



Sexual violence in South Africa and the role of the church

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The contract research on sexual violence in South Africa and the role of the church was conducted on behalf of Tearfund by the Unit for Religion and Development Research (URDR), a self-funded entity (with academic status) within the structure of the Department of Practical Theology and Missiology in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

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Executive summary

Introduction

The church is a popular and important civil society organisation in South Africa, with almost 80% of South Africans identifying themselves as Christian. Yet South Africa has a reputation for extremely high rates of sexual violence (SV). Research on the role of South African churches in relation to SV was commissioned by Tearfund, a UK-based Christian NGO. This project is seen as a continuation of SV research that Tearfund started in 2010. Data collection techniques included structured interview questionnaires, in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus groups and nominal groups, and research participants included community and church members and leaders as well as SV survivors.

Tearfund identified four communities to form part of the research project. These communities were picked based on their affiliation with Tearfund partner organisations. Furthermore, the communities represent different ethnic, language and geographical groups. The communities that took part were Bredasdorp and Du Noon in the Western Cape, and Pietermaritzburg and Durban in Kwazulu-Natal.

Bredasdorp has received much SV-related attention in 2013, with the brutal rape, mutilation and murder of Anene Booysen. Pietermaritzburg is the capital city of Kwazulu-Natal, a province in the eastern parts of South Africa. Research participants came from the wider Pietermaritzburg region. Durban is also in Kwazulu-Natal. It is the largest city in Kwazulu-Natal and the busiest port in Africa. The last community that was studied, namely Du Noon, is an informal settlement in the Table View area of Cape Town. Du Noon has the dubious status of being the place where xenophobic violence in Cape Town first broke out in May 2008 and it is currently the site of repeated violent service-delivery protests.

Key findings

SV is a serious problem in all of the communities, although it remains something that community members do not want to talk about and survivors do not want to disclose. Children and youth are increasingly targeted and many research participants see that as the most common form of SV. The vulnerability of youth and children is directly related to the poor parenting available in all of the communities, with parents not taking adequate emotional or physical care of their children. Parents and/or other family members are also perpetrating SV, with SV within the family having become normalised. It appears that a repetitive cycle has developed in families, with parents treating their children the way they were raised themselves, and neglect and/or abuse thus continuing. Furthermore, the same people tend to fall victim to SV repeatedly, even though they do not always engage in risky behaviours, which reflects on South African society as generally having become very violent and dangerous.

Research participants identified drug and alcohol abuse as the main cause of SV. Another key cause is poverty, as poor individuals choose partners based on their ability to provide financially, which creates unequal power relations. Others prostitute themselves and/or their children. Other key causes include: overcrowding, especially in RDP houses and shacks; culture, as culture and cultural perceptions are some of the main causes of gender inequality, which facilitates SV; misogynistic language and theology; and abuse of the grant system, with many young girls having babies in order to access child grants, but do not take care of the children.

In terms of addressing SV, very little is being done in any of the communities. One of main reasons for this is that the communities are fragmented and SV is thus not prioritised. There is no unified, concerted effort to address SV. There is also no culture of volunteerism, thus it is difficult to

motivate community members to become involved in voluntary initiatives that address the causes and consequences of SV.

According to the research participants, the first step in addressing SV is to launch various SV education initiatives, so that the entire community is aware of SV, its causes and consequences, as well as all the issues directly and indirectly related to SV. Secondly, the needs of SV survivors must be addressed, as they are currently receiving little or no support. Communities are judgemental and it is contributing to non-disclosure by survivors, which in turn facilitates SV.

In asking to discuss the church in relation to SV, it appears that the church is doing very little to address SV, not seeing SV as part of its mandate. Participants, which included church and community members, expect the church to take decided action against SV, through creating awareness and educating the community in various ways. Secondly, the church must get involved in communities in a hands-on way, especially through visiting people at their homes and through knowing what is going on in the community. Thirdly, the church must directly address the SV going on within the church and between church members and/or leaders and no longer try to conceal it. Fourthly, partnerships must be developed between different churches, the government and civil society, in order for SV to be comprehensively addressed. Fifthly, the church must support SV survivors and lastly, pray and work for the salvation of community members in general.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following framework is proposed for how the church should address SV. The expectation is that churches should serve all community members, not just members of their own churches.

Internally, the church must take the following steps:

- Resolve the SV taking place within the church
- First focus on training and educating church leaders on SV
- Publically take ownership of and responsibility for addressing SV in the community
- Address and resolve church fragmentation, so that churches can focus their energies on addressing serious social ills (such as SV)
- Change misogynistic church language and theology
- Create a culture of volunteerism
- Provide support for overworked and traumatised church leaders
- Mainstream gender within the church space
- Make SV a theological concern, not only a pastoral one

Externally (i.e. in the wider community) the church should:

- Serve the entire community, not only Christians and/or church members
- Educate community members on SV and all the issues related to it, in a gender- and culturally-sensitive manner
- Provide guidance to parents on parenting and directly intervene in cases of child neglect and/or abuse
- Have a special focus on children and youth, in order to keep them safe and provide the necessary guidance and support
- Boldly confront those facilitating and/or perpetrating SV
- Address the preponderance of SV within families through various family-intervention initiatives
- Support SV survivors on various levels
- Address drug and alcohol abuse

- Address poverty
- Partner with government, business and civil society in order to create a multi-level response to SV
- Do advocacy, especially in order to motivate government institutions to address SV
- Pray for SV to decrease and for the healing of SV survivors

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Approximately 51,8 million people live in South Africa, of whom 79,2% are African, 8,9% coloured, 8,9% white and 2,5% Indian. 51,3% of the population is female. Almost 80% of the population describe themselves as Christian (South African Government Information, 2013). Thus the church is a popular and important civil society organisation, present all over South Africa.

Yet South Africa has garnered a reputation for sexual violence (SV), so much so that some refer to the country as the 'rape capital' of the world (McAdam, 2009; News24, 2005). For example, one in three men interviewed in Gauteng admitted to having raped a woman (Tay, 2010), and one in every four men interviewed in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape stated that they had raped at least one woman (BBC, 2009). Children are also being sexually violated to an alarming degree. A study of the Thuthuzela rape survivor centres in South Africa showed that children between the ages of 12 and 17 are the most likely to be raped than any other age group (News24, 2011).

In the context of the popularity of the church and the seriousness of SV in South Africa, this study explores the role to date and the potential of the church in relation to SV.

1.2 Project background

Tearfund is a UK-based Christian NGO that has a specific focus on SV. In 2010 and 2011 it commissioned research on SV and the role of the church in four other African countries. It was used to great effect to mobilise churches, governments and civil society in those four countries. This project is seen as a continuation of that research.

Tearfund identified four communities to form part of the research project. These communities were picked based on their affiliation with Tearfund partner organisations. Furthermore, the communities represent different ethnic and language groups, with some being rural and some urban. This is so that the research to some extent is a reflection of South Africa, with its various ethnicities, languages and rural and urban population. The communities are Bredasdorp, Du Noon, Pietermaritzburg and Durban.



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1.3 Research methodology

The research methodology followed in South Africa is largely based on the one used elsewhere in Africa in 2010 and 2011. Yet changes were made to accommodate the fact that South Africa is not a country affected by armed conflict, unlike the previous research focus.

1.3.1 Research objectives

The research methodology was designed so that it fulfils the following objectives:

- Create an understanding of the current role of churches in addressing SV
- Indicate the activities currently undertaken by churches (ranging from prevention and service provision to care and advocacy)
- Give an overview of church members and the community in general's understanding and opinion of what the church is doing
- Provide an understanding of what church members, the community and community leaders expect from the church
- Give a practical set of recommendations for South African churches.

1.3.2 Research methodology

A qualitative approach is used in this study, as it allows a search for meaning and understanding and positions the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. As the study wants to investigate how people perceive the church's ability to deal with SV, such a qualitative approach is best. Furthermore, it allows for an inductive analysis process and a research product that gives an in-depth description of the phenomenon that is studied. Qualitative methods allow one to explore the experiences of respondents. Such an approach permits the researcher to adapt to the context and what is learnt as understanding of the situation grows.

The case study method is used in this study, as this is the research method most suitable. A case study is a form of empirical research where a contemporary phenomenon is investigated in depth and within its real-life context and the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not obvious. Furthermore case study research can handle a situation where there are many more variables of interest than data points. Thus it relies on multiple sources of evidence and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide the process of data collection and analysis. These contextual conditions are highly pertinent to the phenomenon under study and the case study method recognises this.

Ethical clearance for the research project was applied for and received from the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee: Human (Non-Health) in South Africa, where the researcher is based.

Data collection techniques

This is a qualitative study which examines people's perception of the church's involvement and abilities in dealing with SV in South Africa. The information was collected by conducting:

- *Structured interview questionnaires*: The structured interview questionnaire had twelve questions, was interviewer-administered, and done with 15 community members and church members of different churches
- *In-depth, semi-structured interviews with leaders*: Between ten and twelve leaders from different sectors (church, community, government, health, business, etc.) were interviewed.

Between five and seven questions were asked, but it was adapted to suit the particular context of the leader.

- *Focus groups*: In each community two focus groups were conducted, one with leaders and one with SV survivors. Ideally every group had between eight and twelve participants, but with the survivor groups there were often less.
- *Nominal groups*: In each community one nominal group was done with community members, focused on the question “What should the church be doing about SV?”

Selection technique

The researcher was assisted in each community by a partner organisation of Tearfund. While the selection technique was determined by the researcher, the partner organisations were responsible for identifying the actual participants (based on the prescribed selection technique).

The participants were to be as representative of the community as possible, thus the different ethnic groups, genders, age groups, and income-groups in the community had to be taken into account. When identifying leaders, it was important that they were leaders from all walks of life and not (for example) only church leaders. Furthermore, the community members need not all be church-going or Christian, and should also not all come from the same church.

In identifying SV survivors, it was decided that only female survivors should be invited to the focus group. While this invites bias in the data, it would be very difficult for the partner organisations to identify male survivors (due to non-disclosure) and challenging for female survivors to speak in front of men.

1.3.3 Research partners

In each of the communities the research infrastructure was prepared by a partner organisation of Tearfund, based on the brief provided by the researcher. The partner organisations also (at times) used their own partners in the community to help assist in identifying the needed participants. The Tearfund partner organisations were:

- HOPE Africa, in Bredasdorp
- The Warehouse, in Du Noon
- KZNCC, in Pietermaritzburg
- Diakonia, in Durban

The research participants trusted the Tearfund partner organisations and their partners. As the researcher was there with their blessing and assistance, the participants also trusted the researcher. This simplified the research process and created a situation in which participants were open and honest with the researcher.

Due to the sensitive nature of the research, counselling was available for all of participants. During the survivor focus group a counsellor was available in the adjoining room. All research participants could see a counsellor immediately after their session. If they did not wish to do so, the counsellor's name and contact information was given to them, should they wish to make contact at a later stage.

1.4 Overview of research report

Each of the four communities is discussed in a separate chapter. Such a chapter consists of a brief background of the community and the research done there. The data received through each of the data collection techniques are discussed separately. This is followed by a section highlighting the key themes emerging from the research in the particular community.

The last chapter discusses the key themes identified through the research done in the four communities, followed by a set of recommendations.

1.5 Terms and abbreviations used in the report

While all abbreviations that are used in the report will be explained when it is used for the first time, a short list of the most common abbreviations are provided below:

- AIC: African Independent Churches
- AIDS: Acquired Immunodeficiency Virus
- CSO: Civil Society Organisation
- FAS: Foetal Alcohol Syndrome
- FBO: Faith-based organisation
- HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- HIV PEP: HIV Post-exposure prophylaxis
- NGO: Non-governmental organisation
- RDP: Reconstruction and Development Programme
- SV: Sexual Violence
- SVAM: Sexual Violence Against Men
- SVAW: Sexual Violence Against Women
- VAM: Violence Against Men
- VAW: Violence Against Women

While an attempt is made to remain gender-neutral, the terms 'his' and 'her' are used when research participants themselves used such gender-specific terms. In general, SV survivors were seen by research participants as being female and SV perpetrators were seen as being male. While recognising that SV is not always so gender-specific, one must also recognise that this is mostly the case in South Africa. Thus, the research report will reflect this gender-bias in its language and examples.

The term 'SV survivor' is used to refer to people who have experienced SV and lived afterwards. The term 'SV victim' is used in cases where the target of the SV died because of the SV. In cases where there is a reference to both those that survived and those that died, the term 'victim' is used.

