MEN, MASCULINITIES AND HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

A mapping of the state of research and practice-based evidence

HENRI MYRTTINEN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Men and masculinities in humanitarian settings, as well as in humanitarian policy and research, are both omnipresent and simultaneously under-examined, and at times rendered invisible. This goes for both men as gendered beings, as their gendered selves are often taken for granted, as well as for masculinities, which are the ways of being and sets of expectations associated with 'being a man' in a given context.

The aim of this literature review is to map the state of research and practice-based evidence on critically engaging with men and masculinities in humanitarian settings and within the humanitarian sector. It will serve to inform a guidance note on this issue for UN Women, based on the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, which calls for "supporting positive social norms, including through engaging men and boys; women's equitable access to services, goods and resources; [and] women's voice, leadership and agency."[1] The work of UN Women thus seeks to transform patriarchal masculinities with the explicit aim of thereby fostering gender equality, women's empowerment and women's access to rights and services (UN Women 2022a).

In spite of decades-old calls for using relational, comprehensive and intersectional lenses to better understand how gender plays a role in humanitarian settings and affects men, boys, women, girls and persons of other gender identities differently, this has yet to become part of the humanitarian mainstream. However, this review has shown the wide array of studies that are already available, although many of them have tended to be quite small-scale. Nonetheless, they do paint a surprisingly coherent picture across very different contexts – and decades – of crisis-, disaster- and displacement-affected men struggling to cope with central elements of what constituted their understanding of being a man. The literature highlights negative coping mechanisms, overlooked vulnerabilities, resorting to gender-based violence (GBV) and defining oneself and one's masculinity against others who have 'failed worse' as men. Some of the literature does, however, include hopeful glimpses of increased solidarity, of more gender-equitable attitudes and practices, and of a rethinking of masculinity in crises.

Key areas covered by the academic and 'grey' literature on men and masculinities in humanitarian settings include, in descending order of frequency with which they appear:

- Negotiating expectations of masculinities in humanitarian crises
- Men's violent behaviour
- Sexual violence against men and boys and other vulnerabilities
- Masculinities and natural disasters
- Men of diverse sexual orientations, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in humanitarian settings
- Masculinities and disability
- Men as humanitarian responders.

This review highlights research gaps around questioning masculine institutional cultures in humanitarian and disaster-related policymaking and response that would go beyond the necessary and nascent discussions of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, heteronormativity and the need for decolonization in the humanitarian sector. There are also gaps when it comes to fully understanding the situation of persons of diverse SOGIESC and the interplay of gender and disabilities in humanitarian settings.

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[1] UN Women. 2021a. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) Strategic Plan 2022–2025, 2021/6, pp. 2–3.

In terms of programming targeting men in humanitarian settings for gender norm change, there is an emerging body of evidence from low- and middle-income countries on 'what works.' However, adapting these to a humanitarian setting presents a range of particular challenges, and may not be feasible in rapid-onset crises or when a crisis escalates. This review covers several common approaches that have been tried and evaluated in both non-humanitarian and humanitarian settings, and summarizes key recommendations for successful implementation, such as:

- Ensuring approaches are explicitly gender-transformational
- Engaging with both women and men
- Taking into account the relational nature of gender
- Focusing on root causes and gendered drivers of gendered inequalities and GBV, as well as contributing factors (e.g. social norms, substance abuse, anger management)
- Ensuring interventions are contextualised and adapted to the particular context and knowledge/language level of the participants, in terms of both using vernacular language and not being overly abstract or technical
- Using participatory methods rather than didactic approaches
- Engaging with the participants over a sustained period of time
- Making sure that interventions are part of broader approaches that reinforce the messages of the intervention rather than one-off or stand-alone programmes
- Addressing factors that contribute to gendered inequalities and GBV, such as economic stress factors
- Enhancing critical reflection.

Work with men and boys on gender equality – be it in humanitarian or other settings – also needs to be accountable to feminist principles and local women's rights movements.

As the experience and evidence discussed in this literature review shows, engaging both men and women and addressing dominant patriarchal norms and institutional cultures is essential for gender transformation. This is necessary to ensure not only that the minimum conditions of meeting women's and girls' needs and of fully respecting women's and girls' rights are fulfilled, but also that, more ambitiously, humanitarian practice also helps lay the foundation for women's empowerment and more gender-equal communities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Similar to settings of armed conflict, men and masculinities in humanitarian settings, as well as in humanitarian policy and research, are both omnipresent and simultaneously under-examined, and at times rendered invisible.[2] This goes for both men as gendered beings, as their gendered selves are often taken for granted, as well as for masculinities, which are the ways of being and sets of expectations associated with 'being a man' in a given context. On the one hand, men are often centre stage in humanitarian settings as policymakers, responders, refugees or security personnel, and the institutional cultures of key humanitarian actors are often highly masculinized, both in the sense of being male-dominated as well as being characterized by ways of operating that are often associated with particular forms of masculinity, such as hierarchical control-and-command structures, a sense of action-oriented urgency with little space for deliberation, and a 'work hard, play hard' ethos among staff (Daigle et al. 2020). On the other hand, the gender norms, expectations and gendered practices that drive the actions of men and boys in humanitarian settings (be it as responders or beneficiaries), which shape policies and are embedded in responding institutions, have often gone under-examined or even unquestioned. This has often been the case even when and where gender perspectives have otherwise been utilized. Calls for a better understanding of masculinities and addressing these in transformative work with men and women in humanitarian settings are not new (see for example El-Bushra and Sahl 2005, Matsuoka and Sorensen 1999, McSpadden 1999, Schrijvers 1999, Turner 1999, WRC 2005), but progress has been slow, and 'gender' in the humanitarian sector continues to be largely equated with women.[3]

The aim of this literature review is to map the state of research and practice-based evidence on critically engaging with men and masculinities in humanitarian settings and within the humanitarian sector. It will serve to inform a guidance note on this issue for UN Women, based on the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, which calls for "supporting positive social norms, including through engaging men and boys; women's equitable access to services, goods and resources; [and] women's voice, leadership and agency."[4] The work of UN Women thus seeks to transform patriarchal masculinities with the explicit aim of thereby fostering gender equality, women's empowerment and women's access to rights and services (UN Women 2022a).

The inclusion of men and masculinities perspectives into gender-responsive humanitarian policy and programming has not been uncontroversial (see for example White 2000 for an early discussion and Ward 2016 for a similar discussion in the related field of gender-based violence (GBV) in humanitarian response). There are concerns, not wholly unjustified, that calls of 'what about the men?' for a refocusing on male vulnerabilities and of engaging with men and boys as partners for change can lead to a silencing of women's voices, a diversion of attention and funds away from women's and girls' unmet needs, a lack of fundamental questioning of patriarchy and an undue celebration of men who only need to pay lip service to gender equality to be seen as gender champions (Duriesmith 2017, Myrttinen 2019, Ward 2016, White 2000, Wright 2020). Nonetheless, as experience and evidence discussed in this literature review shows, engaging both men and women, and addressing dominant patriarchal norms and institutional cultures, are essential for gender transformation. This is necessary to ensure not only that the minimum conditions of meeting women's and girls' needs and of fully respecting women's and girls' rights are fulfilled, but also that, more ambitiously, humanitarian practice also helps lay the foundation for women's empowerment and more gender-equal communities.

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[2] While this literature review focuses on men and masculinities, it is worth noting that other gendered 'invisibilizations' are also often at work in humanitarian policy and programming, such as those of persons identifying as non-binary or the subsuming of all women under one presumed homogeneous category.

[3] By way of a common example, a recent literature review on gender and health in conflict and humanitarian crises (Meagher et al. 2021) had no reference to men or masculinities beyond mentioning patriarchy once.

[4] UN Women. 2021a. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) Strategic Plan 2022–2025, 2021/6, pp. 2–3.

Methodology and limitations

This literature review draws on academic research and 'grey' literature[5] by remote interviews with 12 leading researchers and practitioners in the field of integrating masculinities perspectives into humanitarian work. The field of the 'humanitarian' is not clearly delineated spatially and temporally, and thus the topics covered here span a wide range of men and masculinities in a range of different geographical locations, although the overwhelming number of studies is either on what is termed the Global South or on men from the Global South who have migrated to the Global North. Although the research covered here spans all continents, there are particular clusters of masculinities research that have formed around certain crisis-affected regions more than others, such as the Great Lakes region in Central Africa or the Eastern Mediterranean, as opposed to say the Lake Chad Basin or Central Asia.[6] This may, however, also be in part because this literature review was limited to English language publications.

For the most part, I have bracketed out studies focusing directly on armed conflict or military and militarised masculinities, although in many cases this is a somewhat arbitrary line to draw. I have also excluded the field of research on masculinities and HIV/Aids, which is of course an ongoing crisis. The research and the theories developed in both of these areas have been catalytic over the past decades in opening new discussions on issues of masculinities, violence, vulnerability and sexuality. However, including these two broad areas of literature would have veered away from having a more humanitarian focus.

In terms of the strength of the evidence and limitations of the studies on masculinities examined here, it is notable that there is a prevalence of qualitative research focusing on individual or smaller groups of men, and only a few large-scale quantitative studies have looked systematically at men, boys, masculinities and gender norms. Chief among them is a series of International Men and Gender Equality Studies (IMAGES), two of which have also at least in part examined men in what could be seen as humanitarian settings (Democratic Republic of the Congo, see Slegh et al. 2014, and Middle East and North Africa, see Promundo and UN Women 2017). There have also been multi-country studies on men's perpetration of GBV, such as the Partnership for Prevention programme in the Asia Pacific region, which included UN Women as a partner. However, this did not engage with humanitarian settings and examined men's norms indirectly, as the focus was on the prevention and perpetration of violence (see for example Jewkes et al. 2020). The fact that most of the studies are qualitative and small-scale means that there are many in-depth findings in the literature, but less of a sense of how widespread or generalizable these are. However, on certain issues, there is surprising continuity and similarity in terms of some key issues across sociocultural contexts and different decades, such as around men's difficulties in coping and coming to terms with their changed circumstances and the centrality of being a self-sufficient economic provider to men's sense of social and self-worth – and often their sense of entitlement.

