

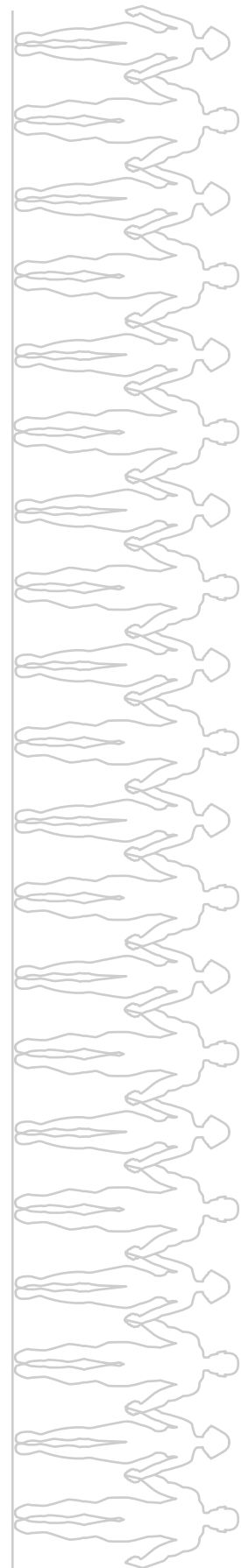
Men, Masculinities & Development:

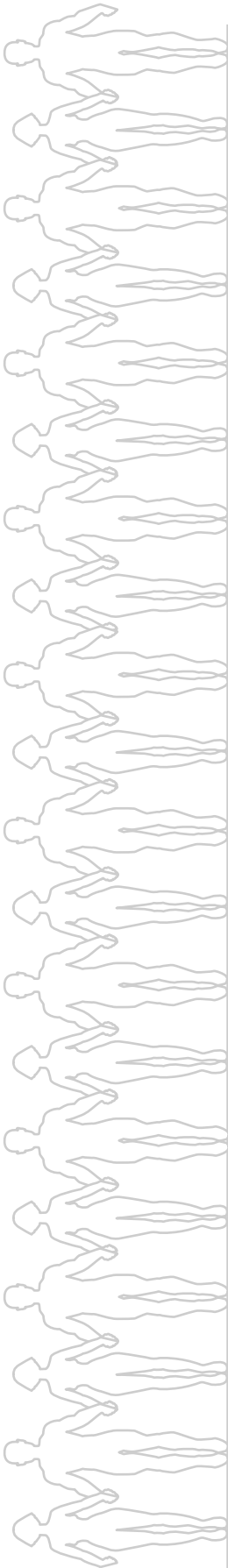
Broadening our
work towards
gender equality

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Gender in Development
Monograph Series #10





About the series

The lives of women and men, the work they do, the income they receive, the roles they are given and the relationships that they share are all shaped by social norms and traditions which treat women and men differently. Truly, we live in a world where gender matters. Such norms and traditions, and the ideas that underpin them, are also manifested in laws, institutions and economic and social structures, such as the family and the job market. But the gendered responsibilities and rewards of participation in society are not only different for women and men, they are usually inequitable. The effect, as UNDP's 1995 Human Development Report bears eloquent witness, is the continuing economic and political marginalisation of women. Understanding the ways in which gender differences are deployed to construct this reality of marginalisation is necessary if efforts to address inequity and inequality are to be successful. The Gender in Development Monograph Series is intended to contribute to this process of understanding.

In analysing the gendered realities of today's world, the series draws on its authors' research into the lives of women and men, linking these lived experiences with the macro-level political and economic structures from which they are often artificially severed in development theory and practice. The monographs reflect the complexity and diversity of global and national responses to key issues like poverty, housing, governance and technology but provide a common analysis of the ways in which gender determines the different ways that women and men act upon and are affected by these issues.

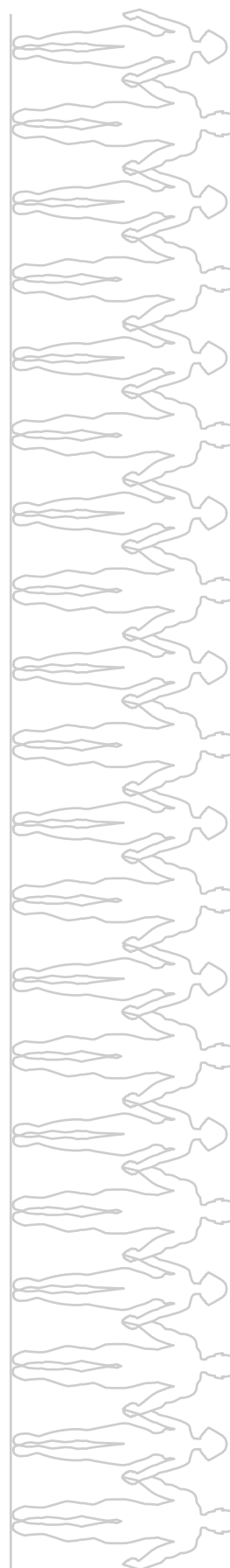
This analysis reveals the gendered bases of inequity and inequality to be powerful and pervasive. Yet, as the monographs make clear, the concept of gender can also provide a catalyst for social and economic change. If the differing roles and responsibilities ascribed to men and women are socially constructed, then, by definition, they may be changed by society, by us. Understanding the ways that gender is constructed can create a space within which women and men may envision different ways of being together.

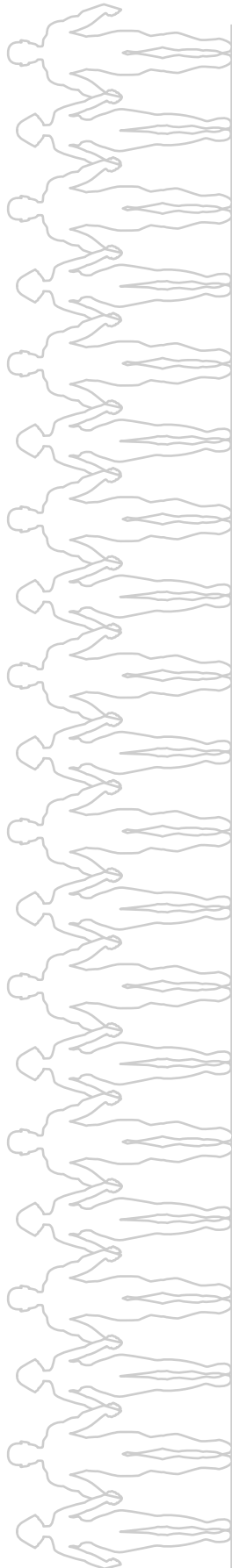
Commissioned from leading researchers and practitioners working with gender and development issues, each monograph reflects the author's particular perspective, shaped by their own expertise and experience. Such diversity is critical to any meaningful dialogue which the series hopes to stimulate. But the monographs' plurality of voices all speak to the necessity of engendering human development and of recognising that the nature of women's and men's common existence is within our power to change