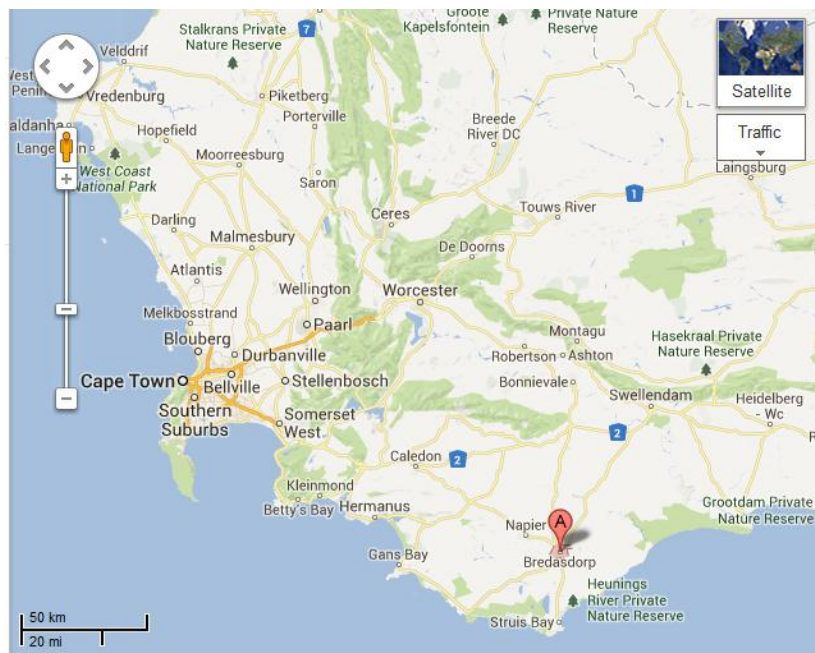
The real names of participants were not used, in order to protect their identities. In the cases where quotes are connected with a named participant, these names are all pseudonyms.

Chapter 2

Bredasdorp

2.1 Introduction

Bredasdorp is small town in the Southern Overberg, Western Cape and is part of the Cape Agulhas Local Municipality and Overberg District Municipality. It has a population of approximately 15 000, of which the majority is Afrikaans-speaking coloured people. It grabbed international headlines with the brutal rape, mutilation and murder of Anene Booysen, as 17 year-old coloured girl, in February 2013 (Davis, 2013).



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2.2 The research process in Bredasdorp

The majority of the research participants were Afrikaans-speaking coloured people. The research participants were as follows:

- 14 participants took part in the survey, of which ten were female and four were male. Eleven were coloured and three were white.
- Twelve Bredasdorp leaders took part in the research. Six were women and six were men. Three were government leaders, three were church leaders, two were NGO leaders, and four were from the education sector.
- Eight people took part in the focus group with leaders. Three were men and five were women. Two were Xhosa, one was white and five were coloured. Five were from government, two were NGO leaders and one was a church leader.
- Eight women took part in the survivor focus group. One was white and seven were coloured.
- 14 participants took part in the nominal group with community members. Ten were female and four were male. Twelve were coloured, one white and one Xhosa.

The nominal group could not be arranged on time and had to be postponed. It was done three weeks after the rest of the fieldwork, and done by an M&E specialist trained by the researcher.

2.3 Data collected

2.3.1 Survey with Community Members

The majority of the participants stated that men and women are not equal in their community. Men are seen and treated, and behave, as if they are more important. This is due to cultural and religious beliefs that men are superior, and despite the fact that women are more active in the community and usually the ones running the household. Two participants stated that men and women have become equal due to women's rights being recognised in South Africa, but that this equality is now leading to conflict in households. Men are not used to it, and especially when women earn more than men it causes conflict.

All, except for one man, felt that SV is a serious problem in their community. Despite the high rates of SV, survivors are not disclosing. Women do not disclose as they are dependent on the perpetrator and children do not disclose as they consider it normal.

SV outside of the home is mostly rape (as opposed to, for example, inappropriate touching). Inside of the home it is mostly a boyfriend/husband who is abusing his girlfriend/wife or an adult male figure who is abusing the children, and this takes on various forms, such as rape, inappropriate touching and forced participation in certain sexual acts. The participants identified several causes of SV:

- Women are generally seen as sex objects
- Poverty, as people choose a partner based on his/her ability to provide, which easily leads to abuse of either the partner or her children
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Rape has become normalised and is a status symbol for certain people
- Due to not receiving love and support in the family, young girls turn to older men, mistaking what he does for love
- Young children have babies for the grant money, then neglect the baby, which puts the baby at risk for abuse
- Women and girls bring it upon themselves, by being places where they should not be, doing things they should not do
- Children act on the example of their parents, treating women in abusive ways and allowing themselves to be abused

All except for one of the participants personally know someone who has been sexually violated. Two of the participants have been sexually violated themselves. Personally, the majority of the participants sympathised with survivors, stating that they need help and support. Only one participant responded by indirectly blaming survivors for what happened to them.

Approximately half of the participants felt that the community is supportive of survivors, while the other half said that the community blames survivors for what happened to them. Generally, though, SV gets little attention and with Anene Booysen it was the first time that the Bredasdorp community really discussed and responded to SV.

Generally participants did not know of any individuals or organisation that was doing something to address SV. It appears that there has been more activity since the Booysen case, but that what is being done is still ineffective and too little. A specific policewomen and some church leaders were mentioned (although it was not clear what they were doing), as well as Welfare, the municipality, the local Neighbourhood Watch, and the SAPS.

In assigning responsibility for addressing SV, the majority of the participants stated that it is the parents' responsibility. Children are not receiving the discipline and guidance they need, which leads

them to committing SV and/or putting themselves in situations where they can be sexually violated. Parents are also bad role-models, as they themselves are in abusive relationships. The government, churches and the community in general was also discussed as having a role to play. NGOs, the mayor, youth groups, the SAPS and the education system were mentioned.

Most participants felt that what is needed is that children must be raised properly and taught to respect and uphold moral values. Therefore the most-needed intervention is for parents to be trained on how to raise children that respect and uphold moral values. The second-most important intervention is to have activities for youth, so that they are occupied. Thirdly, the justice system needs to be fixed, so perpetrators are punished and it can act as a deterrent. Lastly, alcohol and drug abuse needs to be addressed.

The majority of the participants belonged to mainstream churches. Ten participants stated that their churches were doing nothing, two participants' churches had programmes that indirectly address SV, such as youth groups, and one church had a member who is a social worker and who volunteers her time.

The biggest need is for the church to be more involved in the community. At the moment it is only preaching, but it should be more involved, by going to people's houses and comforting those who are abusing someone. They must also directly speak about SV in church, and not just refer to it obliquely. The second-biggest need is for the church to be more involved with youth and in creating activities for youth. The church should be partnering with organisations and schools in order to do so.

2.3.2 Individual interviews with leaders

The leaders agreed that SV is a problem in Bredasdorp. Before the Booysen case it did not get as much attention, thus there has been a positive side-effect from what happened to her. Yet SV remains something that is not disclosed and reported. Survivors do not report, as the perpetrator is usually someone they know, often a family-member. Some survivors refuse to disclose as SV is such a taboo subject and they fear how people will see them if they know. In schools teachers now also tend to prefer it if pupils do not disclose, as they (as teachers) are usually mistreated by both the justice system and the families of the perpetrator and survivor. For example, families that prefer to hide the SV vilify the teacher, accusing him/her of influencing the pupil into telling lies. If a case does go to court, teachers are expected to carry all the costs of attending court sessions to testify, and they find the cross-examinations and accusations by the defence traumatic and sometimes humiliating.

The majority of the leaders feel that most SV is happening in families, and is not done by strangers as people tend to believe. It is the women and children within the home that are being sexually violated, and they are also the ones that tend to not report it, as they are financially dependent on the perpetrator. Fathers, step-fathers, and/or boyfriends of the mother sexually abuse the children, yet nothing is done. The leaders were generally most concerned about youth, as they felt that it is children and youth that most often fall victim to SV.

In discussing causes of SV, two main causes were identified, namely drug and alcohol abuse and parenting. Drugs and alcohol are conducive to SV, as high or intoxicated people easily fall victim or perpetrate SV, but also as those desperate for alcohol or drugs can easily fall victim to SV in an attempt to get a fix.

Bad parenting is another key reason. Parents, especially fathers, are absent and most mothers do not know how to discipline. Parents do not provide the needed care and guidance and children grow up without a sense of worth or belonging, which drives them to experiment in an attempt to find it.

Furthermore, children learn from what they see with their parents. Thus, when parents are in an abusive relationship they learn that this is how it should be done, as one leader explained: “They learn that if Dad hits Mom, then things happen.” Especially in the homes of parents who drink the children are left unsupervised and are targeted by SV perpetrators.

A third cause is the fact that houses are too small. Especially in the RDP houses everyone sleeps in the same room. Parents have sex in the same room as their children, children sleep next to family members who may abuse them, and due to the lack of space the children spend much of their time outside, unsupervised.

Generally, sex is not understood. People do not like to talk about it and children and youth are not educated about it, thus they experiment with sex without realising the consequences. Other causes that were identified was unemployment, poverty, a general disrespect for women, the abuse of the child grant system, and the fact that children and youth do not have activities or safe spaces where they can spend their free time.

Generally the leaders felt that not that much is being done about SV. Four leaders said the SAPS is addressing SV, but that they are limited by the fact that they can only do something should the survivor make a case. They also have a victim empowerment programme and do talks with children. Generally, though, it is felt that the SAPS is not doing enough. Welfare is doing good work, but it is also not enough, as they have limited resources. The municipality are doing some practical things, such as putting lights up in areas that have a high crime rate and deforesting popular paths. The Neighbourhood Watch, started after Anene Booysen died, is now also doing much to keep people safe through their patrolling of neighbourhoods. Four organisations/programmes, namely Education Connection, Boys2Men, the ACVV, and Hands On, were also mentioned.

Approximately half of the leaders mentioned churches that are doing something about SV, but only one said that churches are doing much. Amongst the various churches in Bredasdorp the following is being provided: an education programme, counselling, praying, preaching on the importance of not walking alone, and home visits. Two specific initiatives (by two different churches) have proven to have quite an impact. One church designed a pledge to be signed by men. Through signing it they committed themselves to not abusing their partners or children. They also give another person, such as a friend or pastor, the right to intervene should they become abusive. This pledge is supposed to be displayed in a prominent place in the home, as a reminder to the man, and gives the family the right to disclose to the identified person, should he become abusive.

Another intervention was done during Lent. The pastor made a general call during the service, not wanting to put anyone on the spot, by calling “everyone with hurt” to come to the front and be anointed. He was totally overwhelmed by the amount of people who came to the front. These same people were offered pastoral care afterwards. The service provided the first opportunity for them to disclose and gave him as a pastor an opening to work with them afterwards. Many of those individuals are now receiving counselling.

Many of the leaders were critical of the church. One leader stated that “churches are doing less than nothing”, and that the reaction to the Booysen case was the exception, rather than the rule. Furthermore, churches in Bredasdorp tend to be very fragmented. Few church members will disclose SV to their pastors, even if they are invited to do so. Yet church leaders also find it difficult to care adequately for members, as they themselves are overworked.

Their expectation of the church is that it should get practically involved in, directly and indirectly, addressing SV. It should focus less on salvation and more on assisting people in addressing the realities they face here on earth. In the words of one church leader, “(the c)hurch easily does theology, but they don’t do grassroots” and this should change. Scripture should be used in such a

way that it speaks to the realities and needs of people. A key expectation is that church leaders should go to people's homes if there are problems, and not wait until they are asked. If there is sexual abuse in someone's home, church leaders should not be afraid to step in and talk to the perpetrator and/or survivor. Those who need help are too scared or demoralised to come to them. Church leaders must also work with parents, to help them in raising their children.

Two leaders felt strongly about the fact that a SV survivor can only truly heal through God. Therefore it is very important that the church should support and care for survivors. This should be a long-term commitment. One way to enable churches to do this properly is to train church members in counselling skills. Church leaders often do not have the time to properly pastorally care for everyone who needs it. Thus church members should be equipped to serve and care for each other. Furthermore, the church should start speaking about sex, sexual issues and SV. In the words of one leader, "the church must make sex their business."

Other suggestions that were made was that the church should partner with other churches and with organisations in order to address SV, that they should have men-focused programmes, that it must address the drug and alcohol problem, and that leaders must be an example.

The leaders who discussed the government tended to be critical. They feel that the laws the government has passed, such as lowering the age for legal sex, is contributing to SV, and outlawing corporal punishment has made it difficult for parents to discipline their children, which is indirectly contributing to SV. Currently there does not seem to be much of a relationship between the government and the church when it comes to addressing SV.