One of the challenges of research on men is the fact that masculine norms and patriarchy are often so normalized as to be invisible to men themselves and society around them, and there has historically been (and continues to be) a subsuming of men under the category of the 'generic person/aid recipient', with little or no consideration of their particular needs as men (Dominelli 2020). This is in contrast to women's and children's needs, which are specified through gender analyses or gendered needs assessments and highlighted, and are therefore easier to track and analyse. While the academic studies, especially those grounded in field research, do often explicitly acknowledge and study the interaction of gender with other factors, such as class, age, location, sexual orientation and marital status, policy documents and grey literature are far less consistent in this respect and often approach men as a homogeneous group.

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[5] 'Grey' literature refers to reports from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international agencies and government agencies.

[6] Within these regions, there are also men of certain nationalities who feature more prominently, such as Syrians as compared with other nationalities from/in the region that are also impacted by humanitarian crises.

There are also numerous thematic shortcomings and gaps in the literature on men in humanitarian settings, as explored further below. Although the mental health issues of crisis-affected men and the broader societal implications of this (especially for women) are a recurrent theme in the qualitative studies, there is still a lack of survey data on this (Affleck et al. 2018), and men with visible and especially less-visible disabilities in humanitarian settings remain heavily under-researched (Fiske and Giotis 2021). Crucially for this study, there is also comparatively little research on men who, when affected by crisis, take on more gender-equitable practices and norms, and how and why they do this. There are, however, some studies that do hint at this, highlighting the role of such change as a positive coping mechanism, but also noting the resistance men often face from other community members when they do change their behaviour (e.g. Hollander 2014). Furthermore, there are also relatively few robust data on 'what works' in terms of programming on gender norm change with men and boys in humanitarian settings, especially in rapid-onset crises (see section 4). Many of the approaches used in humanitarian contexts have been tested and trialled in more stable settings in low- and middle-income countries, and then adapted for use with crisis-affected populations. Last, although there are some emerging studies on this (e.g. Daigle et al. 2020), the degree to which institutions and organizations providing humanitarian aid, as well as their practices, are shaped by patriarchal norms and masculinist institutional cultures remains under-studied.

Structure of the review

This review will start with a brief discussion of conceptual framings used throughout this paper, in particular around notions of humanitarian crises and their relationship with gender norms and expectations. This is followed by a brief discussion of masculinities, in particular the notion of 'hegemonic' masculinity, as well as the role of intersectionality, in section 2.[7] In section 3, I map some of the key issues emerging from academic and grey research on men in humanitarian settings, in particular how crisis-affected masculinities are framed; men and the perpetration of GBV in crisis-affected situations; vulnerabilities of men and boys; men of diverse sexual orientations, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in humanitarian settings; men and masculinities in disasters; crisis-affected men living with disabilities; as well as men and masculinities as humanitarian responders and in institutions providing humanitarian aid. The following chapter, section 4, examines the available evidence on programming geared towards transforming masculinities for gender equality. This section draws on, in part, evidence from more stable low- and middle-income country settings, where many of these programming approaches have been developed and evaluated, and showcases five common approaches that have also been used in humanitarian settings. The review concludes with a discussion and a comprehensive bibliography.

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[7] This literature review focuses on the theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinities, as this is by far the most dominant one in the academic masculinities literature covered here and is often also employed by others, such as NGOs. As discussed more in section 2, UN Women has instead started using a patriarchal masculinities approach.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMINGS

Humanitarian crises can be both slow- or rapid-onset, and can be over in a matter of weeks or continue for decades. They can be highly localized or span very large areas, be due to natural causes or be (often literally) 'man-made.'[8] Even in the case of natural disasters, human activity before, during and after the disaster often exacerbates the gendered and intersectional vulnerabilities of certain people as opposed to others. The humanitarian moment in the aftermath of disaster – or, in the case of protracted crisis, its prolonged continuation – often has an immense impact on gender relations. These impacts are not unidirectional or linear: crises can often simultaneously create new openings and pressures to change gender roles and expectations, including men becoming more gender equitable, and can also often lead to a shrinking of the space to do so, as well as a hardening of gender norms and resistance to change. As Dietrich et al. (2020, p. 17) note:

> "... humanitarian crises can disrupt biased norms and discriminatory practices and provoke shifts in power relations. The need to adapt to new circumstances and adopt new coping mechanisms and survival strategies can often entail shifts in, for example, who earns an income or interfaces with public officials. In many humanitarian crises, women's agency and leadership, demonstrated through mobilization to meet daily needs and struggle for peace, are crucial for the survival of their households and communities. Exposure to new surroundings, community dynamics and humanitarian programming offers men an opportunity to "show up" as allies for women's rights and empowerment and serve as gender equality champions and role models among their male peers."

However, as Dietrich et al. (2020) and others note, humanitarian crises, displacement and natural disasters also often simultaneously exacerbate pre-existing gender inequalities as individuals, institutions, organizations and communities may revert to patriarchal norms and practices, as 'coping mechanisms' or to reassert former, pre-crisis power relations (see for example El-Bushra et al. 2013, El-Masri et al. 2013, Gardner and El-Bushra 2016, Kandiyoti 2013, Le Masson et al. 2016). Women stepping into formerly male-dominated roles, spaces or activities and being given targeted support by humanitarian actors often leads to resistance and backlash from men in households and communities were identified as unintended consequences (Dietrich et al. 2020, Turner 1999, Turner 2000).[9]

While there is often, particularly for natural disasters, a temporal division into pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis periods, this division is not necessarily a meaningful one in longer-term humanitarian settings. As Vigh (2008, p. 8) notes, "a great many people find themselves caught in a prolonged crisis rather than merely passing through it," and the global reverberations of climate change, an increasingly unequal global economic order, global migration patterns as well as the after-effects of pandemics can create pockets of essentially humanitarian crisis even in the most stable of societies. This pervasiveness of situations of (prolonged) crisis makes the delineation of what is 'strictly humanitarian' and what is not difficult. It also has profound impacts on the gendered lives of those affected by crises and on the programming that is designed to support them, as the latter tends to still work on the assumption that the crisis is short term, passing and localized. The protracted nature of crises and their after-effects, and the fact that there are often multiple crises impacting populations simultaneously, have led to a paradigmatic shift towards adopting an integrated humanitarian–development–peacebuilding approach, often referred to as the 'triple nexus.'[10]

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[8] There is, for example, increasing evidence of men's practices and attitudes, not to mention policies formulated and supported by powerful men, exacerbating climate change. Furthermore, male-led agricultural practices, construction and irrigation work, mining and other activities increase the risk of flooding, landslides and other disasters locally (e.g. Pease 2016). For the purposes of this literature review I have, however, not examined the roles of men and masculinities in climate change in more detail, although this is an eminently important field of research.

[9] Resistance and backlash to women's empowerment, as well as to shifts in gender norms and gendered power dynamics, is however not restricted to humanitarian settings, but is a common counter-reaction in non-crisis settings as well.

[10] See for example https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ICVA_Nexus_briefing_paper%20%28Low%20Res%29.pdf.

Conceptualizing masculinities

Masculinities are, in short, the social roles, expectations, practices and norms associated with being a boy or a man in a given social, spatial and temporal context. While mostly associated with biological men, masculinities can also be embodied and performed by others (e.g. biological women in masculinized institutions), and men may also be deemed as being 'un-masculine' if they do not live up to the expected ways of 'being a man.' As with other gender identities, masculinities are multiple and fluid, within certain parameters. They are also dependent on other social identity markers, such as age, socioeconomic class, education, ethno-religious background, sexual orientation and marital status, among other factors. This means that expectations of 'proper' masculinity will look different between men and boys, and that their positions of agency, power and vulnerability will differ. This relates to the concept of 'intersectionality.'

'Intersectionality' is a term that is increasingly entering into gender policy and programming terminology, a concept coined by Crenshaw (1991) as "a way of framing the various interactions of race and gender in the context of violence against women of color."[11] It has since been used more widely as a way to define how expectations connected to gender interact with other societal markers, placing people in different positions of power and privilege, discrimination and exclusion. This requires analysing gender in conjunction with other factors, such as age, disability, socioeconomic class, marital status, ethno-religious background, location and education level and so on. Particular attention should be paid also to how persons of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) are affected by a given situation.[12]

In using intersectionality in the context of masculinities, it is worth keeping in mind the origin of the term as a critique of racialised patriarchy, which places certain men in positions of power over women and other men, and those with other gender identities. Thus, even when examining men's vulnerabilities and intersecting modes of repression, we need to acknowledge that all men still enjoy patriarchal privileges vis-à-vis others. Gender also needs to be understood relationally, both in terms of how masculinities are defined in relation to each other and in relation to femininity, but also how men and women through their relations (e.g. mother–son, wife–husband, father-in-law–daughter-in-law) create different relational gender expectations (Lokot 2018a, Lokot 2018b, Myrttinen et al. 2014, OECD/DAC 2019).

Academic research has for decades stressed that masculinities in humanitarian settings should be considered through an intersectional lens, men and women should not be analysed in isolation from each other and gender norms need to be seen as dynamic (see for example Matsuoka and Sorensen 1999; McSpadden 1999, Schrijvers 1999). Nonetheless, work on these issues in the policy realm and humanitarian programming tends to see men and masculinities as homogeneous, and gender norms as static. Men are assumed in most of policy and programming to be heterosexual and to be in (or seeking to be in) a heterosexual family relationship. The realities in humanitarian settings are, however, different, and not only for diverse SOGIESC men, as single men may form their own family-like, but fluid mutual support groups or 'latch on' to other family structures. Much of the programming, especially on masculinities on gender-based violence prevention, focuses implicitly on a particular group of men imagined as being in most need of external intervention to change their behaviours, and usually this is younger, less affluent men, overlooking that these men may also have gender-equitable norms and that richer men also perpetrate various forms of violence and oppression (Holloway et al. 2019, Lokot 2018a, Lokot 2018b, Myrttinen 2019, OECD/DAC 2019, Wright 2020).