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INTRODUCTION

What do men, as a distinct group, have to do with the development process? Men play diverse roles in the economy, the community and the family. Men are husbands and fathers, brothers and sons. Across differences of class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age and religion, one of the few commonalities that men share, as a 'distinct group', is their gender privilege. Men, like women, are affected by gender power structures that are interwoven with other hierarchical structures such as those based on race and class. Yet men, regardless of their positioning in other hierarchical structures, generally have a strategic common interest in defending and not challenging their gender privilege. As Connell states:

A gender order where men dominate women cannot avoid constituting men as an interest group concerned with defense, and women as an interest group concerned with change (Connell 1995).

The processes that confer privilege on one group and not another are often invisible to those upon whom that privilege is conferred. Thus, not having to think about race is one of the luxuries of being of a dominant race, just as not having to think about gender is one of the patriarchal dividends that men gain from their position in the gender order. Men tend not to think of themselves as 'gendered' beings, and this is one reason why policy makers and development practitioners, both men and women, often misunderstand or dismiss 'gender' as a women's issue.

Gender, as a determinant of social relations that legitimizes and sustains men's power over women, is inherently about relations between women and men, as well as relations among groups of women and among groups of men. Achieving gender equality is not possible without changes in men's lives as well as in women's. Efforts to incorporate a gender perspective into thinking about development requires more than a focus on women, however vital that might be; what is also needed is a focus on men. Yet, significantly, men continue to be implicated rather than explicitly addressed in development programmes focusing on gender inequalities and the advancement of women. "In the gender and development literature men appear very little, often as hazy background figures" (White 1997). There is a growing recognition, however, of the need to define more precisely the relationship between men and 'engendered' development policy and practice, and examine questions of men's responsibility for women's disadvantage, as well as men's role in redressing gender inequalities.

This recognition is, in part, a consequence of the conceptual shift from the discourse of Women in Development (WID) to that of Gender and Development (GAD):

The GAD approach signals three departures from WID. First, the focus shifts from women to gender and the unequal power relations between women and men. Second, all social, political, and economic structures and development are re-examined from the perspective of gender differentials. Third, it is recognized that achieving gender equality requires transformative change (United Nations 1999: ix).

The purpose of this paper is to discuss men's possible relationships to this process of transformative change by exploring the meanings and uses of 'masculinity'. Discussions of masculinity provide a place in which men's involvement in producing and challenging



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inequalities and inequities in gender and other social relations can be investigated. Masculinity renders gender visible to and for men. Understanding the definitions and discourses surrounding masculinity can help in the analysis of how political, economic and cultural inequalities are produced and distributed not only between but also within the genders. Above all, an inquiry in to the 'politics of masculinity' offers an opportunity to rethink men's strategic interest in challenging the values and practices that create gender hierarchy.

Examining masculinity and the role it plays in the development process is not simply an analytical exercise, but has widespread implications for the effectiveness of programmes that seek to improve economic and social outcomes in virtually every country. "If development is not engendered, it is endangered" cautioned the 1997 Human Development Report. Gender equality is not only an end in itself, but also a necessary means to achieving sustainable human development and the reduction of poverty. Signatories to the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development recognized this when they committed themselves (in Commitment Five) to:

Promoting full respect for human dignity and to achieving equality and equity between women and men, and to recognizing and enhancing the participation and leadership roles of women in political, civil, economic, social, economic and cultural life, and in development (United Nations 1995).

The nature and effects of gender inequalities worldwide have been well documented. In 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action listed the following critical areas of concern: the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women; violence against women; inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources; inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels, and; gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in safeguarding the environment (United Nations 1995a).

Implicit in this listing is the identification of men and male-dominated institutions as the producers and beneficiaries of the gender order that disadvantages women in all spheres of life. This paper addresses questions that arise when men's contribution to gender equality goals is considered in the context of this prevailing global gender order:

- To what extent can men be involved in transforming the gender inequalities that currently privilege them?
- To what extent should gender programmes work with men, given the already scarce resources available for their existing work with women?
- What are the ways in which gender programmes can work with men in order to achieve their gender equality goals?
- How can a 'politics of masculinity' assist gender programmes to engage with men as potential agents of transformative change, without compromising current commitments to the advancement of women?

Across a range of development issues and institutions, there is an increasing interest in men as potential agents of change and not merely objects of blame. Commenting on the role of men in the HIV epidemic, Peter Piot, the Executive Director of UNAIDS, has stated that "[T]he time is ripe to start seeing men not as some kind of problem, but as part of the solution". The questions of "which men?" and "which solutions?" remain to be answered.



THE MEANINGS OF MASCULINITY

Discussions of masculinity provide a place in which to clarify these answers. But before turning to consider the usefulness of these discussions, it is important to look at the different meanings ascribed to the term ‘masculinity’ and the assumptions that prefigure, as well as the implications that ensue, from these meanings. Masculinity is a way to explain men — but there are different ideas captured with different terminology: biological determinism or essentialism, cultural or social constructionism and masculinity as a power discourse.

Biological Destiny or Cultural Construction?

While both schools of thought believe that ‘masculinity’ is a useful tool to explain men, these polarized propositions diverge in their account of what determines men’s masculinity: nature or nurture? As biological destiny, masculinity is used to refer to the innate qualities and properties of men that distinguish men from women. In this view, masculinity is men’s nature, and as such helps to explain not only differences but also inequalities between men and women. Men’s political, economic and cultural privileges arise from their ‘masculine advantage’, as variously reflected in genetic predisposition to aggression (in contrast to the passivity of femininity), physical strength (in contrast to the weakness of femininity) and sexual drives (in contrast to the sexual reserve of femininity).