Some general practical suggestions for addressing SV were made. SV interventions should focus on men as well, since SVAM is a reality (although much hidden). Secondly, youth-focused programmes are important and foreigners, and not just South Africans, should be targeted in all of the SV interventions. Thirdly, corporal punishment should be brought back, so that children and youth can learn the value of discipline. Fourthly, the abusing of the child grant system must be stopped. Many young pregnant girls drink alcohol while pregnant in order to have a foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) baby, with the bigger grant that results. Lastly, paydays should be moved to Tuesdays and Wednesdays (instead of Fridays), so that people do not have two free days in which to spend all of their money on alcohol.

2.3.3 Leader Focus Group

The group unanimously agreed that SV is a very serious problem in Bredasdorp. While Anene Booysen drew attention to the matter, it has been on-going for a long time and many such serious cases happen, in Bredasdorp and all over South Africa. As a male leader explained:

And that is... my experience of Bredasdorp and people – youth - that I work with and it's occurring in every community in South Africa and we are beyond a pandemic, we are beyond a state of emergency, we are in some very bad place.

Many causes were identified, of which the nature of parenting was deemed the most critical. Parents are to a large extent absent. They do not instil the right values, do not guide and support their children, and mostly have no real relationship with their children. This leaves children vulnerable, literally through being unsupervised for large parts of the day as both parents work, and figuratively, for having no guidance to withstand the temptations and dangers of modern society.

The issue of absent fathers was discussed extensively. Fathers play a critical role in the development of healthy gender constructs in both boys and girls. Girls learn how to relate to men through their relationship to their fathers (and/or other key male figures) and boys learn how to relate to women

through the example of their fathers (and/or other key male fathers). Yet fathers are absent, literally or figuratively.

This problem of parents and parenting is exacerbated by the fact that children are having children. Children as young as twelve or fourteen are having children, which leads to them missing out on an important part of their youth and normal developmental phases. As a female church leader explained:

It is almost like all hell has broken lose. Everyone can just have a baby even though they are young, and it is painful, it is hurtful because that young lady or young son or boy is missing out on the true enjoyment of being just a youth and by the time they get to their mid-twenties, or early thirties, they then realise and then they start understanding, 'we missed out.'

These young parents do not realise the responsibility of parenting, demanding to still have all the freedoms of their peers. Thus they leave their babies to be cared for by others, which leads to another generation growing up without parental authority and presence, and so the destructive cycle continues. This has resulted, according to the leaders, in a generation that has no respect – for themselves or for others – and no discipline. Children are allowed all the freedoms they demand and there is a total lack of discipline.

Lack of intergenerational respect is exacerbated by the fact that adults, and not their peers, are often the ones abusing and sexually violating youth and children. The leaders emphasised that SV within families is rife, with families not allowing the victim to disclose or seek help, as a female leader explained:

...cases are known to us where fathers or stepfathers abuse their stepdaughters or their own daughters and when the mother is informed about it, then she is totally ignorant of the problem, she denies it, 'the child is not telling the truth.'

Families hide SV as a way to protect the family name, as sex and SV is still such taboo subjects. But it is also denied as the perpetrator is often the breadwinner. A mother would then refuse to acknowledge, or deny, that her child is being sexually violated by the perpetrator. In some cases it is the child that refuses to report, as he/she knows the family is dependent on the perpetrator. Poverty is thus a cause of people's refusal to disclose SV. It also facilitates SV, with many women and girls choosing partners that can financially provide for them. This creates unequal power within the relationship, which is often taken advantage of by the male, as a male youth leader explained:

...if for instance they are choosing the boyfriend or stuff like that, they are choosing someone who is like having all the money and stuff like that and that is the problem because most of the time that person might be (bad for them) and then that is where the relationship kind of, the abuse comes from, because always have their say and much controlling than the other counterpart, ja.

Another cause is the government housing. RDP-houses have only one or two bedrooms and almost always also house extended family and friends. This overcrowding has several consequences. There is no privacy. Parents have sex while children are sleeping in the same room, and children sleep directly next to adults or children of the opposite sex, which facilitates SV.

Women are causing SV by going to places where they should not be present, specifically shebeens. There they are easily targeted. Should they refuse sex, their drinks are spiked. Afterwards, should they complain, everyone present in the shebeen will attest to the fact that she danced and drank with the perpetrator for the whole evening and that it was thus consensual. A further cause is a

male sense of entitlement to sex. Many men believe that if a woman is his girlfriend or wife, she has to agree with him at all times and he is entitled to sex with her, at any time. Violence results if she does not comply.

In addressing both the causes and consequences of SV, the leaders had many suggestions. Firstly, the need for counselling, for both men and women, was reiterated. While there are organisations and institutions offering counselling services, these are overworked and cannot meet the need. Furthermore, they are often only women-friendly, so boys and men find it difficult to approach these institutions.

A second, related need is for training. Community (and church) members and leaders need to be trained on how to respond to SV and SV survivors. Many people are approached by survivors needing support, but they have no idea how to help them. Basic training and education on SV, but also on gender equality and healthy gender and sexual relations is needed, especially for youth.

Practical suggestions were offered to meet these needs. One is a neighbourhood watch, which is currently active in Bredasdorp. Started by church leaders and fully manned by volunteers, it patrols the streets over weekends between 9pm and 3am, ordering children and youth back home and escorting intoxicated or high individuals back home. Another solution would be allocating permanent facilities to an aftercare centre. All children whose parents work would then stay at the centre until their parents return home, thus ensuring that they are safe and cared for, a male leader argued:

...a place like that when parents are at work, (kids) go straight from, from school to that place, it is safe, they can play, they do their homework, we have got cooking for them... there are games etcetera, etcetera.

Leaders also deemed it important that those who volunteer should put effort into bringing more people to take part in interventions. It tends to be just the same people present and volunteering at all community and church initiatives. This, some leaders argued, is because a culture of volunteerism is lacking in Bredasdorp. People will only do something if they are paid for it. They also do not volunteer information and support to the services that are available. It is thus difficult for (for example) community workers to identify the problems and needs in the community, for community members will not disclose it.

Lastly, they suggested that support structures should be put in place in every community ward. In each ward there should be people identified (and not the same person) to whom men, women, youth and children can go should they need help. Thus a person can approach and be helped by someone of an age and gender to which they can relate.

Churches were discussed in some depth. Some churches and some church leaders are more active on SV than others. Churches were accused of only preaching the Gospel, but not practically addressing the needs and realities of people. Also, they don't want to preach on such 'sensitive' issues such as SV, argued a male leader:

...other reverends or other churches they just check their scriptures that Jesus died, what, what, finish and klaar ... They rather say like we are praying for those hospital, praying for those who were in prisons, but they do not come, why is the person in prison, why is the person in hospital they don't come to that, to that point...

Furthermore, the church does not take the initiative in addressing SV. The leaders felt that, with the Booysen case, it was government and politicians taking on the issue, but never the church. Only recently have churches in Bredasdorp organised a few initiatives, such as a march. Church leaders

also tend not to turn up when invited to stakeholder meetings. Governmental leaders complained that they invite church leaders, but that they do not attend, or if they do, such a junior leader is sent that no decisions or commitments can be made.

Yet with the need for counselling in the community, the church is the perfect organisation to offer such support. At the same time it needs to be equipped to do so, a male leader (who is not a Christian) explained:

So I think as a community we need to start looking at how we equip people in churches and other civil society organizations to be able to offer that counselling. If we are going to say it is up to social workers or psychologists, it is not ever going to happen, because there are too few of them and we need to attend to this problem otherwise we are just storing up the trauma on top of trauma on top of trauma, then the man bursts. Maybe it happens with women, we have had a woman stabbing a man recently. You just burst and then the violence just flows out of that and we have to get in at the point before the burst and I think churches are the right organizations to be able to do that. So I would like to see us being able to equip our churches to respond to that more effectively.

2.3.4 Survivor Focus Group

In discussing their experiences of support after being sexually violated, it became clear that the survivors have been abandoned by their families, friends, community and the official support structures that should be providing for them. Only two survivors received counselling. One was able to see a psychologist for six months, while the other received counselling from her pastor in the previous year. Yet this was almost three decades after she had experienced SV, as she was sexually violated over a long period of time while she was a child.

Only two survivors had a supportive family member, one stating that her mother had supported her from the start, while the other had a mother (who lived far away) who sent her food. The rest of the survivors' families were not only not supportive, they actively rejected them. One survivor's sister forbid her to contact the pastor when she disclosed her need to speak to him about the SV.

The fact that their mothers did not believe them and/or did not support them was a bitter issue for all of the survivors (whose mothers did not believe them). One survivor was sexually violated for years by her stepfather, yet her mother continued to deny it. Not having any family who support/ed them made the survivors feel incredibly lonely and abandoned and they found (and still find) it hard to continue life: "...there is no-one who wants to listen to me, so I just go, with this that I experienced, I just live in it, there is no solution or help, it seems to me." Yet those who do offer support at times also blame the survivor. One survivor was placed with her grandmother due to being sexually violated by her stepfather. To this day her grandmother blames her for that, stating that she ruined her (the grandmother's) life by doing so.

Community members are also unsupportive. They are accused of enjoying the pain and humiliation that the survivor experiences, especially those that are repeated victims of domestic violence. The community gossips and refuses to help, as one survivor explained in her story:

...and what I hate about neighbours, your neighbours want you to look the way you do, they enjoy it, instead of seeing how they can help, they enjoy it. They stand in their doorways, they look at you and you feel embarrassed.

The official support structures are failing survivors. The two survivors who have been most extensively involved with these structures (including Welfare, SAPS, local and provincial courts) display a strong sense of having been used and abused by the system. All of the survivors were scathing in condemning the SAPS. Police officers disbelieve survivors when they report their

experiences and make it a difficult and long process to open a case. The official forms and procedures are difficult to follow if one has just been through such a traumatic experience, yet one receives no support in doing so. Police officers are also siding with the accused, in an attempt to get cases dropped. One survivor told the story of how she was intimidated by her abusive boyfriend into dropping the case at the courthouse. This intimidation occurred in front of the police officer in charge of the case, who never intervened.

The Welfare system is failing survivors. Survivors have to go to Welfare offices to get help, yet after being sexually violated they are usually physically very weak and hurting. They feel that those working for the welfare system do so only for the salary and have no real heart for those they are supposed to serve. Thus they do not try and accommodate the difficult realities these women face. The justice system is also failing. One survivor, finally brave enough to go to get an interdict against her physically abusive husband, arrived at the courthouse to find they had run out of the forms she needed to complete. Perpetrators are also not being punished properly. On survivor's stepfather sexually violated her for eight years. When it came before the court, he only received a suspended sentence of five years. Three days after those five years passed, he raped his biological daughter. He again received a suspended sentence of five years. He also raped a neighbour's daughter, but that case never even made it to the court. The only survivor whose perpetrator was actually sent to prison worked for the police at the time she was raped. The police assisted her extensively in prosecuting the case and one wonders whether it played a role in the sentence he received.

The church is not supporting SV survivors. One survivor was in tears, saying that what she really needed was for her pastor to help her, but that he never came near her. Only one survivor has been counselled and supported by a pastor, whom she praised for helping her finally deal with the sexual abuse she experienced as a child. For the rest church leaders have been figures who knew what had happened but never even spoke to them. Some church leaders are even sexually victimising them after hearing what had happened. One survivor told of a church leader offering support and asking for her telephone number after hearing what happened to her, only to phone her late at night to make suggestions of a sexual nature.

The issue of repeated victimisation was one that was raised throughout the session. All of the survivors had been sexually violated by different people at different times and in different contexts. They do not understand why this is happening to them. As one survivor explained:

From the time my mother met him, I was five years old, then he started to sexually molest me. Even the gardener did it... Even he did it, and everyone just did it, it was right, I thought it was right, because my stepdad does it... But there was that scar, it is as if the boys... they took their chances and tried, so it feels as if the scar was there, everyone could see it... you get that label, I call it a label, because you feel like you have the label, because all men try it with you, you know, it is as if it is written on your head, you know, it felt like that to me.

Apart from those who are/were in abusive long-term relationships, others have had experiences of perpetrators coming back to sexually violate them again, especially if they had made a case against the person. They have also experienced harassing phone calls, and friends of the perpetrator sent to scare or kill them. The survivors struggle to understand why this was/is repeatedly happening to them. One suggested that they have lost the ability to understand the difference between cruelty and love and that they cannot detect the truth anymore, thus they constantly choose abusive men. With many of the survivors their children have also been sexually violated.