As multiple forms of masculinity are evident across cultures and between individuals, there are certain dominant, normative forms and expectations of 'being a man', which are often referred to as being hegemonic, against which men's gender performances are measured.[13] While there are important cultural differences, some of the roles and traits associated with hegemonic masculinities are present in a wide range of cultural settings, for example expectations of men to be economic providers, of having agency, of being in control (over themselves, over others, over situations), of being stoic and rational, and of being respected. The term 'hegemonic masculinity' has been increasingly used in policy debates and in non-governmental organization (NGO) programming, where there sometimes has been a false equating of the term with violent behaviour, which may be part of hegemonic expectations of masculinity but often is not (Kunz et al. 2018, OECD/DAC 2019).

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[11] See also UN Women Gender in Humanitarian Action Guidance Note on Intersectionality and UN Women (UN Women 2022a).

[12] Work with persons of diverse SOGIESC should always be grounded and guided by the needs and wishes of local activists and intended beneficiaries, and take a 'do no harm' approach. While this should be the case for all humanitarian action, the heightened risks and sensitivities around questions of SOGIESC make this even more pertinent. See also UN Women Gender in Humanitarian Action Guidance Note on Intersectionality and UN Women (UN Women 2022a).

The concept of hegemonic masculinities is the dominant framework used in much of the masculinities literature discussed below, and is increasingly also used outside academic discourses, for example by NGOs. It has, however, been critiqued, among other things, for being too rigid, not allowing for changes in masculinities, and for being used in too imprecise and broad-brush ways (see for example Beasley 2008, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Demetriou 2001, Duncanson 2015). Instead of hegemonic masculinities, UN Women has adopted the language of transforming patriarchal masculinities, defined as:

> “ **Patriarchal masculinities** are those ideas about and practices of masculinity that emphasize the superiority of masculinity over femininity and the authority and power of men over women. Ideas about and practices of patriarchal masculinities serve to maintain gender inequalities and power hierarchies more broadly. They are expressed **individually** (in attitudes and behaviour), institutionally (in policies and practices) and **ideologically** (in social norms and cultural narratives). ”[14]

As this is a comparatively new theoretical framing, however, it is not yet reflected in the literature reviewed here.

Much of the focus in the research on masculinities and programming with men is on men's roles and behaviours. However, it is also important to go beyond this and consider how the expectations underpinning these roles and behaviours are formed by abstract, but immensely powerful, symbolic understandings of what is 'masculine' and 'manly', and what is not. These are often implicit notions that men and boys, and society around them, have internalized. It affects how men see and judge themselves, how they are perceived and judged by others, and what ways of acting are seen as commensurate with 'being a man' and which are not. For example, middle-class refugees who are not dependent on direct financial or material support from others may see themselves as being better men than those refugees who have 'failed' to live up to expectations of being a provider (Suerbaum 2021). The same expectations to be a provider may make lower-income refugee men vulnerable to exploitative labour practices (IRC 2016). Common associations of 'emotionality' with femininity stand in the way of men processing emotional and mental stress or trauma. A man whose mannerisms, way of talking, standing or walking is deemed by others as not being manly enough risks harassment and violence at checkpoints or from other refugees (Maydaa et al. 2020). On the side of humanitarian responders, the atmosphere of real or perceived urgency often fosters ways of working that are 'decisive', top-down, non-participatory and non-deliberative, coupled with a 'work hard, play hard' approach to time off work, which are all often symbolically associated with a particular strand of 'manliness' (Daigle et al. 2020).

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[13] The notion of hegemonic masculinities has been popularised above all by the work of the Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell (e.g. Connell 1995).

[14] UN Women. 2022a. Transforming Patriarchal Masculinities Recommendations for an Organizational Approach to UN Women's Gender Equality Work with Men and Boys, p. 7.

3. OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE ON MEN AFFECTED BY HUMANITARIAN CRISES

In this section I will give an overview of the dominant themes in the existing academic and 'grey' literature on men and masculinities in relation to humanitarian crises. The main themes are, in descending order of frequency with which they are covered in the literature:

- Negotiating expectations of masculinities in humanitarian crises
- Men's violent behaviour
- Sexual violence against men and boys (SVAMB) and other vulnerabilities
- Masculinities and natural disasters
- Men of diverse SOGIESC in humanitarian settings
- Masculinities and disability
- Men as humanitarian responders.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on men and masculinities have to date been mostly studied from a non-humanitarian perspective in academic research (e.g. studies of Western men's opposition to countermeasures, political masculinities and COVID-19 response, male nurses and COVD-19), while there have been numerous grey literature and academic regional and country-level impact studies of the pandemic on humanitarian settings, although often from a non-gender perspective (see here for a collection of academic studies) or from a mostly women-focused perspective when gender is incorporated. The multiple short-term gendered effects of COVID-19 have tended to include an increase of domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV), rollbacks on gains in women's economic empowerment and an exacerbation of gendered vulnerabilities of those already in precarious situations, while the medium- and long-term effects remain to be seen (for global overviews, see for example ACAPS 2020, Asi et al. 2022, Blofield et al. 2021, UN Women 2022b and UN Women – HeForShe 2020, for a broader examination of impacts on masculinities).

Negotiating expectations of masculinities

Much of the literature on men and masculinities in humanitarian settings has focused on the consequences of men's failure in crises to live up to hegemonic expectations of masculinity, leading to 'thwarted,' 'collapsing' or 'traumatic' masculinities (see for example Achilli 2015, Barbelet and Wake, 2017, De Alwis 2021, Dolan 2003, Dominelli 2020, Echavez et al. 2016, Enria 2016, Ezard 2014, Gardner and El-Bushra 2016, Hollander 2014, Holloway et al. 2019, Hynes et al. 2016, Jaji 2009, Kabachnik et al. 2012, Kizza et al. 2012, Quist 2016, Slegh et al. 2014, Szczepanikova 2005, Vitale and Ryde 2016). This literature has focused on how humanitarian crises and displacement, but also prolonged situations of occupation, state collapse and slow post-conflict reconstruction, undermine men's abilities to live up to dominant role expectations. The literature covers a wide range of sociocultural contexts, including parts of the Arab world, sub-Saharan Africa, post-Soviet societies, Latin America, and South and South-East Asia. Men's struggles are highlighted, especially in relation to not living up to expectations of being the main economic provider for their household, as well as the impacts of experiencing curtailed agency and diminished social status. Men often struggle with the loss of their position as, or possibility of living up to expectations of being, economic providers. Some men may also be heavily invested in their work-related identity, such as being a fisherman or a farmer, and the loss of this identity goes beyond the mere loss of a livelihood. Men may also expect to continue pre-crisis personal and societal privileges during and after a crisis, and struggle with any restrictions placed on these. These privileges may include men's expectations to be dominant, of having mobility and agency and being in control (including over female family members); of being entitled to privileging their own leisure time and socializing with other men over care or household work, as men's work is seen as being of more value; and of being the final decision maker, including on issues such as if and when to flee in the event of a crisis and if and when female and male family members can access sexual and reproductive health services. There are also often expectations on men to be active in the community with other men, and partake in homosocial activities, such as conversing with other men in tea and coffee shops or informal bars and other spaces where men socialize, or take part in gambling or sports activities as a part of being a respected man in the community. This may problematically mean using meagre family funds on themselves.[15]

The limited agency refers to men's sense of not being in control of their lives, as their freedom of movement may be restricted, decisions are made for them by humanitarian agencies or governments, and there may be a sense – often not rooted in the realities of aid provision, but rather perceived by men as being so – that humanitarian aid favours women over men (Dietrich et al. 2020, Holloway et al. 2019, Turner 1999).

The literature tends to underscore men's difficulties with accepting their changed life circumstances, their sense of loss and failure, as well as negative coping mechanisms, including mental health issues such as depression, suicidality, substance abuse and violent behaviour (Ezard 2014, Kabachnik et al. 2012, Kizza et al. 2012, Lehrer 2009, Slegh et al. 2014). The inability to live up to ideals of manhood is often identified as a major stressor. Unemployment or underemployment and lack of social standing, what (Jaji 2009, p. 184) calls a feeling of "economic 'impotence'", are common in humanitarian and displacement settings, and can undermine men's sense of identity and sense of self-worth (Barbelet and Wake 2017, Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007, Dolan 2003, Dominelli 2020). Refugee men may also feel – even if this is not necessarily the case reflected in reality – disproportionately excluded from economically and socially valuable activities, community support and social services, which can negatively impact their mental health and well-being (Correa-Velez et al. 2013, Holloway et al. 2019). Other studies note men abandoning their partners or families or no longer contributing to the household income, or withdrawing from community and family life (El-Bushra and Sahl 2005, Horn et al. 2014, Hynes et al. 2016, Lawn and Naujoks 2018). In spite of the widespread and consistent – but scattered – qualitative evidence of displacement-affected men's poor mental health, Affleck et al. (2018) note an under-representation of men in gendered studies of displaced persons' mental health studies.

Broadening this discussion on the negative impacts of crises on masculinities is the literature that examines displaced men's own sense of their masculinities as opposed to those of other refugee men (e.g. Correa-Velez et al. 2013, Grabska and Fanjoy 2015, Jaji 2009, Jansen 2008, Kleist 2010, Suerbaum 2018, Suerbaum 2021). This literature tends to focus on how refugee men may compare their own masculinity to those of other men, often positively contrasting their own ways of coping with those deemed to have 'failed' as men. This distinction vis-à-vis the 'abject other' of the 'failed' refugee man is often construed as being linked to one's ethnicity or nationality, class background or industriousness. Some middle-class or educated refugee men, however, may refuse to take up work seen as being below their status while other men may feel that taking on feminised work would bring shame on themselves and their communities (Franz 2003, Holloway et al. 2019, Jaji 2009, Jansen 2008).