The problem with biological determinism is the arbitrary nature of the fixing of men’s ‘essential’ masculinity, which can range across a whole spectrum from men’s innate physicality/animality to men’s innate rationality. Feminist scholarship and practice has long critiqued the political convenience of explaining gender inequality and hierarchy in terms of men’s natural superiority. But development institutions and practitioners have been slower to take such biological determinist thinking about men and masculinity into account. As such, many have failed to grasp how the resurgence of such thinking has likely come in response to diverse threats to men’s power posed by geo-political, economic and cultural changes, some of which have favored the advancement of women. For instance, writing of events in Serbia in the 1990s, Blagojevic (1999) notes that “[t]he political and economic changes endangered the male identity much more than the female”. Consequently:

New prophets appeared on the scene offering various socio-biological arguments in support of the claim that men are inherently superior. One such was Tosevski, who proclaims Serbian masculinity to be superior to the western variety and advocates open promiscuity for males....The popularity which he enjoys, the pervasiveness of his ideas in public discourse, and the image of a “popular male mythology of Serbian masculinity” in his texts, together reveal how dramatic the problem of an emptied male identity in Serbian culture actually is.

Resistance to the emerging global capitalist order has been similarly mobilized by appealing to biological determinist notions of masculinity. Scholars have pointed out the ways in which religious fundamentalism and ethnic nationalism use local cultural symbols to express regional resistance to incorporation by a larger, dominant power (see espe-

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cially Jurgensmeyer 1995 and Barber 1995). These religious and ethnic expressions are often manifest as gender revolts, and include a virulent resurgence of domestic patriarchy (or militant misogyny); the problematization of global masculinities or neighboring masculinities (as in the former Yugoslavia); and the overt symbolic efforts to claim a distinct 'manhood' along religious or ethnic lines to which others do not have access and which will restore manhood to the formerly privileged. In effect, masculinity becomes a rhetorical currency by which opposition to global integration, state centralization and increasing ethnic heterogeneity can be mobilized. In such cases, we expect to find ideas of traditional, local masculinities and their accompanying hierarchies reaffirmed. Typically, as Connell notes (1998: 17), "hardline masculine fundamentalism goes together with a marked anti-internationalism".

The political implications of the biological determinism that accompanies such fundamentalism have directed much attention toward other explanations of men and their masculinity. That gender is constituted in and by society and culture, rather than nature and biology, is of course a basic tenet of feminism, the women's movement and, subsequently, GAD policy and practice. But this understanding, at least in development institutions and practice, has usually been applied to programmes concerned with the advancement of women, and rarely to work with men. However, there is an increasing interest in 'gendering' men and this interest has centered on an exploration of cultural constructions of masculinity. This exploration still seeks to explain men and their behaviour in terms of their masculinity, but a masculinity which is defined as an embodiment of the cultural norms and social pressures that help to determine the roles, rights, responsibilities and relations that are available to and imposed upon men, in contrast to women.

Accounts of the cultural constructions of masculinity often conceive and describe it in metaphors of roles, performances and scripts. Such conceptions and metaphors give rise to a number of insights that are of use to development practitioners seeking to work with men toward gender equality goals. For example, separating men from their masculine roles creates a space within which their gender, and the process of their gendering, can become more visible to men themselves. Making men more conscious of gender as it affects their lives as well as those of women is a first step towards challenging gender inequalities.

The emphasis on the pressure that masculinity imposes on men to perform and conform to specific masculine roles (emotional and psychological as well as political and social) has highlighted the costs to men of current gender arrangements. Writing from an anti-sexist organization in Zimbabwe, Gokova (1998) notes that:

Men have not realized how much they pay in insisting on separate gender roles.... Men deny themselves the experience of being human, particularly in so far as their relationship with women is concerned. They miss important lessons of life derived from challenging relationships in which women play an equal role. Living the myth of male superiority has sometimes resulted in men suffering from stress, even early death, because of pressure to project an image that is not naturally theirs and that is not sustainable.

This concept of the pressure of masculinity, often linked to a notion of the fragility of masculine identity that requires constant performance, has proved fruitful in providing



explanations of stereotypically problematic male behaviours, such as violence and sexual risk-taking. One programmatic consequence of this concept of the pressures of masculinity has been the attention given to addressing the sources of this pressure in processes of socialization. Working with the institutions (familial, educational, religious and cultural) that help to socialize boys into men creates an entry point for development practitioners concerned with increasing men's commitment to gender equality. Such work offers the possibility of reconstructing masculinity and creating new models and identities for men that will enable and encourage them to work towards gender equality, and therefore more effective models of development.

Defining masculinity in terms of its cultural construction offers ways to re-think men's relationship to gender in/equality. For some, this means displacing responsibility for women's oppression from men onto masculinity. There are dangers in this displacement, however, related to the extent to which cultural constructions of masculinity are regarded as determinants of men's actions in the world. Heise poses the question: "What is it about the construction of masculinity in different cultures that promotes aggressive sexual behaviour by men?" (1997: 424). She concludes that it is "men's insecurity about their masculinity that promotes abusive behaviour toward women" (1997: 425) and continues:

[T]he more I work on violence against women, the more I become convinced that the real way forward is to redefine what it means to be male. (1997: 426)

But the suggestion that men need a new definition of their masculinity in order to reduce or end male violence appears to prioritize questions of identity over questions of values. Clearly the two are related, in that the devaluing of women in most if not all cultures is constitutive of "what it means to be male". But this gender hierarchy of value is interwoven with other hierarchies of value and structures of oppression (by sexuality, race and class for example). In this regard, it is not helpful to abstract a discussion of men's behaviour in terms of their masculine identity from a broader discussion of the values and practices that shape power relations not only between men and women, but also among men and among women.

Discourse(s) of Power

'Masculinity', to the extent that the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture.

The definition offered by Connell (1995: 71), though complex, is suggestive. It warns us that masculinity is not the property of men, and reminds us to be wary of using the terms 'men', 'male' and 'masculinity' interchangeably. Discourses of masculinity are available to, used by and imposed upon both men and women.

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As a woman, I am a consumer of masculinities, but I am not more so than men are; and, like men, I as a woman am also a producer of masculinities and a performer of them (Sedgwick 1995: 13).