One of the consequences of receiving no or little support, is that some survivors regret ever disclosing what happened to them. The way they have been treated by those to whom they had disclosed has left them hurt and wanting to shun all contact with others. Another consequence is abortion. One survivor told of the heart-wrenching decision to abort a child conceived out of rape.

She already had six children, for whom she was the sole provider. Thus she decided to abort it, although abortion was always something she had been against. Because of having the abortion she faced further rejection. Church leaders condemned her, stating that she will never be saved and close friends ended their friendship, saying that she was 'below' them for doing such a thing. Going through the decision-making process was incredibly difficult and it made her angry:

I sat on the carpet in the room, I was talking to the Lord, I said to him "You know why I feel like this, You know that, if I am going to carry this child, I am going to have to be pregnant for nine months, nobody is going to be there for my children, they are still under-aged, who is going to work for them, who is going to support them, I mean mentally and financially. I cannot do this because of a man who ran away from his responsibilities." I must now put my children through hell because of a baby that I myself do not want either.

Many of the survivors turned to destructive ways of trying to escape the hurt of what had happened to them. Many turned, and still turn, to alcohol as a way to forget. Others turned to partying and casual sex with random men. Those that were sexually violated by parental figures while they were children went into abusive relationships with older men. All of these were ways of coping with what had happened.

Many of the survivors have found healing to a bigger or lesser extent. One survivor, after receiving extensive counselling from her pastor, has forgiven her rapist. Yet, she also admits, it had been almost three decades since the SV had happened. She states that it is only God that gave her the ability to forgive, be healed, and move on. She has also found healing and hope in the fact that she is now able to help others that have gone through the same experience.

Most survivors directly or indirectly referred to feelings of suicide. In explaining what it is that helped them to continue, it is clear that their children were and are their driving force. At the same time, it is also their children that put them at risk. In trying to provide and care for children in challenging circumstances, some had done sexual deeds in return for money. Others did not disclose SV, and continued living with the perpetrator, in order not to shame their children.

One of the biggest needs the survivors communicated was for someone to truly journey with them. They have had people offering once-off support, such as food, or a counsellor listening to them once. But they all have a need for someone who will always be there for them emotionally. The church has not offered such support. All of the survivors experienced the church as a place that supports the perpetrator, rather than the victim. One told of a church that paid the bail of the man who raped the little girl living close to her. Church leaders and members do not want to get involved in assisting SV survivors or anything related to it. What they do do is woefully inadequate. Two survivors described food parcels they received from two churches. In both cases there was nothing edible included. One survivor has now rejected all churches, stating that church members were the ones who hurt you the most. Yet others were quick to point out that although it is true, not all church members are like that. One survivor, while explaining the inadequacies of the church, explained why it is so worrying:

The church is an anchor for the community, it is their refuge, it is actually the only refuge in the world that we are now living in, and if the church have such things going on, the pastor sits on the internet the whole night and looks at pornography, and Sunday morning he preaches so he gets his salary, who will then be interested in the church, because I mean, there are no examples.

2.3.5 Community member nominal group

The following ideas for how the church should address SV were offered by the group:

1. Church needs to first address the issues of sexual violence within its own constitution
2. Sense of belonging missing
3. More empowerment (of what?)
4. Define the concept of sexual violence to our lay people
5. Define who is the church
6. Address issues of moral values and abuse of alcohol, drugs etc.
7. Support groups for people recovering from drug and alcohol abuse
8. Church need to advocate and lobby government for policies and laws to address issues
9. Address the many freedoms allowed by the government
10. Address the leadership and good governance of government
11. Teach respect and transformation
12. Reconstruction of family fibre and parental guidance
13. Support group for parents. Teaching understanding of circle of courage and life cycle
14. Integration with other churches to heal the community
15. Create a caring community and reach out to the needy
16. Role models in community
17. Voice of injustices in community
18. Dress code
19. Manners
20. Teach respect of women and respect of your body
21. Address the replacement of material goods for the absence of attention and love
22. GBV should be an open topic in the church and continuous
23. Support for men on how to deal with aggression in a more positive way
24. Parents need to set an example
25. An educated community is a healthy community
26. Integrated community that stands together and has a sense of *ubuntu*
27. Church can have oversight of schools
28. Address the issue of child grant and other support grants from government
29. More visibility of the church in community

After two rounds of voting, the following ideas received the most votes:

- #1: Church need to advocate and lobby government for policies and laws to address issues
- #2: Teach respect and transformation
- #3: Church needs to first address the issues of sexual violence within its own constitution
- #4: Integration with other churches to heal the community
- #5: Teach respect of women and respect of your body

2.4 Key findings

The way children are treated and raised by their **parents** is seen as the primary reason for SV being such a serious issue in Bredasdorp. Parents are absent, due to not caring for and loving their children, due to having to work, or due to being intoxicated or high. Parents do not teach their children morals and values, nor do they discipline them. They are often in abusive relationship, which normalised abuse and gender inequality. Lastly, some parents are themselves sexually violating their own children.

Thus parents need to be assisted, and to some extent forced, to raise their children better. Parenting workshops and trainings are needed. Community and church leaders also need to step in where parents are neglecting or abusing their children, either by reprimanding the parents or by themselves taking over the parenting role-model role.

Research participants see **youth** as being the victims of SV most often. This is almost entirely blamed on their parents. Due to the way they are being raised, youth are unsupervised, which leads to them engaging in high-risk activities. Due to not receiving love from their parents they (especially girls), will go into any relationship where love is professed, yet they have no real idea of what love is. Thus they enter abusive relationships, often due to having had their parents model such relationship and they thus consider it as normal. Furthermore, many youth abuse the grant system, having children so they can collect the grant money, in an attempt to provide for themselves. This perpetuates the cycle of parental neglect and abuse, as they then do not take care of their children.

Thus interventions targeting youth are needed. Spaces and activities where youth can safely spend their free time is a great need. Furthermore, workshops and trainings on sex, SV, gender equality, healthy relationships, etc. is needed, to counter the bad examples and role-models they have had in their lives.

In Bredasdorp the SV is happening **within the family**. While there are cases of stranger-rape, sexual abuse by a close relative, such as a husband, stepfather or an uncle, is more common. In cases where multiple families are living in one house, the risk for abuse is even higher.

Poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, and overcrowding were identified as three of the main causes of SV. **Poverty** often leads to SV, but also to non-disclosure. Many of those who are poor will enter into a relationship simply because the partner is able to provide financially. This creates an unequal power dynamic within the relationship, often resulting in SV. At the same time, many victims refuse to disclose SV, as they are financially dependent on the perpetrator. Mothers may even refuse to acknowledge the abuse of their children, as the perpetrator is providing for the whole family. The high rate of unemployment contributes to this situation, as victims of SV are unable to find work so they can provide for themselves and thus leave abusive relationships.

The **drug and alcohol abuse** in Bredasdorp is a serious concern. It is both a cause and a consequence of SV. Lots of SV is committed while the perpetrator and/or victim are high or intoxicated. Addicted individuals can also fall victim to SV in an attempt to find the money to pay for drugs or alcohol. Another cause of SV is the governmental **RDP houses**, which have one or two bedrooms. This results in those in the house having little or no privacy, especially if more than one family is living together. Parents have sex with their children sleeping in the same room, often exposing children to sex before they are of an age to properly understand it. Children might even be forced to leave the house at night so that the parents can have sex, putting them at risk for abuse while outside. Children share beds with siblings, extended family members and/or acquaintances that have been given board. This often leads to the sexual abuse of children.

Repeated victimisation happens to SV survivors. Almost all of the SV survivors who took part in the research have had multiple experiences of SV, by different perpetrators, in different settings and at different stages in their lives. They themselves cannot understand why it keeps on happening to them.

Little is being done in Bredasdorp to prevent SV or address its consequences. Churches, government, and civil society all fail to provide the interventions and support that are needed and the research participants feel as if nothing is being done to address a problem that is growing bigger. SV survivors' experiences of getting no support – not from family, the community, the church, or governmental support structures – confirm this. The main needs of are for counselling and for SV education and training of all people. The community and the church needs to be equipped so it can be able to address SV.

The church's role is currently negligible, but should be extensive. From the research it is clear that the church is not doing enough. Some individual churches have small projects running, but there is

not united push to address SV. The main things that is expected of the church is that it must become hands-on involved in the issue. It must get involved in the community, go to people's houses, reprimand perpetrators, counsel survivors, and speak, preach and train about sex and SV. Church leaders and members must be willing to really journey with others. At the moment the church is experienced as only concerning itself with 'higher' matters, such as salvation, and not with the dirty realities that its members are facing.

Furthermore, there is an expectation that the church should serve and assist the entire community, not just its own members. It will need to first sort itself out, though, addressing the SV perpetrated by its own members and leaders. It cannot speak with authority if it does not do so. While the participants generally did not see the church and government as currently working together on any level, they did recommend that the church should play a strong advocacy role in lobbying the government to install policies and laws that address SV.

Chapter 3

Pietermaritzburg

3.1 Introduction

Pietermaritzburg is the capital city of Kwazulu-Natal, a province in the eastern parts of South Africa. It has approximately 600 000 residents and is part of the Msunduzi local municipality (Msunduzi, 2013). Participants came from the wider Pietermaritzburg region (called the Midlands Region), which consists of seven municipalities more than four million people. Approximately 70% of these are African.



3.2 The research process in Pietermaritzburg

The majority of the research participants in Pietermaritzburg were Zulu. They came from all seven of the municipal districts in the Midlands region. The research participants were as follows:

- 16 survey participants, of which 11 were male and five were female. All were Zulu.
- 10 leaders took part in the individual leader interviews. Six were women and four were men. One was white and the rest were Zulu.
- 19 people took part in the leader focus group. Eight were men, eleven were women, and everyone was Zulu and church leaders.
- Five women took part in the survivor focus group. All were Zulu.
- 17 people took part in the nominal group with community members. Six were women and eleven men. 13 were Zulu, one Nigerian, and three Ghanaian.

3.3 Data collected

3.3.1 Survey with community members

The majority of the survey participants stated that men and women are not equal within their community. Though there is supposed to be equality, according to South African law, men still have more power and women are looked down upon and taken advantage of. The equality laws are causing some problems as well, as some men are resentful of it and some women abuse it.

Nine of the 17 participants felt that SV is a very serious problem in their community, while three felt that it is not serious. The most common form of SV is children and youth being sexually violated by an adult, who is a parent, an older family member, or an acquaintance. Rape is the most common form of SV. Another context where SV is common is within intimate relationships where the couple are not married but have been together for a long time. Causes of SV are:

- Children left unsupervised, which puts them at risk
- Children under the care of someone who is not their biological parent
- The perpetrator being high or intoxicated
- People vulnerable due to being uneducated and poor
- SV being common within the family
- Beliefs, such as that having sex with a virgin will cure HIV

Twelve of the participants personally know someone who has been sexually violated. Two participants displayed a judgemental attitude towards survivors, with one indirectly stating that female survivors are to blame as they drink alcohol, while the other was of the opinion that victims are uneducated and thus fall prey to SV. The rest of the participants displayed a sympathetic attitude, with two having a strong sense of having to help and assist survivors. Survivors are seen as traumatised, angry, having low self-esteem, paranoid, insecure, unable to trust others, disease-ridden, psychologically unsound and in need of counselling.

Participants were split evenly between seeing the community as supportive or unsupportive of SV survivors. Some of those seeing the community as supportive belong to communities that have taken up a form of vigilante justice. Those participants that see the community as unsupportive stated that they gossip and take advantage of survivors, or at best do not help them in any way.

Five of the participants stated that nothing is being done by anyone to address SV. The rest were able to mention one or two organisations, but communicated a strong sense of it being small initiative(s) not able to address the problem in its entirety. The organisations that were mentioned were Thembeni, Lifeline, The Haven, FAMSA, Isipepele, Rape Crisis Centre, and a policewoman at the local SAPS station. Two participants mentioned churches.

In discussing who has the major responsibility to address SV, four participants said that it is the church, as it has authority over most people. Four participants said that the whole community has the responsibility, as the crime comes from the community itself. Thus the community must assist the government in addressing the problem. Two participants stated that men are most responsible, since they are the ones perpetrating SV. Other responsible parties are parents, NGOs, and the government. One participant emphasised the importance of a multi-level response, especially between churches and government.

In discussing what should be done to end SV, the majority of the participants emphasised the importance of an effective judicial system and of perpetrators being harshly punished. With the current system being so ineffective and corrupt, people believe they can do SV with impunity. Another way is through educating and training all people on SV and general human rights. There must be support for SV survivors, such as counselling and support groups. Other suggestions include

ensuring community unity, resolving the drug and alcohol abuse problem, addressing unemployment, and getting people to go to church and commit to Christ.

