male GBV survivors/cont.

- ▶ For the majority of our clients the violence occur in the midst of divorce cases, in such cases at times the men suffer physical abuse and also loss of property
- ▶ There is also a lot of violence that occur over misconceptions around issues to do with what many men refer to as “conjugal rights”.
- ▶ A lot of men that we assist also suffer psychological abuse/emotional abuse at the hands of their spouses because of failure to provide for their families and also because medical conditions such as erectile dysfunction and many other.
- ▶ We also deal with cases where men suffer abuse as a result of intergenerational marriages where the younger spouses will take advantage of their older spouses
- ▶ There are also isolated cases of aggravated indecent assault (RAPE) where men claim their abusers use drugs before the assaults. These include assaults by women and assaults by other men

# Lessons Learnt

- ▶ The importance of referrals for survivors to benefit fully
- ▶ There is need to raise more awareness on the importance for men to seek help, challenging social norms around masculinity
- ▶ We need to create more safe spaces for men to discuss their issues
- ▶ We need shelters for men
- ▶ We should cover all geographical areas as a lot of survivors are being left behind

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# Challenges

- ▶ Little localised researches in the area of transformative masculinities
- ▶ Short programming periods where at times there are no resources to assist the survivors
- ▶ Referral pathway not fully resourced
- ▶ No shelters for male survivors
- ▶ Stigma

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# ASANTE SANA



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