Understanding masculinity as discourse broadens the focus beyond men and the biological or cultural bases of their masculine nature or identity. The challenge confronting development practitioners concerned with men's relationship to gender equality is to place this relationship in the context of relations of power not only between but also within the genders. Addressing masculinity as discourse (by whom? for what purposes?) helps this placement by clarifying the values and practices that create such hierarchies of power. Misogyny, homophobia, racism and class/status-based discrimination are all implicated in a 'politics of masculinity' that is developed and deployed by men to claim power over women, and by some men to claim power over other men.

Discursive perspectives on masculinity are interested in the ways that it becomes a site for these claims and contests of power. Such perspectives pluralize masculinity into masculinities and note the way that subordinate masculinities emerge in resistance to the power claims of hegemonic masculinities.

Pluralizing masculinity into masculinities is more than a way to explain there are many ways to be a man. It is useful for understanding the connections between masculinities and the distribution and effects of power and resistance among the different forms of masculinity. This has significant implications for development work on men and gender equality. It suggests that such work should not be confined by a concern to work on masculinity in order to reform the male identity and offer men better ways of being a man, however useful such work may be to specific individuals. An understanding of the 'politics of masculinity' indicates that the values and practices (individual and institutional) that create gender inequality are also intimately involved in the creation of other hierarchies of oppression. Challenging these values and practices implies working with both women and men, at the policy and programme level, to mobilize constituencies for change in which gender equality goals are integral to movements and coalitions for social justice.

THE USES OF MASCULINITY

This section turns to examine the uses of masculinity in relation to a number of critical development issues and themes. Discussion of these usages and their implications for men's relationship to engendered development practice and outcomes leads to a number of recommendations for development institutions, their policies and programmes.

Power and Patriarchy

The naturalizing of men's power is one of the main functions performed by discourses of masculinity. The masculine/feminine duality rests on and supports a whole set of dual associations that contrast the powerful male with the powerless female: hard/soft, active/passive, productive/reproductive, warrior/nurturer. Such associations ease men's,



and inhibit women's, access to and control over political, economic and cultural power. An effect of this 'natural' association between men and power is to render their gender invisible in the acquisition of such power.

One of the significant achievements of feminist scholarship has been to name the connections between men, gender and power and give them visible expression in the term 'patriarchy'. In both the public and domestic spheres, patriarchy refers to the institutionalization of men's power over women within the economy, the polity, the household and heterosexual relations.

Men's relationship to such patriarchal arrangements of power must be a critical area of concern to development programmes that seek to involve men in gender equality work. Irrespective of men's power vis-à-vis other men, it is clear that:

Men gain a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command. They also gain a material dividend (Connell 1995: 82).

But it is equally clear that men's 'patriarchal dividend' is mediated by economic class, social status, race, ethnicity, sexuality and age (to name some of the more salient modifiers). Patriarchy becomes a less useful concept when applied to questions of intra-gender equity and equality. Despite the dividend, most men remain disempowered in relation to the elites (composed of men and women) that wield political and economic power in societies and communities throughout the world. It is this experience of disempowerment that potentially connects some men and women across the patriarchal divide, and offers the possibility of linking a gender politics that challenges patriarchy with a wider politics of social transformation.

Production and Social Reproduction

But the barriers to this kind of transformative change, and especially men's involvement in it, are considerable. Many are rooted in gender relations in the spheres of production and social reproduction. Men continue to benefit from the fiction of the separation between the spheres of production and social reproduction. Many women, in contrast to most men, do a double shift, working in both spheres. As Desai (1994) notes:

In the economic South, traditional gender relations inhibit men's involvement in the family, and women assume virtually all responsibilities for child care, regardless of their involvement in paid work.

Industrialization and urbanization in developing countries has only served to increase the pressures on women to perform this double shift. The impact on gender inequalities is apparent in the way this burden of the double shift continues to restrict women's participation and progress in labour markets and the wage economy.

Efforts toward redistributing the burden of reproductive labour toward men within households or socializing the cost of child care or other types of caring labour are necessary for both reducing women's time poverty and helping them participate in labour markets more fully (Cagatay 1998: 13).

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The need to renegotiate an equitable division of labour (and its rewards) across both productive and social reproductive spheres requires structural and not merely individual change.

The report of the 1994 Cairo conference on population and development signaled recognition of the need for changes in men's lives for women's equality. One objective was:

To promote gender equality in all spheres of life, including family and community life, and to encourage and enable men to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behaviour and their social and family roles (United Nations 1994).

But the politics of masculinity inhibits the social and policy changes that are required to "encourage and enable men" to renegotiate roles and redistribute burdens across the productive and reproductive spheres. The effects of such a politics are evident in the benefits that men draw from the cultural prohibitions on their involvement in social reproduction and the grounding of masculine identities in being the provider, the 'breadwinner'. These benefits are reinforced by macroeconomic development frameworks and poverty reduction strategies. Their 'male breadwinner bias', for example:

[C]onstructs the ownership of rights to make claims on the state for social benefits (access to services, cash transfers) around a norm of full-time, life-long working age participation in the market based labour force. (Elson and Cagatay 2000: 18).

There is some evidence of limited change. Some cultural traditions actively encourage involved fatherhood, and others have proved amenable to change. A study of 700 new fathers in Jamaica found that 50% of the urban fathers reported significant involvement in family life such as cooking, cleaning and shopping. There, Fathers Incorporated works with men to promote more positive images of fathers and encourage community and family engagement (Brown and Chevannes 1993). Studies in Brazil have confirmed that younger men are far more flexible in their gender role expectations than older men (Barker 1996). There is also evidence of a backlash by men in situations where male authority is challenged, a backlash grounded in and justified by appeals to biological determinist notions of masculinity and their prescriptions of men's and women's 'proper' roles in the family. For example, "if men feel their authority is in jeopardy, they may attempt to tighten control over the women and girls around them, especially if it is perceived that female gains toward independence or equality mean a loss in their own entitlement as men" (UNICEF 1997: 23).

Dealing with this male backlash and challenging the male bias in economic, political and cultural practice will not be easy. As Elson (1991: 15) writes:

Overcoming male bias is not simply a matter of persuasion, argument, and change in viewpoint in everyday attitudes, in theoretical reasoning and in policy process. It also requires changes in the deep structures of economic and social life, and collective action, not simply individual, action.