All of the participants belonged to a church and only three belonged to mainline churches. Only five said that their church is doing nothing to address SV. Most of the churches offer counselling, while others talk about SV, has a NGO focused on addressing SV and its consequences, has a shelter for abused women, gives practical support to survivors (such as food), or refer survivors to a specific policewoman. In highlighting where the church is lacking, there is a general feeling that the church does not take SV seriously. It does not apply the Bible to the issue, it does not preach or teach about SV crimes, and it generally does not take women's issues seriously.

In discussing what the church should be doing, the biggest role is to bring awareness of and education on SV, through campaigns, teaching and preaching. Such awareness and training should include SV causes, consequences and prevention. Secondly, the church should support survivors, especially through counselling and support groups. Thirdly, the church must pray. Fourthly, the church must launch programmes and projects to address the issue. The key thing is that the church should go over into action and not just talk about taking action.

3.3.2 Individual leader interviews

While the majority of the leaders stated that SV is a very serious problem in their community, two (female church leaders) stated that it is not and that they have no SV cases in their churches. One leaders stated that it is not such a big problem, that it is not something new, and that it is happening all over South Africa and in other countries too.

There are various reasons why SV survivors are not disclosing. Firstly, survivors are often financially dependent on the perpetrator and thus unable to disclose. Secondly, survivors do not want to shame the family name, either by admitting that it happened to them or because the perpetrator is from their family. Thirdly, as there is little or no support available to survivors, there is no motivation for them to disclose. Fourthly, the questions asked by the SAPS when you report a case are inappropriate and humiliating, thus a survivor won't report for they do not want to go through that. Lastly, in rural areas the case is rather taken to rural court, with it being considered resolved if the perpetrator pays a goat or cow to the family of the survivor. In some cases the perpetrator and survivor are even forced to marry.

To the leaders it appears as if it is young children and youth that are targeted most often. Yet even old women are sexually violated, with a few recent cases drawing much media attention. Few mentions of SVAM were made, and it is considered uncommon. In discussing SV causes the leaders identified parenting and the way children are raised as the main cause of SV. Father figures are absent and/or children are brought up without discipline, respect and moral values, and socialised into demanding and taking whatever they want. The family unit is breaking apart, with parents divorcing (or never getting married) and having multiple partners, and the children in the house having different parents. Sex becomes trivialised and especially boys in relationships with older women come to disrespect women in general.

Another central cause is a general disrespect for women and women's rights, which often has its basis in cultural beliefs. People ignore basic human rights and gender inequality continues. Other causes are drug and alcohol abuse, poverty, and an ineffective and corrupt judicial system.

There are some organisations and/or institutions that are doing something to address SV, but these are small, each focusing only on its own activity and/or constituency. There should be partnership between these institutions. Organisations that were mentioned specifically were Friends4Life, Thembeni, Hospice, Omama, Lifeline, TAC, and Rape Crisis Centre.

The leaders felt that churches are not doing nearly enough to address SV. While some churches are praying, dealing with SV consequences such as HIV, or referring survivors to help-centres, this is not enough. What they do is of an ad-hoc fashion, thus lacking true impact. Furthermore, some leaders felt that church leadership need education and training to be able to understand, and thus address, SV. The church is also limited by the fact that it is often a male-dominated space, with little room for what is considered a women's issue. Furthermore, churches in the area are quite fragmented. Thus they are concerned with their own power games, working to further their own causes, and do not unite around such a common issue. In some cases the church leader openly suppresses any attempt to talk about or address SV. One women leader desperately wants to start a SV programme in her church, but the head pastor refuses to let anyone address SV in any way.

Nevertheless, all of the leaders feels that the church has the ability and should be addressing SV. It has authority and moral standing within the community and should use this position. Its biggest role is to create awareness of and educate people about SV. This must be done in workshops, sermons, campaigns, and Sunday School. The Bible must be used correctly, and not misquoted or misinterpreted in ways that validate gender inequality.

Secondly, churches must stop their bickering and unite around the issue of SV. The current fragmentation prevents churches from doing what they are supposed to do. Yet their approach must be holistic. While spiritual intervention is important, the church must also address the practical needs of people, without creating dependence. Lastly, the church must play a central role in supporting survivors. Churches must also partner with NGOs and government in order to be able to address the problem properly.

In discussing partnership between government and church, it appears as if the church and district government are working together on various levels and the leaders feel that collective, multi-level response is the correct way to address SV. Partnership between government and church is also considered a wise move by the government, as most South Africans are Christians and churches have authority within communities. Yet not that much partnership around SV is currently happening. Furthermore, the church runs a risk by partnering with the government, as it easily gets co-opted into the government agenda. With such partnerships it seems as if the government is very prescriptive.

3.3.3 Leader Focus Group

The entire group agreed that SV is a very serious problem in their different communities. In discussing causes, parents and parenting repeatedly emerged as a central theme. Parents do not provide the discipline, guidance and example that they should. Children are left to fend for themselves, with no role-models and no guidance in decision-making and handling the pressures and challenges of growing up. Especially with boys this means that they are left to figure out for themselves what a 'real man' should be. Often, as well, they see how their fathers or male parental figures treat women, and copy that. Thus, when parents fight and mistreat each other, children accept it as normal. This is why many young boys and men abuse and mistreat women. This is also why so many young girls and women accept it. Furthermore, as so many girls are desperate for love, they will turn to any man that says that he loves her.

Due to multiple relationships, many households have children from different parents. These children are treated differently by the mother and father of the house. For example, it is often the stepchildren who are sexually violated. This has led to youth generally being very angry. They are angry for the way they are treated by their parents and by adults in general. They are angry at what they had been forced to endure. They are angry at not being loved, cared for and supported.

While bad parenting was discussed in-depth, other causes of SV also emerged. Poverty is a big factor. It causes SV as a poor person will exchange sex for money or food. Some individuals choose a partner based on his/her ability to provide, which leads to an unhealthy power dynamic within the relationship. It also leads to non-disclosure, as a victim (or the victim's family) will not report a perpetrator, in fear of losing the financial support that the perpetrator provides.

The community leaders also stated that the communities are generally quite angry. Due to the past (colonial and during apartheid), their own traumatic experiences, and continuing injustice, people are angry. This leads to SV. Many men are angry at the way women are now promoted and supported by government. They feel they do not have power in their own homes anymore and commit SV in an attempt to reassert their power.

Drug and alcohol abuse is also causing SV. While intoxicated or high, people commit SV or are easy targets for SV perpetrators. Addicts can also fall victim to perpetrators in an attempt to find money to feed their habit. Perpetrators actively seek out people who are vulnerable in such a way, knowing that they will have power over them. Beliefs in the community also contribute to SV. For example, the belief that having sex with a child heals HIV, or that certain sexual acts will lead to wealth, all contribute to SV.

The RDP houses are also contributing to SV. With parents having no privacy, they have sex while their children are in the same room. This can psychologically affect the children and with children sleeping close together, it can lead to unhealthy, early sexual experimentation. Furthermore, with different families often living in one small house, opportunities for sexual abuse are easily available. The leaders also felt that the media is sending wrong messages. Sex, sexuality and violence are propagated and normalised in an irresponsible and dangerous way.

The community generally is a hostile environment for a SV survivor. Community members tend to blame the survivor, accusing him/her of 'asking' for it, or simply not believing him/her. This is especially the case if the perpetrator is a person of standing within the community. SVAM and VAM are also not recognised and even the police do not take such cases seriously.

Interestingly, although all of the group members were church leaders, they were quite critical of the church. Church leaders were accused of condoning SV. When a survivor discloses SV, church leaders often choose to ignore it when the perpetrator is someone with standing in the church and/or community. Many stories were related of church leaders who perpetrated/are perpetrating SV. The church members and community choose to believe the church leader, as he is a person of standing, and the survivor is blamed and stigmatised for spreading lies or enticing the church leader.

In looking at ways the church should be addressing SV, the leaders identified two main ways. The church should be praying about it, as there is a spiritual dimension to it which can only be countered through prayer. Secondly, clergy should be trained on SV, so they can deal with it more effectively, but also launch effective interventions.

Something that emerged quite unexpectedly is that the leaders themselves are very traumatised. Many shared their own experiences of SV, burn-out, stress, isolation, etc. With the focus usually being on assisting church members, the church leaders do not receive the emotional and physical support that they need.

3.3.4 Survivor Focus Group

All of the survivors agreed that SV is a serious problem in their area and wondered what it says about the society that SV, and especially rape of children, is so common. Causes include the perpetrator's need to feel powerful, drug abuse, and the belief that sex with a virgin can cure HIV. Others sexually

violate children as a way of revenging themselves on the child's parent/s. Poverty is a big cause, as poor people will engage in sex or a relationship in exchange for money or food. In such a situation they are vulnerable to abuse, and the dominant partner has a sense of entitlement:

Someone who come close to you, giving you support, maybe giving you some tokens because you do not have those things and then after he has done things for you, there is an expectation that he must sleep with you and if because there is no relationship so if you not doing that, the rape become inevitable.

Poverty is also a reason why many choose to ignore or deny on-going SV. If the perpetrator is the provider, the victim and/or the victim's family will not address the situation, for fear of losing that provision:

The mother has gotten, what you call, into a relationship with a stepfather. The stepfather is putting food on the table and they are all depending on this and the mother is looking away, because if she talks, this man is going to take the support, the food from the table. So this child cannot tell the mother because maybe she has tried (telling the mother) and (the mother) has not (done anything about it).

Abused children thus do not tell their parents, knowing that it will not be addressed. Often it is a blood relative abusing the child, but the family decides to rather protect the family name than help the violated child. One survivor shared her fears for her small daughter. In her family an uncle had sexually abused his niece for three years, yet the family denied it and he was never arrested or punished. The survivor is HIV-positive and she fears for the safety of her daughter should she no longer be around to protect her.

SV survivors are not supported by their communities. They are judged, condemned and blamed for being sexually violated. One survivor told of how her employer talked about her rape in front of other staff members:

...when I came out of the hospital I went back to work two weeks later, but you could still see from my face that I was, was really beaten up and my boss, I was sitting at my desk and she said, guess what, (name of survivor) has just gotten herself, has just gone and gotten herself raped, that is why she hasn't been around...

Those who have been sexually violated are stigmatised by the community. Survivors were blamed for putting themselves in situations where they could be sexually violated. Especially the police blame survivors and the questions they ask when investigating a case are especially traumatic:

You – they ask you, you mean to say, you didn't orgasm during the rape, I mean you must have felt some, I mean some little bit of enjoyment?... the problem is that people come and report and then the first person you meet they ask you these questions, what were you wearing, what were you looking for, what time of the night, what time of the night you were there?

This is why many SV survivors choose not to disclose. The way they are treated by family, the community and the (supposed) support services make it not worthwhile to do so. Some of them disclosed the first time they were sexually violated, but have now learnt to rather keep quiet and have not disclosed subsequent SV. They receive no support. They do not even receive justice. Dockets are 'lost', with perpetrators and/or their families bribing officials to drop or ignore the case. Perpetrators and/or their families also intimidate the survivor into keeping quiet.

Many survivors choose to isolate themselves, fearing others and the emotions and/or memories that might be evoked by being between strangers. Many carry continuous anger, at the perpetrator, the way they are treated, and the situation they are forced to live with. Emotionally they carry a heavy burden, feeling that they are “dead, you are nothing, you are, you are useless, you, you have been used and then discarded you know, just like that.” Many had thoughts of suicide, while others turned to alcohol and partying in an attempt to forget, which put them at risk for further sexual violence.

Repeated victimisation was a continuous theme. Those that had been raped were raped again. Yet it was done by different people, often different strangers, in totally different geographical locations and at different times. For example, one survivor was raped by a stranger while walking in a well-populated, up-market area of Johannesburg during the day, then at night at Park Station when she got off the bus, and then by strangers who broke into the house she was sharing (in KZN) with her two sisters. Another survivor was raped by someone in her community, who was then jailed for seven years. When he was released, he came back to rape her again. Then she was raped a third time by a stranger, when she was crossing a field in her community. One survivor sees this as proof that a survivor cannot be blamed for being raped:

And that was a lesson to me, that when a person ask you, what were you doing in the middle of the night in Park Station so that you can be raped, it has got nothing to do about the time and where you were at, you are not supposed to be raped. It has got nothing to do with it, even when you are in your own home, you still get raped.