Mirroring these comparative lenses on refugee masculinities, the so-called 2015 'refugee crisis' in Europe in particular has led to numerous studies on European host populations' negative views as well as racialised (and often Islamophobic) media stereotyping of the men as security threats, as being hypersexualised, and as indolent, criminal and culturally 'backward' (Allsopp 2017, Herz 2019, Jaji 2021, Olivius 2016b, Pruitt et al. 2018, Wojnicka and Pustułka 2019). As Dolan (2003), Szczepanikova (2005), Turner (1999) and Turner (2020) note, refugee men may also be simultaneously 'securitized' as threats, yet also

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[15] While there is anecdotal evidence that at least some men do spend more money on themselves/social activities with other men while women spend more on household needs, there have, to the author's knowledge, not been any large-scale studies to ascertain how widespread this might be, and this will likely differ greatly between individuals and contexts.

‘infantilized’ by humanitarian actors, especially in camp settings, while men’s actual needs and vulnerabilities may be overlooked in the process.

The theme of men seeking to re-establish or re-define their own sense of masculinity is also examined in research looking at masculinities in post-conflict spaces over a longer period of time (e.g. Enria 2016, Esuruku 2011, Hollander 2014), post-resettlement in a third country as well as on men’s return from displacement to their home communities (Grabska and Fanjoy 2015, Huizinga and van Hoven 2021, Jansen 2008, Levine et al. 2019, Matsuoka and Sorensen 1999, McSpadden 1999). Dominant themes in this literature are men’s attempts, for the most part, to navigate competing expectations of what it means to be a man, in particular the gaps between lived realities and ‘traditional’ norms of masculinity and navigating different gender norms and expectations in one’s ‘home’ and ‘host’ societies, in trying to make a living and be a provider in collapsed economies, as well as, in some cases, taking on more gender-equitable ways of being a man.

For the most part, the existing literature thus highlights the difficulties men in crises have in coming to terms with their new life circumstances, their struggles with changes to their status and roles, and a tendency to hold on to dominant norms and expectations even when these become increasingly unattainable. Furthermore, expectations of men to be ‘unemotional’ compound negative impacts, as the men portrayed in these studies often do not seek help or constructively engage with their emotions, but rather resort to negative, masculine-coded coping mechanisms, including substance abuse, in particular alcohol. However, some research also points to some men changing their outlooks on notions of masculinity and gender equality more broadly, as well as embracing different roles and ways of being a man in the face of crisis, including showing more emotions, participating in domestic chores and accepting women’s social and economic participation. Given dominant gender expectations, however, it is not uncommon for these men to also face opposition and ridicule from peers and family members, and/or having to ‘hide’ their more gender-equitable behaviour (Gressman 2016, Hollander 2014, Ingvars 2019, Lokot 2018b, Marlowe 2011, Matsuoka and Sorenson 1999, Szczepanikova 2005).

Situations of displacement can also lead to further entrenching of the position of already-powerful men, for example through camp management committees, or create possibilities for previously less-advantaged men to increase their social capital. This includes men participating in gender-equality programming by humanitarian actors, which can end up benefiting educated young men who are subsequently able to assert themselves as a new generation of leaders, rather than empowering women (Dietrich et al. 2020, Grabska 2011, Turner 2000).

Men and perpetration of gender-based violence

A second major strand in the literature on men and masculinities in humanitarian and displacement contexts (and often linked to discussions of preventing different forms of gender-based violence (GBV)) examines the ‘violences of men’ and how these can be addressed through behavioural change (Flood 2015, Flood 2018, Hearn 1998, Namy et al. 2019 – see also section 4 below on gender norm change programming). The perpetration of different forms of GBV by men in humanitarian contexts is often framed as being linked to an attempt to re-assert male dominance in the face of the ‘thwarted’ attempts at achieving hegemonic expectations of masculinity discussed above (Dolan 2003, Kandiyoti 2013, Turner 1999, Turner 2000). Much of the academic research on this in humanitarian settings has, however, been largely theoretical, and practice-based research is mostly from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and often with less of a masculinities lens and more of a programmatic GBV focus (e.g. Erikson and Rastogli 2015, Hilhorst et al. 2018, IRC 2017, Murphy et al. 2019, Namy et al. 2019, Tanabe et al. 2019). Evaluations of programmes aiming to transform men’s gender norms, attitudes and practices, in particular with relation to GBV, will be discussed in section 4 below.

As Olivius (2016a, pp. 59–60) notes in her analysis of humanitarian discourses of refugee and displaced men, men often link their ‘thwarted’ masculinities, patriarchal gender norms and perpetration of GBV:

> “First, refugee men are represented as perpetrators of violence and discrimination against refugee women. Refugee men are thereby actively creating women’s vulnerability and subordination, and must be made to stop if gender equality is to be possible. Second, refugee men are represented as gatekeepers who, as power holders and decision makers in their families and communities, can both obstruct and enable change towards gender equality. The potential role of men as partners and allies for gender equality and the importance of convincing them to act as such are therefore strongly emphasized. Third, refugee men are represented as emasculated troublemakers. In this representation, their inability to perform masculine roles as providers and protectors due to the constraints of situations of emergency and displacement, in combination with aid agencies’ efforts to empower women, is said to leave men disempowered, emasculated, frustrated and bored. Male violence against women, alcohol abuse and criminality are represented as consequences of this situation, and gender equality policies that better respond to the needs of men are offered as the solution.”[16]

While there is a real risk of broad-brush stereotyping of men responding to crises by perpetrating violence, there is evidence that some men indeed do. Mostly male-perpetrated domestic and intimate partner violence, as well as other forms of GBV, are known to increase after natural disasters, for example, but also during more diffuse crisis settings, such as most recently during the COVID-19 pandemic (see for example APA 2020, Buttell and Carney 2009, Le Masson et al. 2016, Nguyen 2019, Rezaeian 2013, UN Women 2022b).

In addition to attempts at reinforcing their authority, men may respond with violence or controlling behaviour when they feel that women’s behaviour or activities harm their or their families sense of ‘honour’ and deprive them of the respect of community members, or when changes brought on by the crisis lead to a diminishing of men’s leadership in the community or household (Dietrich et al. 2020, El-Masri et al. 2013, Hynes et al. 2016, Petesch 2012, Szczepanikova 2005, Wringe et al. 2019). This body of research thus focuses mainly on examining men’s violence as a consequence of various stressors linked to crises and disasters, seeing violence – in particular against intimate heterosexual partners – as an attempt by men to assert power and control over others, which may also be encouraged by other peers or family members (including the parents of husbands). Key gendered drivers of men’s violence are broader societal acceptance of men’s power over women, of men’s entitlement and men’s use of violence for asserting control and ‘disciplining’ others, while contributing factors include social, psychological/emotional and economic stress factors, food insecurity, men’s socialization into violence and previous witnessing of domestic/intimate partner violence, increased substance abuse and broader processes of militarization and public violence around them – all of which tend to be exacerbated in humanitarian crises (see for example Fulu and Heise 2015, Gibbs et al. 2020c Gibbs et al. 2020d, Jewkes et al. 2020, Murphy et al. 2019). There is currently little research on violence and men in same-sex relationships in humanitarian and displacement settings, although Maydaa et al. (2020) raises this as a potential issue.

Whereas rigid patriarchal norms and societal acceptance of violence set the stage as it were for men to use domestic and intimate partner violence as ostensible ‘answers’ to their real or perceived loss of status in post-crisis settings, to stress and to trauma, it remains largely unresolved why some men resort to violence while most others do not. There are, however, clear emergent patterns in non-crisis situations that map men into different categories of propensity of perpetration of public and private violence, although whether this holds true in situations of crisis has not been fully evaluated (Jewkes et al. 2020).

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[16] It should be noted that the author is referring to common narratives and assumptions about men, rather than stating that these are reflective of lived realities.

Male vulnerabilities

A third area of research on men in humanitarian settings is around men's vulnerabilities, given the common exclusion of adult men from lists of vulnerable groups (Krause 2014). This new focus on men's vulnerabilities has been especially visible in terms of examining SVAMB. This field has rapidly grown in size, diversity and depth. Much of this research has in the past tended to be focused on making the case that SVAMB exists and examined more narrowly conflict-related rape of men (e.g. Sivakumaran 2007). By now the field is examining a much broader range of sexual violence, of its medium- and long-term impacts, as well as in different settings, including in displacement and forced migration (see for example Chynoweth 2017, Chynoweth 2018, Chynoweth 2019a, Chynoweth 2019b, Chynoweth et al. 2020, Féron 2018, Lwambo 2011, Schulz 2020, Touquet et al. 2020, Zalewski et al. 2018). Nonetheless, there are still large gaps, in particular in terms of examining SVAMB in humanitarian settings, SVAMB committed by civilians, as well as particular SVAMB-related vulnerabilities of men of diverse SOGIESC and of men living with disabilities.

Beyond SVAMB, the Syrian Civil War and migration via Turkey and the Mediterranean into Europe, especially, have led to an increased examination of men's and boys' vulnerabilities more broadly. This includes labour exploitation, survival sex and violence encountered along migratory routes (Howe et al. 2018, IRC 2016, Krystalli et al. 2018, Khattab and Myrttinen 2017, Quist 2016, Turner 2016, Turner 2020). Often, these vulnerabilities are directly linked to the expectations that men face of being economic providers, which may have sent them on their migratory route in the first place, in the hope of being able to make a living in more stable and prosperous societies and send remittances home (OECD/DAC 2019). Undocumented migrants and refugees, for example Syrian men in Lebanon, often have to rely on the informal and unregulated labour market, and are often exploited and have little recourse to justice in the case of abuse (IRC 2016). Refugee or IDP men are also often construed as a threat by host communities and their mobility is restricted. Ingrained norms and behaviours around stoic manhood often militate against seeking help for physical or mental health issues (Khattab and Myrttinen 2017). Naujoks (2016) has also examined migrant men's additional financial vulnerabilities after the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, as men felt obliged to return to rebuild their homes, which left them in debt traps with migrant labour brokering agencies. Krystall et al. (2018), Quist (2016) and Turner (2016, 2020) also argue that some humanitarian actors may also inadvertently exacerbate especially younger, unaccompanied men's vulnerabilities by assuming that they are the least vulnerable demographic. In spite of a focus in the literature on various forms of vulnerability faced by crisis-affected men, there are also more hopeful glimpses of the emergence of homosocial solidarity and positive coping mechanisms, such as mutual caring and informal support systems among informal migrant, refugee and displaced men, including men and boys of different ethnic and national backgrounds (Bozok and Bozok 2019, Howe et al. 2018, Ingvars 2019).