The need to renegotiate an equitable division of labour (and its rewards) across both productive and social reproductive spheres requires structural and not merely individual change. This suggests that the emphasis given in cultural constructionist accounts of masculinity to the need to re-socialize men to perform caring and nurturing roles and to asso-



ciate those roles with a new model of masculinity may be necessary but not sufficient to bring about the necessary change. Indeed, framing the problem purely in terms of gender roles may distract attention from other basic issues such as economic class. Men and women in poor and marginalized communities in many ways lack the economic freedom to choose how they negotiate their distribution of productive and social reproductive tasks. Collective action at community and societal level is needed in order to create not only the cultural but also the economic conditions that can make this re-negotiation possible.

Poverty

Many governments, UNDP and a number of other development agencies have recognized the connections between gender equality, human rights and the reduction of poverty. As a component of a six-point action agenda for the eradication of poverty, The Human Development Report 1997 (UNDP 1997: 7) states:

Gender equality needs to be part of each country's strategy for eradicating poverty, both as an end and as a means to eradicating other forms of human poverty. This means: focusing clearly on ending discrimination against girls in all aspects of health, education and upbringing — starting with survival. Empowering women by ensuring equal rights and access to land, credit and job opportunities. Taking more action to end violence against women, the all-too-pervasive hidden side of human poverty. A creative commitment to gender equality will strengthen every area of action to reduce poverty — because women can bring new energy, new insights and a new basis for organization. If development is not engendered, it is endangered. And if poverty reduction strategies fail to empower women, they will fail to empower society.

Gender inequality is responsible for, and expressed in, the different articulations of the global 'feminization of poverty'¹. Women represent approximately 70% of the 1.3 billion poor people in the world (Beneria and Bisnath 1996: 6). Compared with men, girls and women are most likely to be undernourished, and girls and women are most likely receiving less health care — out of approximately 900 million illiterate adults in the world — 2/3 are female (Cagatay 1998).

Discourses of masculinity help to shape the power relations underpinning gendered and inequitable division of labour and access to resources. Households, communities, markets and states are interconnected sites of cooperation and conflict over the control and allocation of resources, and discourses of masculinity are used to legitimize some men's stronger bargaining position vis a vis women and other men. The differentiation of men's work from women's work, the differential remuneration that men and women receive for the same work, the exclusion of women from positions of power within the economy, and the omission of the reproductive sphere in macro-economic planning can all be linked to discourses of masculinity that privilege the male over the female.

¹ The concept of 'feminization of poverty' can refer to a variety of ideas including either one or a combination of the following: women compared to men have a higher incidence of poverty; women's poverty is more severe than men's, and/or; over time, the incidence of poverty among women is increasing compared to men (Cagatay 1998: 3).

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In addition, although they appear to be gender-neutral, the institutional arrangements of global society are very much gendered. The marketplace, multinational corporations, transnational geopolitical institutions and their attendant ideological principles (economic rationality, liberal individualism) express a gendered logic. The “increasingly unregulated power of transnational corporations places strategic power in the hands of particular groups of men,” while the language of globalization remains gender neutral so that “the ‘individual’ of neo-liberal theory has in general the attributes and interests of a male entrepreneur” (Connell 1998: 15).

Feminist economics and other approaches to engendering economic planning and policy making at all levels can make more use of ‘masculinity’ as a discursive framework within which to mark men as gendered beings and to expose the constructed and political nature of their privilege in the economic sphere. Equally, an understanding of the politics of masculinity can help to link broader dimensions of human poverty (such as freedom, self-perception, and violence) to the distribution of political, economic and cultural power between and within the genders. This suggests the need to work at the community level, with women’s and men’s differing but shared experiences of poverty, to develop collective action and advocacy for the sustainable reduction of human poverty.

Governance

Redressing gender inequities in the distribution and impacts of poverty is connected to questions of gender inequalities in systems and structures of governance. Development institutions, among many others, are conscious of the connections between women’s economic empowerment and political enfranchisement. Increasing attention is being given to identifying and challenging the barriers that prevent women from participating fully in the political process, with the aim of creating a critical mass of women in positions of governance at all levels.

In describing the inception of the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI) system in India, by which the Indian constitution was amended in order to mandate the reservation of seats for women in local government, Devaki Jain (1996) notes:

Women’s empowerment challenges traditional ideas of male authority and supremacy. It is unsurprising, then, that PRI has been opposed by some men. Ratanprabha Chive (Ratna) is the sarpanch (head) of the seven halets (hamlets) that comprise the Ghera Purandar Panchayat. Ratna was beaten up as soon as she assumed office by her rival who could not accept the fact that a female had outwitted him.

The reluctance of men to cede power to women in institutions of governance has been evident too in the marginalizing of women within movements for national liberation. McClintock (1997: 109) has noted the ways in which the nationalism of such movements is masculinized, and the effects this has on silencing the gender politics of such political transformations.

Male nationalists have condemned feminism as divisive, bidding women hold their tongues until after the revolution. Yet feminism is a political response to gender conflict, not its cause. To insist on silence about gender conflict when it already



exists is to cover, and thereby ratify, women's disempowerment...If nationalism is not transformed by an analysis of gender power, the nation-state will remain a repository of male hopes, male aspirations, and male privilege.

Similarly, the politics of masculinity in anti-colonial struggles mimics the use made of discourses of masculinity to claim and maintain colonial power. Thus, for example, colonial administrations often problematized the masculinity of the colonized. In British India, Bengali men were perceived as weak and effeminate, though Pathas and Sikhs were perceived as hypermasculine — violent and uncontrolled (see Sinha 1995). Similar distinctions were made in South Africa between Hottentots and Zulus, and in North America between Navaho or Algonquin on the one hand, Sioux, Apache and Cheyenne on the other (see Connell 1998: 14). In many colonial situations, the colonized men were called 'boys' by the colonizers (see Shire 1994).

Securing the entry of a sufficient number of women into positions of political power and influence will help to make gender visible as a key governance issue and will challenge the masculinizing of power that has been alluded to already. But questions of representation remain, given the possibly divergent interests of different groups of women in a given society. The uses of masculinity in claiming and resisting power over local, national and global governance suggest that the entry of more women into positions of power within these structures may be a necessary but not sufficient condition for gender-equitable sustainable human development. More fundamentally, there is a need to challenge the series of exclusions (by gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, age and able-bodiedness) on which such power is based and which are embodied by discourses of masculinity and their hierarchizing of not only inter- but also intra-gender difference.