Some of the survivors have been able to move beyond the trauma of the event and find healing, and even positive aspects, to what they had experienced. One survivor started an organisation that assists and counsels SV survivors:

But then, I decided one thing, you know what, I am not going to let this rule my life. I am going to, to make myself a better person because, I am a better person than the person that has done this to me... I turned this incident into something that can be able to help others, because I did not have anyone to help me. So I know it might sound weird, but I am thankful that I went through this, because perhaps if I had not gone through this, I would be ignorant, I won't know how it effects these people that go through it. So, I would say my life was changed into a more focused and positive (one).

Another survivor argued that this is why it is important to disclose, as one is then able to help others. A third had found purpose in her life as she is now a role model to other young women, who turn to her for advice and support.

In discussing the support that survivors need, it is clear that a sympathetic, supportive space is their biggest need. Survivors stated that it must be clear to a SV survivor what he/she must do immediately after the event, and where he/she can go for help and assistance in doing so. Furthermore, it is important that the SAPS receiving officers are trained on SV, so that they can handle the situation more sensitively. At the moment survivors are even more traumatised by the way they are treated at police stations. Thirdly, support groups were suggested as a great way of assisting survivors. In such a space they can openly share and encourage each other, which is one of their greatest needs.

At the moment they do not experience their churches as offering any support. They suggest that church leaders and members, but especially church leaders, must be trained in counselling. Not only so they can counsel survivors, but so that they learn the importance of confidentiality. At the moment church leaders and members are sharing the stories, told to them in confidence, with the

entire community. Secondly, the church should target men more strongly, teaching them to respect women and not just see them as an object or plaything.

3.3.5 Community member nominal group

The group generated the following ideas for how the church should be addressing SV:

1. Must create place of safety (shelter)
2. Poverty alleviation projects
3. Free counselling
4. Activities to keep community members busy
5. Run SV awareness campaigns
6. Support for perpetrators (to stop doing it)
7. Work with SAPS
8. Pray
9. Networking (partner organisations/government/whatever)
10. Evangelical programmes educating community on consequences of SV
11. Educate community on Godly values
12. Use Scripture to address SV
13. Do SV education at Sunday School
14. Start organisations that do human rights education
15. Education and guidance for people on healthy sexuality
16. Work against stigmatising of SV survivors
17. Have brainstorming sessions on how to address SV
18. Church must be example (must sort itself out before trying to help the community)
19. Start SV survivors' support groups
20. Do intercession on a spiritual level
21. Invite experts to speak in church, just after sermon
22. Change focus to the whole community (not just own church and members)
23. Create safe environment in church, so survivors will disclose
24. Stop talking, start acting
25. Talk about sex (by pastors too!)
26. Educate parents on how to talk to their kids about sex
27. Implementation steps and responsibility must be part of planning
28. Continue teaching abstinence
29. Make youth part of awareness campaigns

Two rounds of voting were done. At the end of the second round the following ideas were identified as the most important to implement:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| #1: | Stop talking, start acting |
| #2: | Free counselling |
| #3: | Educate community on Godly values |
| Joint #4: | Pray |
| | Educate parents on how to talk to their kids about sex |
| | Invite experts to speak in church, just after sermon |

3.4 Key findings

SV is a problem in the research participants' communities and they indicate that **youth and children** are the primary targets of the SV. Lack of **parenting** and bad parenting was discussed at length in almost all of the research sessions. Bad parenting is seen as a major cause of SV, as children are raised in such a way that they easily become SV perpetrators or SV targets. Parents do not raise their

children with proper discipline, respect for others, and values. In many cases the parents, especially fathers, are absent. Sexual violence occurs within the home, perpetrated by parents and at times with the children as victims. Children are left to fend for themselves.

SV appears to be most common **within families**. It is family members or close acquaintances which perpetrate SV, especially in the case of children and youth. With families bent on protecting the family honour, disclosure of SV and reporting of the perpetrator is usually not done. Disclosure is generally not done.

Three causes of SV were repeatedly referred to, namely drug and alcohol abuse, poverty, and RDP housing. **Drug and alcohol abuse** is a cause of SV, as intoxicated or high individuals easily fall victim to or perpetrate SV. An addict also easily puts him/herself at risk for SV when in need of a drug or alcohol. **Poverty** is a cause of SV and non-disclosure. Poor individuals choose relationships based on the partner's ability to provide financially, or engage in prostitution. The power dynamic of such relationships put them at high risk for sexual abuse. SV survivors may also choose not to report perpetrators, as the perpetrator is the financial provider within the household. **RDP housing** is a problem as it is so small and family members are forced to sleep together in one or two rooms. This means children are exposed to the sexual activity of their parents at an early age, as well as being at risk for sexual abuse as they have to share beds with siblings or extended family members.

During the survivor focus group and some of the other sessions, the fact that SV survivors are repeatedly violated, was discussed at some length. The community tends to think that **repeated victimisation** occurs because a person is in a relationship with an abusive partner or continuously engages in risky behaviour, such as drug or alcohol abuse. Based on the experiences shared by Pietermaritzburg participants, this appears to not be the case. The same woman was targeted in vastly different contexts, many of which cannot be considered as risky.

The issue of **anger** was brought up in different sessions. Firstly, survivors are seen as being very angry people, due to the act/s that was perpetrated against them. They do not receive counselling and help in dealing with the event, and thus become angry. Secondly, youth are seen as very angry. Due to the neglect of their parents and the challenging situations they have to face without guidance, they become angry. This may be why many turn to gangsterism, where anger is seen as a valuable quality. Thirdly, the community is seen as an angry environment. People are angry about the injustices of the past and the present. All of this anger creates an environment that is conducive to SV, as people need to vent their anger and often do so in such destructive ways.

SV **survivors' primary need** is for long-term emotional support. They need a supportive, confidential space where they can disclose and they need someone to assist them with the official structures of reporting the event. They need counselling which promises to respect confidentiality and support groups where they can share and support others who have gone through the same trauma. Those that have been able to find healing have done so through being able to help others. This is why a support group is such an important space. Not only can a survivor receive support, but he/she can also provide it to others.

Little is being done to address SV. No-one felt that enough is being done about SV and many felt that nothing is being done. Government, churches, NGOs and the judicial system are all failing to comprehensively address the causes and consequences of SV. Communities are not supportive spaces for SV survivors and the church usually not either. The inappropriateness of the questions that survivors are forced to answer when reporting a case to the SAPS is a cause for alarm. It is one of the reasons why survivors choose not to report SV and is thus contributing to the continued perpetration of SV.

Currently the **church's role** is not being fulfilled. The church is not playing any comprehensive role in addressing SV. The main reasons are that churches are fragmented, and thus focused on its own issues and gathering members for itself, and do not see SV as truly its business. But research participants expect the church to address SV and envision for the church a central role in ending SV in South Africa. The church must take action.

The church's most important role is in creating awareness of SV and educating people about sex, SV and its causes and consequences. This must be done in different ways – such as seminars, campaigns and workshops – and focused on different age and gender groups, separating men and women and children, youth, adults and the elderly. The church should also address SV through educating on related issues, such as parenting, values, morals, how to talk about sex with your children, etc. A second key role of the church is in providing free counselling to anyone who needs it, not just to church members. Thirdly, it must pray about SV.

Chapter 4

Durban

4.1 Introduction

Durban is a city on the east coast of South Africa. It is the largest city in Kwazulu-Natal and the busiest port in Africa. It has over 3,5 million inhabitants and is part of the eThekweni Municipality (eThekweni Municipality, 2013).



4.2 The research process in Durban

The research in Durban was done in three communities, namely Mariannridge (an English coloured community), Inanda (a Zulu community) and the refugee community of Durban. The research participants were as follows:

- 16 participants took part in the survey, of which twelve were female and four were male. Eleven participants were coloured, three were Zulu, and two were refugees.
- 14 leaders took part in the individual leader interviews. Ten were female and four were male. Six were Zulu, four were white and three were refugees.
- Three focus groups with leaders happened.
 - The Mariannridge leader focus group had ten participants. Eight were women, two were men and all were coloured. Three were church leaders, five were NGO leaders, one was from education and one was a community leader.
 - The refugee community leader focus group had ten participants. Three were female and seven male. Six were originally from Rwanda, two from the Democratic Republic of Congo, one from Burundi and one from Somalia. Five were church leaders and five were community leaders.
 - Another focus group was done with leaders active all over Durban and KZN in general. The group had seven participants, three of whom were female and four male. Two were church leaders and five were NGO leaders, but as all of the NGOs are Christian NGOs, everyone had church affiliations.

- Two survivor groups were done
 - The Mariannridge survivor group was done with four coloured women.
 - The refugee community focus group was done with nine women, six originally from Rwanda, two from Burundi and one from Uganda.
- 15 people took part in the nominal group, which was done with community members from Inanda. Twelve were female and three were male. All were Zulu.

A youth focus group was done with nine young women from Mariannridge. The wrong participants were collected for what was supposed to be a survivor focus group. Since all of the women had turned up, a general focus group session was done with them.

4.3 Data collected

4.3.1 Survey with community members

Only four of the survey participants felt that men and women are equal in their community. The others stated that gender inequality is balanced in favour of men, since they are seen as more powerful and important than women. This is mostly due to cultural beliefs. One participant felt that women are superior, since they are the ones ruling the homes.

While all of the participants stated that SV is a problem in their community, half felt that it is a really serious problem. Most of the participants added that, although SV is a problem, it is a hidden issue and people do not want to talk about it. SV within families, with a husband/boyfriend sexually violating his wife/girlfriend or with family members violating children in the family, is most common. Children and youth appear to be the most common targets of perpetrators.

Four participants felt that there was no reason for SV and that survivors were simply unlucky for having it happen to them. The identified causes of SV were:

- Drugs and alcohol, for if people are intoxicated or high they engage in risky behaviour, that puts them at risk of SV or perpetrating SV
- The situation in homes, with children being sexually violated by stepfathers, or illegal shebeens being run from the home and the children being prostituted by their parents
- Poverty creates dependence, with poor individuals engaging or staying in abusive relationships, or prostitution, in order to survive

Only one participant did not personally know someone who has been sexually violated. All of them feel sorry for survivors. Survivors are seen as being permanently affected by what happened. Many become aggressive, or depressed, or their behaviour changes completely. The majority of the participants felt that their communities are not supportive of survivors. They gossip, stigmatise or exclude survivors, or pretend like nothing happened, which means that the survivor receives no support. One participant was of the opinion that Christians are even worse than non-Christians, as they are more judgemental. Some of the participants are living in a community where community members will rebuke the perpetrator and support the survivor.

The majority of the participants felt that nothing is being done to address SV in their communities. The initiatives that are being done are run by churches. Yet it is on a small scale with relatively little impact. When assigning responsibility for addressing SV, the community as a whole is seen as the key role-player. Since SV is such a personal issue, it is the people themselves who must take responsibility. The institution that was identified most-often to address SV, was the church. It is in the community and has a close relationship with the community, so it has responsibility for addressing such a community issue. Parents were identified thirdly. They should be teaching their children correctly so that they would not perpetrate SV and not fall victim to SV. Other organisations

or institutions that were assigned responsibility were the SAPS, government, counsellors, community committees, schools, prayer warriors and traditional leaders.

In identifying what should be done in order to end SV, the need for awareness-raising, education and training on SV and related matters was identified as the most important. Such training should focus on youth especially. Not just SV, but related issues, such as self-esteem, should be workshopped. Secondly, idleness should be addressed, through creating employment and activities for youth to engage in. Other interventions were getting women to wear less revealing clothing, that parents must supervise their own children, and that people must pray.

None of the participants belonged to mainline churches, but all belonged to a church.¹ Six participants stated that their church is doing nothing on SV. One argued that this was because some of the accused are in the churches and that they are being protected. With the nine that stated that their churches do address SV, it is mainly through youth activities being run at church and/or that the pastor will counsel a survivor who discloses. Only one church has a project, namely a NGO that counsels and assists women and children who have been abused, that directly address SV.

In discussing what the church should be doing about SV, the key expectation is that churches should stop protecting the perpetrators simply because they are prominent church members. They must report all cases of SV, even if it is done by church leaders. Secondly, the church should take a leading role in educating the community on SV. Through campaigns, workshops, Sunday Schools, and groups for different age and gender groups, the church must ensure that everyone is trained about sex, SV and SV-related issues. Thirdly, the church must create a safe space for survivors, where they can find support and be counselled.