Men in disasters

The literature on men and masculinities in natural or (mostly natural) disasters has focused largely on the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami (e.g. De Alwis 2016, De Alwis 2021, Dominelli 2020), Hurricane Katrina (e.g. Austin 2016, Luft 2016) and to a lesser extent the 2015 Nepal earthquake (Naujoks 2016), Typhoon Haiyan (Nguyen 2019), Hurricane Mitch (Bradshaw 2016) or the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan (Morioka 2016). Similar to research on men in contexts of displacement or protracted crises, the research points to men's struggles in coping with the new circumstances, loss of self-worth due to a loss of their economic provider status, negative coping mechanisms, such as alcohol abuse, depression and other mental health issues, higher appetite for risk as well as attempts to re-assert male dominance in the home and in public spaces, including in community-level crisis response and reconstruction efforts. As mentioned above, rates of domestic and intimate partner violence perpetrated mainly by men often increase in the aftermath of natural disasters (Le Masson et al. 2016, Nguyen 2019).

Men's involvement in decision-making on disaster risk reduction planning and management and its consequences have been studied for the local level in at least Pakistan (Mustafa et al. 2015), the Caribbean (Dunn 2016), South Pacific islands (Fisher 2016) and South Africa (Genade 2016), with the last three studies including working with these men on gender equality. Community-level disaster risk management committees, as local-level decision-making , are often very much male dominant, building on expectations of men being decision makers, community leaders and protectors of families (see also links to men as crisis responders discussed below). In disasters, this can have detrimental impacts on other family and community members if they are expected to wait for men's decisions and approval before they are able to react to a crisis, for example to evacuate (Mustafa et al. 2015).

Men of diverse SOGIESC

The Syrian Civil War, and subsequent refugee and migratory movements in particular, have given a strong impetus to academic and 'grey' research on men of diverse SOGIESC, as well as policy responses, and by now there is broad evidence from a range of geographical locations (e.g. Chynoweth 2017, Chynoweth 2018, Chynoweth 2019, Chynoweth et al. 2020, Daigle and Myrttinen 2018, Heartland Alliance International 2014, Helem 2017, Human Rights Watch 2020, Kıvılcım 2017, Maydaa et al. 2020, Myrttinen et al. 2017, Saleh 2020, Serrano-Amaya 2018, UNHCR 2012, WRC 2016). Much of this has focused on conflict and displacement settings, with comparatively less research and policy focus on disasters (see for example Gorman-Murray et al. 2016 and Rumbach and Knight 2014 for exceptions). The research highlights how crises and displacement generally increase the risks and vulnerabilities of persons of diverse SOGIESC across the board; however, as with other people as well, an intersectional lens needs to be applied to understand how class, age, location, disability, ethno-religious background and other factors create particular vulnerabilities for different people (Daigle and Myrttinen 2019). In the case of persons of diverse SOGIESC, visibility and 'passing'[17] are also key vectors in defining vulnerability, i.e. how visibly do others see the person as not conforming to heteronormative and cis-gender behaviours and demeanours, regardless of the way the person self-identifies (Maydaa et al. 2020). Compared with other civilians, persons of diverse SOGIESC face the risk of violence, abuse and discrimination from a much wider spectrum of actors, including armed actors, politically or religiously motivated groups, other community members as well as family members if their sexual orientation and gender identity come to light (Daigle and Myrttinen 2019).

Although the belated policy attention to persons of diverse SOGIESC in humanitarian contexts is welcome, it does often suffer from several shortfalls, such as a focus primarily on GBV, a conflation of vulnerabilities of persons of diverse SOGIESC with SVAMB, a focus on men and male-to-female trans persons at the expense of lesbian and bisexual women's and trans men's experiences, and a lack of intersectionality.

Masculinities and disabilities

Overall, there has a been a striking lack of engagement in the literature with masculinities and disabilities in the context of humanitarian settings (Fiske and Giotis 2021, Sherry 2016). A notable exception in this respect is a very nuanced study by Muhanna-Matar (2020) about Syrian refugee men with disabilities and chronic diseases, as well as work by Lawn and Naujoks (2018) on the impacts of disabilities on the masculinities of Kachin internally displaced men in Myanmar. Much of the broader literature on men, masculinities and disabilities has focused on how men with disabilities, especially ones sustained later in life, struggle with no longer being able to live up to and attain expected markers of manhood, such as mobility, agency, physical strength and being a provider, as well as sexual virility. There are thus clear parallels with the above-mentioned findings on 'traumatic' and 'thwarted' masculinities, and Lawn and Naujoks (2018) highlight how internally displaced persons with disabilities often feel doubly stigmatized. However, as they also highlight, some men reject the 'disability' label, pointing to how they, compared with worse-off men, are still able to fulfil some physical activities. Similarly, Muhanna-Matar (2020) highlights how her respondents constructed their own masculinities as being more successful than those of others, echoing Suerbaum's (2018) observations about middle-class Syrian refugee men. The broader disabilities literature has engaged with how men with disabilities who accept their (new) limitations in terms of living up to conventional standards of masculinity and embrace a less rigid gender identity often are better able to come to terms with their disability. However, based on this review of the literature at least, this has not been studied to date in humanitarian settings, with the exception of some anecdotal evidence in Lawn and Naujoks (2018).

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[17] 'Passing' in this sense refers to the ability of a person to be regarded by others as belonging to an identity group or category that is not necessarily their own, for example for a transgender person to 'pass' as a cis-gender person without attracting attention to their trans identity.

Men as humanitarian responders

While men and boys as targets of humanitarian aid have thus increasingly been researched, there is also a smaller body of literature examining, and mostly problematizing the role of men and masculinities in the institutions providing assistance, in decision-making and policy, as individuals and in their practices. One strand of the literature has focused more broadly on the gendered economies emerging around crises and humanitarian/peacekeeping interventions, often with a focus on the negative consequences (e.g. Autesserre 2014, Fluri 2011, Jennings and Bøås 2015). Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by humanitarian aid workers, almost exclusively men, has been a related theme, in particular in the wake of the 2018 Oxfam scandal and cases of SEA and GBV linked to the Ebola response in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Westendorf 2020, World Health Organization 2021).[18] The online #AidToo movement against sexual harassment and SEA within the humanitarian sector has also led to a greater discussion of hypermasculinized and hypersexualised institutional and work cultures in the sector, as well as around the assumed whiteness and heteronormativity of aid sector workers (Daigle et al. 2020, Jolly 2011, Kagumire 2018, Spencer 2018 – see also CTDC and WILPF 2021).

A more disaster-focused subset of the engagement with masculinities as responders has been examining men, risk-taking, hypermasculinity, emotional disconnect, violence, trauma and male leadership styles in the context of catastrophic fires, floods and hurricane response, with a heavy bias towards western settings, such as Australia, Canada, the USA and Western Europe (e.g. Austin 2016, Baigent 2016, Ericson and Mellström 2016, Eriksen and Waitt 2016, Luft 2016, Parkinson and Zara 2016).

Often, certain male beneficiaries of humanitarian aid also transcend the division between beneficiaries and aid providers through their role as intermediaries in camp management committees and similar structures and positions (Dietrich et al. 2020). These tend to be heavily male-dominated because of conscious decisions on the part of the aid providers to go through men who are already in positions of power or thanks to unconscious gender bias that values or trusts male leadership more than women's decision-making capacities. Men in these positions can be hugely powerful in the displaced community, and can act as gate-keepers, distributors of aid, adjudicators in cases of GBV and, on occasion, abusers of power (cf. McAlpine et al. 2020).

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[18] While the UN and other peacekeepers are not, strictly speaking, humanitarian actors, they are often present in crisis settings, and sexual harassments, exploitation and abuse by them has been widely documented in media, NGO campaigns, (http://www.codebluecampaign.com/), internal UN reports and academic literature since the 1990s. For a good overview and discussion of the issue, see Westendorf (2020).

4. ENGAGING MEN FOR GENDER NORM CHANGE – OVERVIEW OF EVIDENCE

This section will examine the literature and evidence on working with men on gender norm change. The vast majority of programming experience on critically engaging with men and boys on transforming masculinities comes from work on violence prevention, be it work on armed violence or various forms of gender-based violence (GBV) (for a rare exception, see WRC 2005, WRC 2016). These programmes can be relatively narrowly violence-focused or take a more comprehensive approach, and at times use less-obvious entry points, such as fatherhood, HIV/AIDS prevention or health care. There is also some available research on the impact of cash transfers on gender role and gender norm change, although this has often focused less on men. There are also areas of programming on gender norm change that are largely unstudied, such as the impacts of public awareness-raising campaigns or engaging with community leaders and gatekeepers, although these are often mentioned in passing.

Different kinds of programmes that aim to transform masculinities, shift social norms, engage with men on gender equality, prevent GBV and promote particular practices, such as men's increased participation in care work, parenting or more equitable household decision-making, are often lumped together or conflated (OECD/DAC 2019). There are, however, important differences in the scope, scale, ambition and ways of working between them. Some approaches focus on only the individual, some on couples and families and others on the community – and yet others seek to affect change at multiple levels. Some focus narrowly on, say, just violence prevention or care work, while others seek to deconstruct dominant patriarchal norms and practices in a more wholesale way. Some take a soft, careful or non-confrontational approach to masculinities, or seek to mainly highlight the positives, while others focus at times almost exclusively on the negatives. There is also a large difference in the time that is allotted for the programme, with approaches ranging from short, one-off sessions to approaches that last several years to implement. There is no rule for how long a change process might take – some men might have a transformative moment in the very first session, while others may never change over the duration of the intervention. Barker et al. (2007) argue that group education sessions lasting 2 or 2.5 hours per week, for a period of 10–16 weeks, is the most effective 'dose' with respect to sustained attitude and behaviour change.