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Violence and Conflict

Men's violence is a key determinant of the inequities and inequalities of gender relations, both disempowering and impoverishing women. Violence is a fundamental dimension of human poverty. Yet, men's 'natural aggression' is often invoked as a defining characteristic of an essential gender difference and as an explanation for the gendered hierarchical arrangements in the political and economic lives of richer and poorer countries alike.

Understanding development as freedom and as a right means recognizing that men's violence restricts women and children's development by curtailing their freedoms and restricting their rights. This understanding also means recognizing the various pressures placed upon men that may result in violent reactions and well as the need for men to take responsibility for their actions.

It is important to give simultaneous recognition to the centrality of individual freedom and to the force of social influences on the extent and reach of individual freedom. To counter the problems that we face, we have to see individual freedom as a social commitment (Sen 1999).

Heise (1997: 414) reports on a summary of twenty studies from a wide variety of countries that 'document that one-quarter to over half of women in many countries of the world



report having been physically abused by a present or former partner'. She concludes that '[t]he most endemic form of violence against women is wife abuse, or more accurately, abuse of women by intimate male partners' (Heise 1997: 414). In terms of sexual health and reproductive rights, such abuse diminishes women's capacity to express and enjoy their sexuality and to control fertility, while increasing their risks of pregnancy complications and of acquiring sexually transmitted infections.

By moving from biological determinist to cultural constructionist accounts of masculinity, a number of men's anti-violence programmes have been able to work with violent men to help them understand the ways that structural pressures, cultural messages and/or parenting practices, have contributed to their socialization into violence. Deconstructing their violence in this way has helped some men to change.

Violence prevention and intervention² programmes are numerous worldwide. United Nations entities including UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA have launched and supported a significant number of violence prevention campaigns and projects over the past decade, some of which involve men, and the UN General Assembly passed the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (resolution 48/104).

In many countries, civil society organizations and profeminist men's groups work alongside women's shelters to confront men's violence. Over 100 men's groups in the United States — including Men Overcoming Violence (MOVE) in San Francisco, St. Louis's Rape and Violence End Now (RAVEN), the Massachusetts-based Men's Resource Center, upstate New York's Volunteer Counseling Service, and Boston's EMERGE — actively work to end men's violence against women. Other U.S.-based groups, such as MVP Strategies, have developed training materials for men and women in high school and universities, corporations, law enforcement agencies and military services. Similar programmes exist throughout the world. The Men Against Abuse and Violence, based in Mumbai, India is a volunteer organization whose focus is to end domestic violence. In Mexico, CORIAC holds workshops to reduce men's violence against women while in Nicaragua, CANTERA develops training and resource materials for working with men on issues of domestic violence, using popular education methodologies. The International White Ribbon Campaigns (WRC) invite men to wear white ribbons for one week — usually commencing November 25, the International Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women — symbolizing their opposition to men's violence against women, to overcome complacency, to develop local responses to support battered women and to challenge men's violence. Wearing a white ribbon is a means to break that silence and encourage self-reflection. Today, WRC has been successfully launched in more than a dozen countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and in the United States and Australia.

Beyond the public awareness and therapeutic value of such interventions, it is also important to explore the political opportunities of deconstructing the connections between men, masculinity and violence. In describing a project that works on male violence in Nicaragua, Montoya (1999) stresses the importance of contextualizing such violence in history and culture:

² Prevention refers to stopping violence before it starts — initiatives that, for example, address socialization processes, use public awareness strategies or methodologies such as peer education. Intervention refers to work with those who commit acts of violence.



Violence in couple relationships is a problem of power and control....It is maintained by the social structures of oppression in which we live — based, among others, on gender, class, age, and race inequalities. A national history of wars and a culture of settling conflict through force also maintain it. Colonialism and imperialism have had a role in intensifying this violence.

Implicit in this quote too is a connecting of different types of violence; the interpersonal violence in couple relationships is placed in the context of the structural violence of inequalities based on gender, class, age and race. It is also located in a culture that ‘naturalizes’ violence, rendering it ‘normal’ (in itself, an act of violence against those who have come to accept violence) and a history of wars, colonialism and imperialism.

Placing men’s violence in a historical and cultural context helps overcome the naturalizing of men’s violence, or what might be called the ‘masculinizing of violence’. Indeed, it points out the role that discourses of masculinity play in exploiting what is claimed to be men’s ‘natural’ aggression and militarism for specific political purposes. [Enloe \(1990\)](#) notes the way that public power continues to be used to construct gender in such a way as to militarize a society and mobilize its ‘fighting’ men. Blagojevic (1999) comments on the mythology of a dominant Serbian masculinity that became popular in Serbia in the 1990s in order to compensate for men’s reactions to the war:

The behaviour of many men during this last war was neither ‘manly’ nor ‘macho’, and, contrary to the popular media image of the Serbs as warriors, they did not generally support the war. They too found themselves to be, in many ways, victims of patriarchal megalomania and the madness of civil war.

Men’s and women’s relationship to violence is usually more complex than gendered accounts of perpetrators (male) and victims (female) suggests. This is not to deny the material reality of women’s suffering at the hands of men and that women are at far greater risk of being the victims of acts of violence committed by men than vice versa. But questions of responsibility become more complicated when such gender-based interpersonal violence is contextualized within structures, cultures and histories of violence that both men and women have produced and reproduced. To address these, it may be useful to look not merely at the violence of men but at the violence that lies at the heart of masculinity’s hierarchizing of difference and the misogyny, homophobia and racism that are embedded in discourses of masculinity. In this sense, a development response to the connections between men, masculinity and violence should not only consider working with men (for example in post-conflict reconstruction programmes) but also, for example, addressing issues of human rights and discrimination.

Health

A man who does gender correctly would be relatively unconcerned about his health and well-being in general. He would see himself as stronger, both physically and emotionally than most women. He would think of himself as independent, not need-

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ing to be nurtured by others. He would be unlikely to ask others for help. . . He would face danger fearlessly, take risks frequently, and have little concern for his own safety (Courtenay 1998: 21).

Or, as one Zimbabwean man put it, “real men don’t get sick” (cited in Foreman 1999: 22).

That health is gendered has long been understood. Women and men have different rates of different diseases, seek medical care differently and in differing amounts, and are unequally affected by global health intervention strategies. One of the major obstacles to women’s improved health care is the same obstacle that inhibits men’s adequate use of available health care systems: traditional ideologies of masculinity. Women who seek to improve access to health care, to avail themselves of existing methods of contraception or practice safer sex often run “into a wall of un-cooperation from men” (Meursing and Sibindi 1995).