4.3.2 Individual interviews with leaders

All of the leaders agreed that SV is a problem in the various communities that they serve. Six said that it is a very serious problem, and that the new trend of a rapist murdering the victim after raping her is of much concern. While SV has been going on for a long time, people are still hesitant to disclose it. There are various reasons for this. Female survivors cannot trust church leaders, as even leaders are tempted to gossip. Also men often support men, so a female survivor is afraid that the male leader will automatically pick the side of the perpetrator. This is connected with culture, as many cultures condone SV in various forms, and oppose disclosure of SV, and a survivor is thus not supported. Families also tend to always try and keep SV quiet, either because the perpetrator is a family member or because they do not want to sully the family name.

SV within the family is common, especially of daughters being sexually violated by their fathers, stepfathers or other male family members. SVAM was referred to by few of the leaders and is not viewed as common.

Drug and alcohol abuse was identified as one of the main causes of SV. Furthermore, the general poverty, to a large extent due to unemployment, is also causing SV, with relationships built on a partner's ability to provide financially. Education is another cause of SV, operating on many different levels. In the first place, youth especially are not educated about sex. Thus they engage in sexual relationships without fully understanding what it entails. Secondly, people are uneducated about their rights and the support structures available to them. Especially in the case of gender rights,

¹Mainline churches refer to the established Protestant denominations that were founded as a result of the Reformation.

many have no idea that women have equal rights to men. Thus men continue to abuse women and women continue to see it as acceptable.

Yet much training and awareness-raising has been done on the issue of gender equality. A government employee, whose job focuses on mainstreaming gender, is of the opinion that it is due to many people (especially men) seeing gender equality as an imposed concept. No true ownership of the concept and what it entails has followed. Thus cultural and religious beliefs concerning men's superiority continue to be upheld. Many men also become resentful of the emphasis on gender equality, especially if their partners earn more than them, and this can lead to conflict within relationships as men tries to reassert their power. The structures of patriarchy, as instituted and upheld by churches, cultures and traditional leaders, thus continue to thrive and facilitate SV.

A third general cause of SV is the humour and language that we use in daily life. People generally easily talk in a derogatory way of and about women and SV, which creates an environment that is conducive to SV. As one government leader explained: "It might look funny, but what are we teaching kids?"

Leaders could mention some SV intervention activities, but these were on a small-scale and with little effect. Everyone in society should be doing something about it and a multi-level response, incorporating the church, government, education and media, should be launched.

In discussing what the church is currently doing about SV, it appears as if very little is being done. Sex and SV remains a topic that most churches are uncomfortable with and the patriarchal nature of many churches makes it something they would rather not address. Some of the church activities and/or structures even actively promote gender inequality. Though there might be lots of talk, there seems to be little action except for prayer and providing some counselling.

Within the refugee community it seems there are some exceptions. Gender equality is something that many of the churches have taken to heart and they are working hard to educate their members on it, holding seminars and inviting various experts to speak. While SV is still a hard topic to discuss, due to strong cultural taboos, the research has given them the opportunity to now start raising the issue.

Partnership between government and church in addressing SV offers decided challenges from both sides. Firstly, the church tends to be very fragmented, which makes it difficult for the government to know who they should work with. Even the ecumenical bodies do not represent all churches. As there are also other religions, it is a challenge for the government to work with one religious group without having the other groups feel marginalised. Yet some leaders feel that the government is in any case not taking gender equality seriously. A government employee focused on gender issues argues that government departments and employees see it as merely a matter of compliance.

Churches and church leaders feel that government tends to manipulate the relationship, in terms of trying to co-op the church and its membership into their political agenda. Civil society (CS) in general runs the risk of losing its ability to hold the government accountable, since CS projects are increasingly being funded by government.

In discussing what the church should be doing about SV, the key role is for the church to get actively involved in SV, by educating and training the entire community on it and related issues. This includes gender equality, sex and sexuality, life-skills, changing gender roles, appropriate ways of dressing, how to support survivors, and parenting skills. Education activities should include workshops, campaigns, rallies, and classes. Yet the first step is for the church to start talking about SV and embracing it as its own. In many cases this would mean a total revision of church structures, beliefs and outlooks.

Other ways in which the church should address SV is through providing support to survivors. Counselling should be made available and confidentiality must be respected. Mentoring of children and youth, especially those without proper parental guiding, is also important. Churches should provide aftercare services, so children can be kept safe after school until their parents return home, and interventions, such as income-generation projects, should be launched to decrease women's dependence on abusive men.

The language that is being used in church tends to be quite misogynistic. Liturgies and hymns should be revised and edited to make the language more inclusive and gender-sensitive. This would be a conscious learning and unlearning process, through which people can be re-socialised into seeing men and women as equal. A female NGO leader who has been involved in such a process extensively, warned against being pedantic or aggressive in doing so. It should be a gradual process, where gender sensitivity is not introduced at the cost of men and masculinity. In changing the language that is used in churches, one creates an environment that is less conducive to gender inequality and SV.

Church leaders tend to be important figures in the community and this is especially the case in the refugee community. Church leaders must thus become spokespeople for gender equality and against SV, as this can have a considerable effect on the community in general.

4.3.3 Leader Focus Groups

4.3.3.1 Focus group with leaders working throughout KZN

All of the leaders agreed that SV is a very serious problem in all of the areas that they are working in (which includes the whole of KZN). Very worrying is the extent to which it has become normalised and the fact that very young children and old people are increasingly being sexually violated. Also, there seems to be an increasing number of rape-murders. In general they perceive South African society to be a traumatised society, be it from the apartheid past, wars that were fought, or current violence.

In discussing causes of SV, the way religion constructs women is seen as a key factor. Both men and women are socialised into a warped sense of the position of men and women. Many popular preachers espouse a theology that are actually quite misogynist and most church members do not have the skills to discern what is nonsense and what makes sense. As a male church leader explained:

Fundamentally what needs to happen is a whole paradox shift in the cultural, in the religious area in terms of the way men see women and there are some unbelievably weird teachings in the church, as you are probably aware of. One of the things of course is 'wives listen to your husbands'. I believe anything preached from the pulpit gives moral oxygen to those. They will breathe it in and go and say that they church has said I, 'you must be submitted to me'. Now they will translate it into whatever way that they feel that the person should be submissive. So I think that has a large. It is an overlooked area that we have a huge influence and responsibility as those who are in public space, you know. If you get up on the pulpit, you are in a public space because there were public people there before you and you are influencing minds. You are influencing a mind set.

Furthermore, beliefs and practices are often defended as being 'culture', but are in reality a distorted form of culture. Bad parenting is another cause of SV, with many parents not taking the time – or not even seeing it as necessary to take the time – to properly teach and socialise their children. Families further contribute to SV through their refusal to disclose SV, bent on protecting the family

name, and as it is often family members themselves who are the perpetrators. Children are also under other negative influences, such as school friends and the media. Especially the media is guilty, due to the way it glorifies violence and reinforces negative female stereotypes.

The issue of language was discussed at length. In three ways does the language people use indirectly contribute to SV. Firstly, in both religious language and cultural language, women are portrayed as weak and something that must be conquered. A male church leader discussed the language used every day:

...in fact, when people say, "You know, I can have any women I like, that is my culture", that and that is not reserved to any particular, that is right across the board. That is a language that men talk, "I can have any women I like". It is a conquest, you know, you hear it in university students, you hear it in, you know, you hear it through the media etcetera and so there is a pervasive, distorted culture, I think, that people are now defining as culture and I think it is compounded in this country

In order to change how religion and culture portrays and positions women, it is necessary to change the way we talk about men and women. In the words of a female NGO leader:

So I think it is a crucial thing because I think it is our mind-set, our upbringing, our culture all cut out in our language and how we talk to one another. So if we want to have genuine mutual respect and mutual submission... not about the one being in power over the other, and to get there we have to relearn how to talk to one another.

Secondly, through the jokes that are made and humour in general, people contribute to gender inequality and gender stereotypes that degrade women. Such humour is not innocent, as it sets the standard for what is allowable and acceptable. Thirdly, the language that is used is violent. Ironically, even in discussing VAW people tend to use very violent language. All of these contribute to creating a culture where violence, gender inequality and degrading gender stereotypes are acceptable.

Other issues that contribute to SV is the myths and beliefs that are popular (such as that having sex with a virgin can cure HIV), people's desire to have power over others, mental instability, drug abuse, and spiritual forces.

Currently, churches are contributing to SV through doing bad theology. Bad exegesis of texts leads to a warped message spread from the pulpit, and these warped messages can create a climate conducive to SV. Furthermore, the way some churches' leadership is dominated by men and refuse to give space to women, creates as misogynist climate that leaves no room for addressing issues that are relevant to women. Lastly, churches are mostly not addressing the critical issues that the community needs them to address. As a male church leader explained:

We are not speaking on the messages that our society currently need, the issues at hand. Church is continuing to become a usual activity. We are not speaking to issues. Our sermons are not speaking directly to issues... Ministers are not picking up on those and develop a sermon out of that for Sunday because that is a perfect opportunity for me and there are many issues all the time.

The key step is for the church to start boldly speaking out on critical, pertinent social issues, such as SV, drug abuse, and gender inequality. Churches should be playing a bigger role in addressing SV in society and should do so through partnering with other organisations and with government. In partnering with government it remains important, though, to monitor and filter government language and messages, if needs be. A male NGO leader explained:

(The church) could partner with government to change the direction in which the messages are conveyed to the people because the message from the government most of the time is not one that we must always accept. We must have some massive filters. We must filter the information that comes from the government to the society. We, as a church, could give directions along those lines. Not necessary that the government should impose his language or way of doing things to the society but we must determine the cause of action as the Church. Partnership is critical because as soon as we go it alone, we don't have resources, we don't have man power to do the work but we could set the tone in the society to eliminate the forms of violence...

The church should be running programmes and projects that address SV on various levels. Importantly, though, it should utilise the platform it has to influence minds positively. Furthermore, it must live the example:

...(W)e have to model a different way of living, in being with one another, because I think that we... There is a, there is a definite disconnection between the is and the ought, you know, what we ought to be and what is and I think that if it comes to us needing to work harder as a Church in creating the models of community, that kind of, even go beyond the words.

In general, though, there is much to be done and not only by churches. There needs to be constant programmes and projects, directly and indirectly focused on the causes and consequences of SV. Men and especially young boys should be targeted and socialised. Workshops on gender sensitivity and parenting can be especially helpful. These programmes and projects should be on-going and the yearly 16 Days of Activism must be used as an opportunity to test how things have changed since the previous year. In other words, 16 Days of Activism should not be the motivation for action, but a time when the effect of constant activity is evaluated.

Mentoring, done in small groups, can be an effective way of positive socialising and providing good role-models. Lastly, gender sensitivity and equality should be mainstreamed within the church, especially within ministerial training.

4.3.3.2 Focus Group with Mariannridge Leaders

The group all agreed that SV is a serious problem within Mariannridge. A grave concern was the fact that SV has become so normalised, as a woman NGO leader explained: "it's appalling what is happening in our community that is acceptable..." A key cause that was repeatedly discussed during the session was the high rate of drug abuse in Mariannridge. Both a cause and consequence of SV, community members refuse to confront the issue, as a female community leader explained:

Most of the township's biggest problem, which everybody just tries to sneak under the carpet... it's drugs. Drugs ... I may know my neighbour, and because she's my neighbour, I know she sells drugs, but I won't want to rat on her, she's my neighbour. Forgetting that what she's doing is destroying of thousands of people, but just because she's my neighbour, I'll be scared. And then of course if I do have the courage maybe to speak out on her, I've got to face thirty other people that are friendly with her. So I'm not just facing her, I'm now facing thirty one people.

Unemployment is another cause, with those without jobs having too much time which they spend unwisely. Also, they tend to turn towards drugs. Poverty leads to some choosing a partner based on his ability to provide, with the resultant power dynamic within the relationship often leading to SV and the victim unwilling to report it in fear of being left destitute. Many young girls also have a

desperate need to be loved, due to never being loved by their parents, and will go to any man that says he loves her.

Yet the cause identified and discussed continuously throughout the session was parents and parenting. According to the leaders the Mariannridge community do not have good parents. This has been on-going for some time, so those who are now parents have no good role-models to copy. As a male pastor explained:

Now I discovered by sitting down with certain parents, or elderly people, the very thing that she's talking about is the very thing that they never receive. So what basically happened, you can't give to someone something that you haven't got, and I firmly believe the commitment, and that love that parents are supposed to shower over their children, that type of thing is lacking in our community.

The majority of parents, and adults in general, do not take an interest in children and are absent emotionally, even if they might be present within the home. There does not even seem to be any intention to be present and support their children and there is no communication between parent and child. Some parents even actively contribute to the destruction of their children, buying children as young as six alcoholic ciders and selling drugs from the house.