The available studies on gender norm change come with numerous limitations. First, there is a comparative lack of studies from humanitarian settings, although all of the studies covered here are from low- and middle-income countries. Second, there is variety in what the studies measure and how, making comparisons difficult. The most common data collected by implementing organizations is around increased knowledge (e.g. pre-/post-testing), which is often unreliable in and of itself, but also says little about changing practices or norms. More in-depth data are rarer, in particular in terms of examining medium to long-term impacts of interventions. Moreover, the aim of the intervention guides what is measured, making studies difficult to compare. An evaluation of a programme on fatherhood will, for example, gather different data from one focusing on GBV prevention, and neither will necessarily examine norm change as opposed to changed behaviour. Third, it should be kept in mind that a large part of interventions, especially community-level ones, do not get evaluated or evaluation data are not made public, and evaluations of programmes that are rigorous enough to meet academic standards are seldom carried out, leading to a bias towards larger programmes implemented by international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) that have been able to attract funding and academic partners for the evaluation. Last, while rigorous evaluations are important, they should be seen as guidance rather than be read as gospel. The role of contingency should not be overlooked, especially in such complex environments as humanitarian crises. If a particular programme is shown to be successful in one context with one set of participants, there is no guarantee whatsoever that the results can be replicated elsewhere, and even the same implementation team working in the same country with a different set of participants may achieve different results. Contextual factors that may favour a successful implementation in one place may not be present in the next, such as institutional support from the government, locally more liberal understandings of dominant religious or social norms, or just the presence of particular charismatic personalities willing to support and drive forward the change process.

There is by now a sizeable international body of evidence on what works – and does not work – in terms of gender-transformative approaches to GBV prevention and promoting gender equality through engaging with women and men in low- and middle-income countries with manualised programmes such as SASA! (e.g. Abramsky et al. 2016, Namy et al. 2019), Stepping Stones (e.g. Gibbs et al. 2020a, Gibbs et al. 2020b), International Rescue Committee's Engaging Men through Accountable Practice (EMAP) (e.g. Falb et al. 2020, Hossain et al. 2014, Vaillant et al. 2020), CARE's Role Model Men approach (developed from the Abatangamuco programme, Wallacher 2012), Equimundo's (formerly Promundo) fatherhood-focused Programme P (Fried and Vlahovicova 2019) and health-focused Programme H, Sonke Gender Justice's One Man Can (Van den Berg et al. 2013) and others, such as Tearfund's faith-based approaches to transforming masculinities (Deepan 2017) or integrating positive deviance into work with men, including in UN Women's work in Palestine under the Men and Women for Gender Equality (MWGE) programme (Abdo 2019).[19] While there are differences between the various approaches, all focus on fostering gender equality, transforming men's gender expectations, reducing violent behaviour and promoting men's increased participation in household and care work. Some, such as Programme P and some Stepping Stones, encourage men's increased engagement on sexual and reproductive health issues and most implicitly or explicitly encourage men to take mental health issues seriously and be more emotionally open.

Often, these manualised programmes are adapted to local needs, such as the Programme P-based Bandebereho (Doyle et al. 2018) and SASA!-inspired Indashyikirwa (Stern et al. 2018, Stern et al, 2021), both couples-based interventions in Rwanda, the Stepping Stones-based adaptations Sammanit Jeevan in Nepal (Shai et al. 2020), Pyaw Gah Meh in Myanmar (Myrttinen and Kyaw 2021) and Zindagii Shoista in Tajikistan (Mastonshoeva et al. 2019), or developed locally, such as Young Men's Initiative in the Western Balkans (Namy et al. 2015). Of these, the International Rescue Committee's EMAP programme is the only one that has been specifically designed for a humanitarian setting. It is not uncommon for different approaches to be used simultaneously, in parallel or consecutively, such as combining EMAP and SASA! (see also discussion below on programming approaches, as well as Namy et al. 2019).

Key take-aways from background literature surveying various approaches in low- and middle-income countries are that the most successful approaches are as follows (Dworkin et al. 2015, Flood 2015, Flood 2018, Fulu and Heise 2015, Global Women's Institute and International Rescue Committee 2016, Jewkes et al. 2015, Kerr-Wilson et al. 2020, Peacock and Barker 2014, Stark and Ager 2011):

- Are explicitly gender-transformational
- Engage with both women and men
- Take into account the relational nature of gender
- Focus on root causes and gendered drivers of GBV as well as contributing factors (e.g. social norms, substance abuse, anger management)
- Are contextualised and adapted to the particular context and knowledge/language level of the participants, in terms of both using vernacular language and not being overly abstract or technical
- Use participatory methods rather than didactic approaches

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[19] See also UN Women Gender in Humanitarian Action Guidance Note on Engaging with Men and Boys in Humanitarian Action.

- Engage with the participants over a sustained period of time[20]
- Are part of broader approaches that reinforce the messages of the intervention rather than one-off or stand-alone programmes
- Address factors that contribute to GBV, such as economic stress factors
- Enhance critical reflection.

A systematic review (Spangaro et al. 2021) of academic evaluations[21] of programmes to counter intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict states and other humanitarian crises echoed similar findings as in the none-crisis-affected settings. Approaches that reduced sexual violence and IPV included approaches that focused on shifting social norms among men (Hossain et al. 2014 – EMAP in Côte d'Ivoire), one economic empowerment approach reduced IPV and was statistically significant (Glass et al. 2017) and three approaches combining economic empowerment and social norms reduced IPV (Gibbs et al. 2020c, Green et al. 2015, Gupta et al. 2013).

A further common intervention in humanitarian settings is the use of conditional or unconditional cash transfers. These may or may not seek to bring about changes in gender dynamics, and may be targeted to women, men or both (Falb et al. 2019, Simon 2019). Even cash transfers that do not seek to explicitly bring about changes in gender dynamics may end up doing so, either leading to a shift towards more equitable norms or reinforcing pre-existing ones (Dooley et al. 2019, Falb et al. 2019, Simon 2019). In her review of humanitarian cash transfer programming, Simon (2019) found that cash transfers often reinforce existing gender stereotypes, but did lead to positive or neutral impacts of cash transfers on psychosocial well-being for both women and men, and allowed men to fulfil social roles that they had not been able to play prior to the assistance.

In addition to large programmes aimed at changing behaviours and attitudes, there are also a range of other approaches that are used, either on their own or in conjunction with more elaborate programmes. These include, for example, public awareness-raising campaigns, use of traditional and social media, gender champions and engaging with male opinion leaders and gate-keepers, including faith and community leaders (Deepan 2017, Duriesmith 2017, Flood 2018, Myrttinen 2019, OECD/DAC 2019). However, there is very little hard evidence on the impacts of such approaches, which does not mean that they cannot be effective, but rather that measuring their impact is very challenging, in particular in crisis-affected settings.[22]

Men's resistance to change and other risks

While some of the messaging directed at men on social norm change and GBV prevention inevitably has to be negative (e.g. not condoning violence), giving something positive (e.g. role models, practical advice, models of 'positive' masculinity) helps in engaging with men/boys on these issues (Schroer-Hippel 2017), although it may risk reinforcing certain unwanted behaviours (cf. Gibbs et al. 2020b). A centring of male agency in change processes carries the risk of sidelining women's concerns and needs, and men may benefit more from these programmes than women, highlighting the need for men to be accountable to ensure that there is real change (El-Bushra et al. 2013, Gibbs et al. 2020a, OECD/DAC 2019, UN Women 2021b). There is also a need to engage seriously, and over extended periods of time, with potential resistance to change and its drivers, and to be aware that men may seek to set limits to the speed and scope of change they are willing to embrace (Gibbs et al. 2020b, Pierotti et al. 2018, Ratele 2015). Furthermore, change processes may not be linear. For example, an assessment of the International Rescue Committee's EMAP programme in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo showed improvements in men's gender-equitable attitudes, reducing their support for violence against women and increasing their support for a woman's right to refuse to have sex. Nonetheless, despite these changes, female partners of male EMAP participants reported, on average, no change in the levels of IPV that they experienced (Falb et al. 2020, Vaillant et al. 2020).

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[20] As mentioned above, Barker et al. (2007) argue that 2 or 2.5 hours per week, over a period of 10–16 weeks, is the most effective 'dose.' However, there is no hard and fast rule. The ideal length and intensity, as well as effectiveness, depend on a wide variety of factors, such as the degree of transformation sought and how entrenched a particular norm or behaviour is, as well as other factors, such as the quality of the staff running the intervention, small group dynamics (including the presence of 'enablers' and 'spoilers' in the group), personal chemistry, 'bandwidth' of participants and how much they can concentrate, the social/political environment in which intervention is taking place, and resistance to/ support for change among peers.

[21] It is important to note that the vast majority of GBV prevention programmes would not qualify for this systematic review, as they have not been evaluated with the degree of rigour demanded by an academic study. This is especially true for small, localised approaches by grassroots and community-based organisations doing work on transforming masculinities.

[22] For example, running randomized controlled trials in humanitarian settings is not only highly challenging but could be seen as being potentially unethical, as it can not necessarily be guaranteed that the 'control group' would be able to benefit from the same intervention at a later stage.

Men's resistance or reluctance to change is mirrored by broader social resistance to shifting existing gender norms. Those men who do undergo processes of change and exhibit more gender-equal behaviour have often, and in very different cultural settings, faced ridicule, animosity and push-back from family members, including spouses (Myrttinen et al. 2022, Ratele 2015, Sherfer et al. 2015). Furthermore, there is also a tendency of these programmes to mostly reach men who are already to some degree predisposed to undergo a process of change rather than the 'hardest to reach.'