Increasing attention is being paid to these connections between masculinity and public health. Courtenay, among others, has described the ways in which ‘traditional’ masculine roles and ideas increase men’s exposure to ill health and premature death, and decrease men’s ability to protect and preserve their health. Besides looking at the links between gendered division of labour and occupational morbidity and mortality — as well as gender differences in the use of health services and in treatment seeking behaviour — much of the interest in masculinity and public health has been concerned with the notion of ‘risk-taking’.

Cultural constructionist accounts of masculinity often identify risk as a key element of masculine performances and scripts. This conception continues to influence health promotion work with men, especially in the area of sexual health. For example, a recent report from UNAIDS (2000):

[C]hallenges harmful concepts of masculinity and contends that changing many commonly held attitudes and behaviours, including the way adult men look on risk and sexuality and how boys are socialized to become men, must be part of the effort to curb the AIDS epidemic. Broadly speaking, men are expected to be physically strong, emotionally robust, daring and virile, the report says. Some of these expectations translate into attitudes and behaviours that endanger the health and well-being of men and their sexual partners with the advent of AIDS.

HIV prevention work, with both straight and gay men and looking at both homosexual and heterosexual transmission, has addressed HIV-risk taking behaviour as a facet or demonstration of masculine identity. Deconstructing the need for this demonstration and highlighting the pressures on men to ‘perform’ their masculinity through risk-taking have created a space for men to be more conscious of the reasons for and consequences of their own sexual behaviour.

Focusing on risk as the mediating term between masculinity and poor public health, however, threatens to decontextualize gender from issues of sexuality and power relations more generally. Pleasure and desire are less often identified as mediating terms, and yet the power and privilege of men in their relations with women often translates into a sense of entitlement to express their desire and seek pleasure in their heterosexual relations with



women. Arguably, it is men's assertion of their entitlement to pleasure, and the demonstration of power that underpins this assertion, that help to explain the effects of masculinity on sexual health.

Pleasure and power are also important concepts for understanding the nature and health outcomes of sex between men. Parker's work in Brazil on the desires, practices and identities of men who have sex with men offers many valuable insights (Parker 1998). Clearly, the notion of risk-taking sexual behaviour as proof of masculinity is inadequate in contexts where men's choice of active and passive positions in anal sex both reflects and recasts the gendering of sexual and social roles that see men as dominant and women as submissive. Parker notes the way that men play with masculine-feminine 'boundaries' and also, in their transition in to gay identities, demarcate a gay masculinity that both confronts and reinforces more orthodox arrangements of power in terms of gender and sexuality.

The connections between health and gender inequality are most urgently expressed by the HIV epidemic. "The HIV epidemic is driven by men," commented Calle Almedal, a senior official with UNAIDS (cited in Foreman 1999: viii). Of the estimated 30 million people infected with HIV, about 17 million are men (Foreman 1999: 172). Ana Luisa Liguori, head of the MacArthur Foundations programs in Mexico points out that if there is a positive side to the AIDS crisis it is that "it provides proof that the very unequal relationship between men and women in poor countries is a danger for the human race" (cited in Foreman 1999: 62).

Given that male sexuality, and the cultural, economic and political contexts that shape its expression, is the main HIV risk factor for many women, efforts to integrate men into HIV prevention programmes are urgently required.

"Involving men more fully in HIV prevention work is essential if rates of HIV transmission are to be reduced. While such a move may not be universally popular, it seems necessary if we are to ensure that men take on greater responsibility for their own sexual and reproductive health, and that of their partners and families" (Rivers and Aggleton 1999: 18).

Successful HIV risk reduction programs have targeted men's behaviour in such diverse countries as Thailand, Great Britain, Australia and Senegal. In the Caribbean, the Gender Socialization and Life Skills Education project works with younger men to control HIV and reduce teen pregnancy and violence. In the Dominican Republic, a collection of NGOs have promoted the Avancemos ("Let's Move Ahead") programme to promote condom use among clients of sex workers. In Zimbabwe, teaching of life skills and responsibility issues has been incorporated into primary school curriculum by using HIV as an entry point.

Perhaps the most successful HIV risk-reduction programme has been in Uganda, where the rate of new infections of HIV has moved from being one of the highest in Africa to one of the lowest. Life Skills Education programs are run in every school, and *Straight Talk*, a magazine on sexual issues targeted to a young audience, is distributed free as a monthly insert in the country's state-owned daily newspaper. Significantly, these socialization approaches have been combined with efforts to mobilize community action on some of the social and cultural determinants of HIV vulnerability. Training programmes, such as *Stepping Stones*, have been used to initiate a dialogue between women and men at

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Development institutions can build on these examples if they recognize that involving men in work on gender equality and health must look beyond programmes targeted at men's behaviour. There is a need to initiate dialogues between women and men about the structures of inequality that determine the distribution of morbidity and mortality, and the role that the politics of masculinity plays in maintaining such structures.

The Workplace and Organizations

Changes in mainstream policies and resource allocations must reflect the interests and views of women as well as men. This mainstreaming strategy emphasizes systematic attention to gender equality issues and the experience of women in organizational practices, policies and programmes (UNDP 1998: ii).

Gender biases at the institutional level are deeply embedded in organizational cultures and practices, management systems and bureaucratic structures. 'Gender mainstreaming' is one method of overcoming institutional biases and involves not only a recognition of the gender implications of development programming and resource allocation, but also challenges an organization to reflect on the gendered processes that exist in its own operational structures.

UNDP, with an overriding mandate of poverty reduction, recognizes that sustainable poverty reduction requires gender equality. Consequently, through gender mainstreaming programmes and its men's initiatives, UNDP is taking steps in a self-reflective process meant to identify barriers to a more gender equitable working environment. In general, these types of self-reflective exercises may also identify other forms of inequitable power relations that are not based solely upon gender, such as those based upon class and race.

During a gender mainstreaming workshop in February 1999, a group of male UNDP staff was encouraged to discuss the role of men as advocates for gender equality and the advancement of women. This group soon evolved into the UN Men's Group for Gender Equality, which has identified a number of barriers to a more gender equitable organization:

- The organizational culture. There are barriers embedded in the organization such as sexism, male/female staff ratios, hierarchical structures in decision-making and prevailing attitudes that hold gender to be a 'women's issue'.
- The lack of ample opportunity and/or spaces for men to discuss gender equality with other men and women.
- The limited number of men participating in mainstreaming efforts. For example, the mainstreaming workshop had a six-to-one female-to-male participation ratio.