Risks of men and other community members resisting change, participating men seeking to control the degree and speed of change, but especially of men either choosing not to engage or not having the time and bandwidth to do so are heightened in humanitarian settings. There is, however, also the risk, which has emerged in some programming focused on gender norm change, that in the end it can be men rather than women who benefit more from the programmes.

Socioecological approaches and amplifying messages

Based on best practice, ideally a socioecological model[23] should be used for broader social norms change, in which change at the individual level is supported by changes in the family and community as well as at the structural level, for example as Programme P seeks to do (Heise et al. 2013).[24] Creating a 'surround sound' engagement where key messages are reinforced at multiple levels can be key to overcoming resistance and creating momentum around the change process. Often, it can be helpful or even necessary to have at least the approval of, if not endorsement and amplification by, key faith and community leaders and other gate-keepers. Supportive messages can also come from influential role models, but often it is peers who can be most influential in encouraging and sustaining change (Kindler 2022).

One example of such an approach has been the South African NGO Sonke Gender Justice's 'spectrum of change' approach, which simultaneously targets individuals, communities, local organizations and government to change notions of masculinity and expectations around male behaviour to encourage an environment more accepting of new attitudes and practices (Kindler 2022). Their 'flagship' campaign, One Man Can, sought to start with change at the individual level, before moving to community spheres. The approach used participatory workshops with men and boys, as well as in mixed groups with women and couples at the individual and couple/family level. In parallel, longer-term community engagement through community action teams sought to strengthen community mobilization and conduct public awareness activities, resulting in changes in community understandings of masculinity and beliefs and practices in relationships (Kindler 2021). The approach, however, relied on long-term engagement over years and on building momentum in a community, both of which can often be difficult in humanitarian settings.

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[23] https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/about/social-ecologicalmodel.html#:~:text=CDC%20uses%20a%20four%2Dlevel,%2C%20community%2C%20and%20societal%20factors.

[24] A more common approach is the Knowledge, Action, Practice approach, but this often struggles with moving from the individual to the community and systemic level, and with moving from one stage to the next (i.e. from increased knowledge to changed attitudes to actual changed practice).

Adapting gender norm change approaches to humanitarian settings

Crises and the attendant social upheavals provide tentative windows to rebuild more non-violent and gender-equitable norms and also bring the crisis-affected populations in touch with new ideas and actors, such as community-based organizations and INGOs (Namy et al. 2019, Read-Hamilton and Marsh 2016) However, adapting programmes developed in non-crisis settings to humanitarian and crisis-affected settings often creates extra hurdles for implementing these programmes. These include the following (based on GWI and IRC 2016, McAlpine 2020, Myrttinen and Kyaw 2021, Namy et al. 2019, Raising Voices and International Rescue Committee 2018, as well as interviews):

- Competing pressures for time and attention among beneficiaries, in particular in the early stages of a crisis or at points of escalation, making implementation often impossible during those periods
- Fluctuations and movement of intended beneficiaries
- Increased security risks for implementers and intended beneficiaries
- Securitization of spaces and beneficiaries, leading to lack of mobility of crisis-affected populations and lack of access to camps for implementers
- Hardening of gender norms and attitudes in the face of increased militarization (Paz y Desarrollo 2016)
- Mixed refugee populations, meaning that there may not be one common language that could be used
- Variety of household configurations and living arrangements (e.g. single men or women, same-sex couples, unaccompanied minors, women-headed households, nuclear and extended families, temporary conjugal partnerships)[25]
- Lack of safe and accessible locations for conducting interventions (or research)
- Research and programming fatigue among intended beneficiaries
- “Navigating tensions between programme adaptation (the process of ensuring that initiatives are culturally appropriate and resonate with the communities in which they are introduced) and fidelity (the degree to which the adapted programme maintains the essential ‘ingredients’ of the original intervention)” (Namy et al. 2019, p. 205).

Adaptation and vernacularization of approaches are essential to ensure that programmes are accepted and understood by the intended beneficiaries. This can, however, be a very lengthy and contested process, and inevitably raise difficult questions about which gender norms and gendered behaviours the intervention wants to challenge or transform, and how far to push on these (Namy et al. 2019). A further challenge is the pressure to ‘scale-up’ and expand programmes that have often been developed in conditions of relative stability and on a small scale. Simply increasing financial and human resources to support programming within a larger geographic area or a larger population cannot automatically be expected to result in success (Heilman and Stich 2016).

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[25] This is not only important in terms of the different needs, vulnerabilities and risks faced by the intended beneficiaries based on their living conditions, but also presents intended beneficiaries with different time pressures. Furthermore, some interventions are specifically designed for (mostly assumed heterosexual) couples or nuclear families, which may not be relevant in a displacement or humanitarian context.

Five examples of gender-transformative programming

This section will focus in more detail on five programmes: SASA!, Stepping Stones/Creating Futures, CARE's Role Model Men, the International Rescue Committee's EMAP and Equimundo's (formerly Promundo) Programme P. These have all been developed in low- and middle-income countries with the aim of changing gendered norms and behaviours, although they target different aspects of life. While they have been adapted and used in different crisis-affected situations (e.g. Palestinian and Kenyan refugee camps, internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, crisis- and conflict-affected men in Burundi and Lebanon), these are by far not the only approaches, and there are numerous localized programmes that have also been run in crisis-affected communities, be it local curricula developed by grassroots organizations on 'new masculinities' in Colombia, Living Peace Institute's trauma healing work with men in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo or Sonke Gender Justice's One Man Can, which was rolled out in conflict-affected communities in Sudan in addition to South Africa. These five were chosen as they are arguably the most well-known and have been used in multiple settings.

SASA![26] - is a community based mobilization approach that aims to prevent GBV by challenging the harmful social norms and understanding of power relations underpinning GBV, and promote gender equality and violence prevention. It has mostly been used in low- and middle-income countries, but also in IDP and refugee camps in at least Myanmar and Kenya. It was developed by the Ugandan NGO Raising Voices, and SASA! is an acronym denoting the four phases it encompasses – Start, Awareness, Support and Action – which are often completed over a period of 3–4 years. The approach centres around four 'SASA! essentials': "(1) gender-power analysis, which recognizes power imbalances between women and men as the root cause of VAW; (2) phased-in approach, where new ideas are introduced systematically through the Start, Awareness, Support, and Action phases; (3) holistic community engagement, involving all 'circles of influence' (e.g. individuals, families, neighbours, religious leaders, political leaders, etc.) to build a critical mass for change; and (4) aspirational activism that emphasizes the benefits of balanced power between women and men, as well as safe intimate partnerships." (Raising Voices 2017, p. 1 quoted in Namy 2019). The approach is implemented by community activists rather than NGO staff, and SASA! "contains a variety of materials designed to spark critical reflection and compel women and men to action, including quick chats, comics, dramas, community posters, PowerPoint presentations to support formal advocacy efforts, media content (e.g. radio soap operas), and more" (Namy et al. 2019, p. 2054). The SASA! methodology has been tested using a randomized controlled trial (RCT) in Uganda, but not in a humanitarian setting (Abramsky et al. 2014).

Stepping Stones/Creating Futures[27] - is a joint approach that combines a gender norm change component (Stepping Stones) with an economic empowerment component (Creating Futures). Stepping Stones was initially developed for HIV/Aids prevention work, but has since been used especially for GBV prevention and gender norm change, including in at least two acutely crisis-affected settings in Myanmar. It is a highly adaptable curriculum-based approach, used with single persons, couples, nuclear and extended families, and usually runs over a course of 6–12 months or longer, depending on whether or not there is an economic empowerment component in addition to the gender norm approach. Stepping Stones consists of 10 sessions and Creating Futures consists of 11 sessions. In at least two adaptations, Zindagii Shoista (International Alert, Tajikistan) and Sammanit Jeevan (VSO, Nepal), the approach also included giving cash grants for income-generating activities, and the economic component was developed to a greater degree than the original Creating Futures. The gender norm change component focuses on issues such as interpersonal communication, power, family dynamics and harmful norms and practices, making use of role play and other interactive methodologies. The approach has been tested in a range of countries and has often been successful in shifting gender norms and reducing GBV. It has been evaluated through an RCT in a non-humanitarian crisis setting in South Africa (Gibbs et al. 2020).

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[26] https://raisingvoices.org/women/sasa-approach/.

[27] https://prevention-collaborative.org/programme-examples/stepping-stones-and-creating-futures/.

Role Model Men[28] / Abatangamuco - is an approach that was locally developed in Burundi and had been adapted by CARE International for use in at least Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The approach has an explicit focus on masculinities and promoting pro-social, gender-equal and non-violent behaviour. The original Burundian approach has gained support from donors and INGOs, including CARE International as one of the main sponsors. The movement seeks to promote men's engagement with and leadership in promoting new, more gender-equitable relations in the household, and renouncing domestic violence and GBV. The movement seeks to instil in its members a positive pride in a 'new' kind of masculinity. It spreads its message through theatre productions and testimonies, in which members talk at village-level meetings of their new life. Men who give their testimonies draw on the fact that many villagers will remember their former selves and ask them to compare between the 'old' and 'new' ways of being a man, with their wives acting as a witness to this change. Those men who choose to change their ways can apply to join, after which they need to pass a probation period, during which they are monitored. If they pass, then they are inducted into the 'brotherhood' in a public ceremony. Although the programme focuses mainly on men as actors of change, their wives are also included both indirectly (through their husbands) and directly in the programme (Myrttinen and Nsengiyumva 2014, Wallacher 2012). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo adaptation, the participating men develop personal plans for change, which they are then held accountable to (Care International 2021). The approach has proven to be highly popular and, based on project reporting, has led to reduced GBV and more gender-equal behaviour. It has, however, been critiqued for centring male agency (El-Bushra et al. 2013), which has led to considering how it could be made more accountable to women in the community.