The UN Men's Group for Gender Equality subsequently disseminated a statement called "Gender Mainstreaming: A Men's Perspective" that outlined what it believes to be issues behind these barriers:

(1) Fear: Men are often fearful when first presented with a gender mainstreaming agenda. The advancement of women may be perceived as a threat to men's personal and professional status. This may be buttressed by anxiety about ridicule or compromised masculinity if one is widely perceived as an advocate of women's equality.



(2) Lack of experience: Men recruited by UNDP, and a majority of those already working for the organization, do not have experience — whether academic or professional — on related gender issues. Concurrently, it is frequently women who are recruited or appointed to handle gender concerns, regardless of their expertise. Therefore, any meaningful dialogue on gender equality and the role of men and women in gender mainstreaming could be viewed as disunited from a common agenda.

(3) Organizational culture: UNDP's organizational culture is a product of accumulated legacies, which can maintain a partition between men and women. There is an absence of incentive structures for staff to view gender equality as integral.

In its current capacity, the UN Men's Group for Gender Equality sponsors panels and seminars, and also facilitates a web site and electronic discussion list. By creating spaces for dialogue about gender issues, the institutional barriers to gender equality and possible solutions, the group seeks model how men can become involved in gender mainstreaming.

Practically, gender mainstreaming requires that gender be brought into the center of discussions about development, and not marginalized as a 'women's issue'. Organizations need not only to take a 'gendered lens' to its mission and practice; gender mainstreaming also requires internal organizational self-examination, and investigating the assumptions and criteria for administrative decision-making and human resource policies.

Men must be integrated fully in discussions regarding gender mainstreaming, lest their attitudes provide the chief obstacle to women's equality, organizationally and politically. Senior staff and managers can encourage and provide incentives for the promotion of gender equality. When the organizations charged with facilitating development adopt an effective inward/outward looking gender mainstreaming policy, they can begin to fulfill their commitments to gender equality, poverty alleviation and human rights.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Thinking about masculinities and men's roles in working towards gender equality is relatively new in the development field. This paper has presented a review of the meanings and uses of masculinity to catalyze thinking around these issues — to inspire new conversations and debate — and to offer a conceptual backdrop for practitioners engaged in work with men. To carry this work forward, continued efforts should be made to publicize and advocate for the importance of men's responsibilities and roles in work towards gender equality in international fora, local and national policy debates, and development programming. Making masculinities visible and men more conscious of gender as it affects their lives and those of women is a first step towards challenging gender inequalities.

Beyond the broadening and deepening of conversations concerning men, masculinity and gender equality, a second step in this undertaking is the facilitation of programming efforts. UN agencies and the UN Men's Group for Gender Equality can help practitioners talk to each other about conceptual starting points, assumptions and practical methodolo-



gies to be used on the ground. The clearinghouse of resources and methodological tools on the Men's Group web site (http://www.undp.org/gender/programmes/men/men_ge.html) can be expanded and linked with other such efforts. Through data collection efforts, context-specific information can be compiled and shared concerning gender norms and attitudes, community assets, socialization processes, and good practices that are replicable across geographical and ideological settings.

The overview of the 1995 Human Development Report articulated a vision of transformation:

One of the defining moments of the 20th century has been the relentless struggle for gender equality, led mostly by women, but supported by growing numbers of men. When this struggle finally succeeds — as it must — it will mark a great milestone in human progress. And along the way it will change most of today's premises for social, economic and political life.

To achieve this vision, numerous actors (men and women, communities, civil society organizations, development agencies and governments) should carry out transformative work at multiple points of entry in the development process. Some of this work is ongoing, but can be optimized with greater connections to actors at different levels, and a clearer understanding of the discourses of masculinity.

What follows are some suggested areas to help practitioners think about these issues more broadly and to identify spaces for intervention.

- **Gender mainstreaming and institutional cultures.** To start, gender mainstreaming means taking gender out of its enclave of 'women's work' and embedding it in a sustainable human development and human rights agenda supported by both men and women. Many organizations have some gender-specific policies in place, ranging from resource allocation and policies against sexual harassment, to hiring practices and maternal and paternal leave. However less apparent structures that perpetuate discrimination such as the 'blocks' of institutional cultures can be targeted for change. Initiatives such gender mainstreaming capacity building programmes and men's discussions groups can create spaces for consciousness raising and self-reflection that ultimately lead to stronger, more effective and equitable organizations.
- **Policymaking.** Beyond institutional policies, discussions around gender equality and discourses of masculinity can be brought to the table in local, regional and national policy debates. Such perspectives can deepen the understanding of the social content and outcomes of policies and highlight the need to coordinate the different levels of policy. For example, surveys measuring the social and economic costs of domestic violence can influence the design of more integrated policy frameworks at the local level (among communities, schools, law enforcement agencies and health care providers) as well as national level social, economic and labour policies.
- **Focusing on socialization and youth.** The family, educational systems and religious institutions play key roles in gender socialization, and can also act as agents of transformation. In the family, increased involvement by fathers can have powerful effects on both boys' and girls' socialization. In schools, attention to empower-



ing girls and efforts to pay attention to the ways in which male socialization steers boys away from intellectual pursuits are vital steps. In religious institutions, spiritual leaders can act as role models who value compassion and community building over more constraining gender roles.

- **Addressing issues of class and other modifiers of inequality.** Understanding different forms of inequality may help build bridges between men and women who recognize and are affected by similar patterns of disempowerment. Although gender can be a fundamental vehicle for determining power relations, gender works in conjunction with other power structures, such as those based upon differences in ethnicity, class and race. When we ask “What’s in it for men?” it becomes clear that gender equality is part of a broader social justice agenda that will benefit most men materially and all men psychologically/spiritually. Reflections on class and race, for example, also can be helpful in the context of the advancement of women by raising question such as “which women are we talking about”?
- **Sexuality.** It is difficult to think about gender inequality without also talking about sexuality, and the sex-gender system that mandates gender relations be grounded in a specified sexual relation (i.e., heterosexual relations). Being able to recognize diverse expressions of sexuality disrupts traditional views of the sex-gender system, and may be a good analytical tool for practitioners to think about the options and potentialities of gender relations.



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