Engaging Men through Accountable Practice (EMAP)[29] - is a one year GBV prevention intervention developed specifically for humanitarian settings by the International Rescue Committee, and has been used with crisis-affected populations in at least Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Myanmar. It uses a field-tested curriculum for engaging men in transformative individual behaviour change, fostering an acceptance of women's leadership, encouraging equitable approaches to gender, increasing men's participation in household and care work, reducing GBV and encouraging male allyship with women. The approach was successfully evaluated using an RCT in Côte d'Ivoire (Hossain et al. 2014) and was also evaluated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Falb et al. 2020, Vaillant et al. 2020). In at least Myanmar and Kenya, EMAP has been used in conjunction with SASA!, as well as programming focused towards women in the refugee/IDP communities (Namy et al. 2019).

Programme P[30] - is an approach developed by Equimundo (formerly Promundo), and was initially rolled out in Brazil. It works with young fathers and fathers-to-be and uses fatherhood as an entry point to promote men's involvement in caregiving, gender-equitable attitudes and reducing GBV. It is curriculum based but also uses "hands-on activities and role-playing exercises with fathers and couples [to] create a safe environment for discussing and challenging traditional gender norms and practicing new, positive social behaviours related to men's caregiving and involvement in prenatal, newborn, and children's health." (Promundo et al. 2014). In addition to group education for parents, the programme also includes training for health and social sector staff, and can be accompanied by community public awareness-raising campaigns and local and national advocacy campaigns (e.g. around paternity leave). The Rwandan adaptation of Programme P, Bandebereho, was evaluated using an RCT (Doyle et al. 2018). Programme P is usually rolled out in 11 sessions, often with one session per week (Promundo et al. 2014). However, the curriculum can be integrated into a longer, broader and more comprehensive programme, as for example in the case of the Bandebereho programme, which ran for three years. The Programme P approach has been adapted and successfully integrated into, and implemented as part of, the Men and Women for Gender Equality Programme of the UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine, including with conflict-affected and displaced populations.[31]

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[28] https://www.care.org/news-and-stories/resources/role-model-men-and-boys-uganda/.

[29] https://gbvresponders.org/prevention/emap-approach/.

[30] https://promundoglobal.org/programs/program-p/.

[31] https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/men-and-women-for-gender-equality .

TABLE 4.1: SUMMARY OF SOME GENDER NORM AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE APPROACHES

	SASA!	Stepping Stones/ Creating Futures	Role Model Men	EMAP	Programme P
Thematic focus	Gender norm change	Norm and behaviour change, economic empowerment	Masculinities	Gender norms, GBV	Fatherhood, care work
Approach	Community mobilization	Curriculum based	Individual change	Curriculum based	Curriculum based
Participants	Men and women in communities	Individuals, couples or families	Individual men	Individual men	Individual men, couples
Does the intervention explicitly focus on transforming masculinities and/or men's behaviour?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Randomized control trial (RCT)	Yes (Uganda)[32]	Yes (South Africa)	No	Yes (Côte d'Ivoire, DRC)	Yes (Rwanda)[33]

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[32] Note that the focus of the intervention was on preventing violence against women and girls and HIV/Aids prevention.

[33] An adapted version, Bandebereho, was used in this case.

RCT findings	Reduction observed in all types of IPV, including severe forms of each, suggesting that in cases where IPV was not completely eliminated, intervention may have reduced the frequency and/or severity of violence. Reported positive shifts in community attitudes to acceptability of IPV and more gender-equitable power dynamics[34]	Significant reduction in men's self-reported perpetration of IPV (including sexual violence), but no change in women's reported experiences. No change in men's controlling behaviour. Significant increase in women's earnings[35]	N/A	In Côte d'Ivoire, positive impacts on men's reported conflict management and gender-equitable behaviours, reduction in men's perpetration of IPV, although not statistically significant in this study.[36] Similar reported positive attitude changes by men in the DRC cluster RCT, but no significant changes in reported experiences of IPV by women[37]	Women reported decreased physical and sexual IPV, and improved men's attendance and accompaniment at antenatal care, as well as participation in childcare and domestic work. Women and men in the intervention group reported less child physical punishment, less dominance of men in decision-making and greater modern contraceptive use[38]
Implementation time	Recommended 3–4 years (but has also been shortened)	6–18 months	Continuous community-level engagement	12 months	11 weeks (curriculum only, programmes can be longer)

While all five of these programmes have been evaluated and tested to some degree, there is no one approach that is a guaranteed success, especially given the challenging contexts of humanitarian settings. The choice of programme depends on the aims (e.g. is it about care work, changing gender dynamics or GBV prevention), the resources available, the capacity and availability of implementing partners and, critically, also the time available. The approaches all rely on some degree of stability for participants to be able to undergo a process of change over a period of weeks and months, if not years, which may become an insurmountable obstacle for implementation in crisis settings. While compressing the time allocated is possible, it is far from optimal and can undermine the hoped-for process of change. The time needed for the process of adaptation and possible testing, as well as for the thorough training of implementers, should also not be under-estimated, even if it is an approach that is already available 'off the shelf.'

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[34] Abramsky et al. (2016_. A partially SASA!-inspired couples intervention in Rwanda, Indashyikirwa, also reported significant reductions in IPV and positive changes in gender attitudes in an RCT (Dunkle et al. 2020).

[35] Gibbs et al. (2020a). Other, non-RCT studies (e.g. Mastonshoeva et al. 2019) have shown much greater reductions in DV/IPV, both in terms of men's self-reporting and women's reporting.

[36] Hossain et al. (2014).

[37] Vaillant et al. (2020).

[38] Doyle et al. (2018).

Two of the key programming lessons learned are that relying on men's individual change alone is often unlikely to work unless there is a supporting environment, and that working only with men rather than with women and men is far less effective. One way of achieving this is using several approaches simultaneously, as the International Rescue Committee, for example, has done in combining EMAP, SASA! and women-focused programming, "create[s] multiple entry points for the community through the different […] programme components – any one of which may appeal more to a specific individual – it seems to have become easier for the IRC to build trust, bring community members on board, and help them to overcome their initial scepticism or reluctance to participate" (Namy et al. 2019, p. 208). Running parallel programmes does, however, carry the risk of creating confusion among intended beneficiaries and implementing partners. It can also lead to difficulties with sequencing, and ensuring that interventions are synchronized temporally and geographically, as well as with respect to the target communities, especially if they are funded from different sources or implemented by different teams. Nonetheless, in spite of these programmatic challenges, such a combined approach can help create the kind of socioecological model for change mentioned in the above section. Creating this kind of a model is often much more challenging in humanitarian settings, given fluctuating populations and the lack of social cohesion and community or peer networks that could be used to promote and sustain change, as well as often competing sources of authority (e.g. host state actors, humanitarian agencies, NGOs, camp management committees, faith leaders), which may have competing views on norm change.

Accountability of work with men and boys to the broader goals of the women's rights movement and feminist principles has been a key emerging issue in recent years, and has also been embraced by UN Women (2020). Unless there is accountability, the Coalition of Feminists for Social Change cautions that 'a parallel system' is emerging, of "male engagement campaigns, programmes, organizations and networks that, although allied theoretically to feminist principles, stand largely independent of the women's movement."[39] The MenEngage Alliance defines accountability as i) being critically aware of one's own power and privilege, and being open to criticism; ii) taking action to address personal and institutional practices that go against our principles of gender equality and human rights, acknowledging any harm caused and making amends; iii) respecting and promoting women's leadership in the gender equality movement; and iv) creating structures of consultation and partnerships with women's rights organizations.[40]

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[39] Coalition of Feminists for Social Change (2017).

[40] MenEngage Alliance (2014). See also https://menengage.org/our-work/accountability/.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This review of existing literature on men and masculinities, as well as the interviews with humanitarian practitioners and researchers, has, on the one hand, underscored the lack of a masculinities perspective, let alone a critical one, in much of humanitarian policy, programming or research. One of the key challenges of research on men is the fact that masculine norms and patriarchy are often so normalized as to be invisible to men themselves and society around them, and there has historically been (and continues to be) a subsuming of men under the category of the 'generic person/aid recipient' with little or no consideration of their particular needs as men (Dominelli 2020)

In spite of decades-old calls for using relational, comprehensive and intersectional lenses to better understand how gender plays a role in humanitarian settings and affects men, boys, women, girls and persons of other gender identities differently, this has yet to become part of the humanitarian mainstream. On the other hand, this review also showed the wide array of studies that are already available, although many of them have tended to be quite small-scale. Nonetheless, they do paint a surprisingly coherent picture across very different contexts – and decades – of crisis-, disaster- and displacement-affected men struggling to cope with central elements of what constituted their understanding of being a man. The literature highlights negative coping mechanisms, overlooked vulnerabilities, resorting to GBV and defining oneself and one's masculinity against others who have 'failed worse' as men. Some of the literature does, however, include hopeful glimpses of increased solidarity, of more gender-equitable attitudes and practices, and a rethinking of masculinity in crises.

The review also underscored research gaps around questioning masculine institutional cultures in humanitarian and disaster-related policymaking and response that would go beyond the necessary and nascent discussions of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, heteronormativity and the need for decolonization in the humanitarian sector. There are also gaps when it comes to fully understanding the situation of persons of diverse SOGIESC and the interplay of gender and disabilities in humanitarian settings.

In terms of programming targeting men in humanitarian settings for gender norm change, there is an emerging body of evidence from low- and middle-income countries on 'what works.' However, adapting these to a humanitarian setting presents a range of particular challenges, and may not be feasible in rapid-onset crises or when a crisis escalates.

Nonetheless, as the experience and evidence discussed in this literature review shows, engaging both men and women, and addressing dominant patriarchal norms and institutional cultures, is essential for gender transformation. This is necessary to ensure not only that the minimum conditions of meeting women's and girls' needs and of fully respecting women's and girls' rights are fulfilled, but also that, more ambitiously, humanitarian practice also helps lay the foundation for women's empowerment and more gender-equal communities.

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UN WOMEN

220 East 42nd Street
New York, New York 10017, USA

UN Women Geneva Office
Humanitarian Section
20, Avenue Appia
1211 Geneva Switzerland

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