Many parents refuse to let their children get the help and support they need, in fear of family secrets being exposed. A young woman community leader who volunteers in the schools told of her frustration with how parents refuse to give permission for their children to receive counselling:

...you've got to get consent from the parents, and that's where you just hit a stone wall, because the parent can even tell you to your face, I am not signing nothing, and you can't do with my child nothing... And then maybe they're scared that they will be painted as the one that was responsible for putting the child, I don't know, but they don't want to be exposed. They don't want their family secrets, or drugs, or whatever you want to call it, to come out.

Most parents also do not supervise their children properly. After school they are free to wander the streets, which put them at risk. This has created an evil, repeating cycle in Mariannridge, with every generation abusing and/or neglecting their children in the same way they were. A woman community leader told her own story as an example. Her grandmother, mother, herself and her daughter have all been raped. Each of them were neglected and/or abused by their mother and neglected and/or abused their own children:

So when I did it, my daughter did it to her children as well, because now I am now, of course, thank goodness I grew up and my way of thinking changed, my morals have changed, everything has changed, but now I am the one that's mostly with my grandchildren, and they're also crying out for mom and dad's love.

SV survivors do not disclose what happened to them, not even to their own parents. Pastors, even those very active in the community, are not approached either. The main reason identified by the leaders is the lack of trust. With the community gossiping and many having had experiences of confidential information being told to everyone, they feel they cannot trust anyone:

I think it's a trust issue in our community, one of the reasons, not ... for the young girls maybe it's like, they don't feel like they can trust going to somebody and telling somebody what happened to them, because trust has been broken.

SV is seen as a taboo subject and those who are sexually violated are stigmatised. There is a feeling that community members and even those in positions of authority, who should know better, do not

respect confidentiality. School children have had horrific experiences of their counselling sessions being shared with the entire community. One leader's daughter was forced to leave school because she was mercilessly teased by the other school children after her experiences, shared in confidence with a person in a position of authority, was told to others.

SV also continues, and people refuse to disclose, because they see it as a worse evil to report on someone else, a male pastor shared:

We all know each other's business. I mean we know each other's business well, but nobody wants to be the one to state that they're the one who wants the person to rat... It's generally, nobody ... everything is hush-hush, everything is ... no-one wants to be the one to speak. And it's one of the biggest troubles that we have in the community.

In discussing the role of the church, all of the leaders felt that the church has the ability to play a key role in addressing SV. Some told their personal stories of how it was through the church that they were able to change their own lives for the better. Yet what churches are currently doing – some pastors were identified by name as addressing SV in various ways – is not enough. A key criticism was that the church should be more active in the community, in engaging with and assisting people. A male pastor put it as follows:

...we don't befriend the people, and friendship is something, it's coupled with love and all the other kind of compassion and all these type. We're not prepared to befriend someone... Later on the time of talking about the bible is going to come, but befriend them so that they can actually start to desire what you've got in you...

The leaders identified various ways in which the church should be addressing SV. Firstly, they state that most of Mariannridge do not attend a church. A first step would thus be to draw people into the church, so they can form part of a community with good moral values: "You can only come in to the character of the church if you join the church family." On a practical level, churches should develop more structures to enable them to deal with GBV in general. Thirdly, both church leaders and members need to be trained so they are able to address SV. Especially counselling skills can be of much value. At the moment there are very few people in the church who can do this. Another practical way in which to engage people in the church is to arrange fun social events for adult community members. This can be a way to build relationships and possibly draw them to the church.

The group spent much time discussing whether the focus should be on adults or youth. Should the church be focusing on adults – as they are the parents supposed to be providing guidance and be an example – or should the focus be on youth, positioning the adults as a 'lost' generation? While no final conclusion was reached, the group did emphasise the importance of boy child socialisation, and the role the church can play in this. A mentoring programme, where one adult provides support, guidance and a positive role-model to a few individual boys, can be an effective way of doing this.

Yet it seems that Mariannridge does not have a culture of volunteerism, which will make it challenging to launch interventions in the church and community. People expect to be paid for anything they do. Even those without work and with nothing to do refuse to volunteer. Suggestions were made that those (such as some of those present in the group) who have learnt the value of volunteering can be used to motivate others.

3.3.3.3 Focus group with Refugee Community Leaders

In the Refugee Community Leader focus group, the issue of culture was discussed continuously. The refugees are in a precarious position, with their original culture from their motherland clashing with South African culture. While there is much they want to keep from their home culture, there is also

much they admire and want to assimilate from South African culture. This is especially relevant when it comes to sex and SV.

The leaders stated that their home cultures all honour men at the expense of women. Women are seen as mere tools and slaves, with men having ultimate power. This easily morphs into SV, with women expected to fulfil any sexual whim of her husband. Sex and SV, though, is a taboo topic. Survivors do not disclose and communities do not support survivors, for it is something that should not be talked about. As a pastor originally from Rwanda explained:

Actually the sexual issues in our community is something which is terrible, you know, we cannot really divulge even if you are raped somewhere... It is not easy to comment, for somebody... It is a cultural problem, you know. It is not easy to comment on someone else's issues...

Thus the refugees do not easily disclose SV they suffered in their home country or in South Africa. Yet this is something they much admire and want to assimilate from South African culture, i.e. the way people speak openly about sex, sexual matters and SV. From their perspective South Africans are quite open about sex, easily discussing it and SV. A Congolese leader explained:

But when we came to this country, we found that women and men, they can stay together. They can share new experiences about sex. They can talk openly and this is somewhere, something which does this country good...

The ability to talk about sex is important. According to a pastor originally from Rwanda, most of family conflict stems from sexual matters and a couple's inability to discuss it. It affects the entire family. Here in South Africa they have realised that this is something that can and should be discussed openly and thus they are doing so in church, by arranging seminars.

Yet South African culture is not only a positive thing. The leaders feel that many aspects of South African culture contributes to the occurrence of SV, such as alcohol and drug use, early dating and sexual debut, and dress codes. They fear for their children and find it difficult to connect with their children, who have so much contact with South African culture. Also, SV in South Africa take forms that they are not used to, not even those from countries who had high volumes of SV during armed conflict. The way babies, little children and old women are raped is something they find alarming, as well as the sheer volume of SV in South Africa. They also feel that the South African government, and especially its leaders, should be more openly addressing and condemning SV.

In discussing causes of SV, the refugee leaders identified quite a few. Firstly, the cultural belief that men are superior to women and should rule over them is a cause of SV. In this they squarely positioned their home cultures as culprits. The situation in South Africa in terms of having many sexual partners, early sexual debut, early (teen) pregnancy and the grant system were all identified as contributing to SV. The South African lobola system, which has morphed into an understanding that a man must pay to marry a woman, is also contributing to SV. Couples choose to live together as they are unable to afford to get married, and many women choose men based on his ability to afford lobola. In the perpetrators themselves the group identified a sick need for power and one leader felt strongly that all SV perpetrators must be mentally disturbed to engage in such acts.

In the refugee community the church is of critical importance. As individuals and as a family they have little support and the family breaks apart more easily when it faces challenges. As they are refugees they do not have the support system of their extended family. The church now fills this role. Church leaders are of critical importance. As a pastor formerly from Rwanda explained: "I can also say that the church also plays a big role in terms of standing in the gap, filling the gap where the extended family should be..."

In discussing what churches should do about SV, all of the leaders felt that the church should actively start addressing the issue. Firstly, it should be training and educating the community about gender equality and SV. Especially in the refugee community this is important, for many come from countries where they treat women very badly. So the church has to start talking about it, and especially about SV. Religious leaders, as they are such important people within the refugee community, should be particularly active in talking about SV and highlighting the fact that men and women are equal and deserve equal respect. Workshops on gender equality and SV should be done and should be presented in languages that are accessible to the refugee community. It would also help if refugees can be trained, so they can continue the workshops and trainings.

The refugee community is very receptive to workshops and seminars of any type. They want to be informed and educated. The leaders suggest that workshops on sex and talking about sex, where parents and children are all present, will be particularly helpful.

4.3.4 Survivor Focus Groups

4.3.4.1 Focus Group with Refugee Community SV Survivors

For all of the survivors the church is an enormously positive space and institution. In and through the church they had found the support they needed. This issue was discussed again and again.

Some of the survivors have been able to disclose to their church leaders, who have helped in their healing process through counselling and general support. Others have found individuals within the church to whom they were able to disclose, and who have become like family and/or parents to them. Another credits the entire church community for saving her from depression as, when she went through a particular bad episode, they fasted and prayed until she emerged from her house. Another found God through the church, who she credits for bringing healing. Generally, though, all of the survivors experience the church as a supportive space, where they can be happy.

The church is especially important to them as they are so far from their homes and families. Many stated bluntly that the church was not as important to them when they were still in their home countries, as they had a lot of family members there who could support them in times of trouble. Some of them have only become really involved and active in the church since leaving their home country. As a woman originally from Rwanda explained: "For me it... wasn't the same... from home... because from home we have... the family was too big. We have the aunties, we have cousins, there were so many people to talk to, if you needed."

Having come to faith (survivors used the term "born again" most often), they have begun the healing process. They see their relationship with God as key to forgiving and forgetting what had happened to them. Prayer is an important helpline.

While all of the survivors have disclosed to someone, all still prefer to not let it become public knowledge. The main reason for non-disclosure is the shame and embarrassment that goes with it. With SV being such a taboo, they will be stigmatised and shamed by the community. As one Rwandan survivor put it: "I prefer to die within myself (rather) than hearing people outside talking about me." Another reason is a fear of being killed by the perpetrator or the perpetrator's family. The perpetrator may also be a family member, which inhibits disclosure. Many survivors choose not to disclose at great emotional harm to themselves. As one survivor explained:

So I choose to die silently... Many people, they die silently because you're scared to talk about it and you don't know who to tell. Some isolate themselves, feeling that no-one cares for them. Some lose all interest in sex, finding no satisfaction from it.

When asked what support survivors need, the group emphasised the importance of therapy. One-on-one counselling is much-needed and important. Yet a support group also has a lot of worth. They all experienced the focus group as such a support group and for many it was their first time to experience such a group. They all felt the benefit of attending such groups:

I'll be needing to have such a group often because...I thought I was the one who's suffering from terrible experiences but now I found... maybe by sharing, everyone can feel better...thank you for... hav(ing) such a thing. It's a first time in our lives having such a (group).

4.3.4.2 Focus group with Mariannridge SV survivors

The Mariannridge survivor focus group was in many ways more of a therapeutic support group session, with participants sharing their stories and expressing relief in being able to do so. In their stories the following common themes emerged.

Parents and parenting is a serious concern and cause of SV. The parenting they themselves received, the type of parenting they give, as well as the parents that their children are all point towards a repeating cycle of abuse. One survivor referred to it as 'generational abuse', when explaining her own upbringing:

Why I am saying this because listening, to all of this and I'm looking back on my past I'm thinking you know, if my dad was not a dead-beat dad, if he was like a dad that was responsible for the family, and wasn't also abusive to my mother, it would not have taught me that that's the norm you know, nobody really, even up to my brother, nobody really showed us a leadership from a male role, being a model, being a role model I should say, let me put it that way because my uncles in their own times also abused their wives, my mother was abused by her husband from the time we were small...

Two survivors told of the abusive homes they grew up in, in which sexual, physical and emotional violence was considered normal. This led them to choose relationships and partners that were also violent and abusive, as they thought it acceptable. One survivor suffered repeated sexual abuse from various family member and acquaintances as she was growing up. During the group sessions she started remembering even more of it and realising for the first time that it was sexual abuse. As a young child she was sexually violated by a male boarder, a male cousin and a female cousin.

The survivors' traumatic experiences while growing up not only led them to choose relationships and situations in which they were abused again, but also led them to abuse their own children. They deeply regret it now, but in many ways they treated their own children the same way they were treated: "the manner I grew up... I even ended up hating my dad. I ended up hating the woman that gave birth to me because through them... because it's like you became a lunatic with all the abuse that you getting..." Two survivors told stories of physically abusing their own children: "God forgive me but I forgot who I was. I think I even damaged a little bit of (her) head because I was banging her. I was taking out my anger."

Now their grandchildren are going through the same situation. Two of the survivors take care of some of their grandchildren full-time, as the mothers are either alcoholic or not interested in supervising the children. The survivors realise that their own children have been through a lot of trauma, but still deeply regret what their grandchildren are forced to experience:

...now I'm their Gran they become Granny's children and she's not playing her part as a Mother, she's also trying to skirt her duties...

...my heart was broken on Saturday morning again, the child was getting up and she say to me, Gran, do you really think my mother misses me...

All of the survivors were fierce in stating that they did their utmost to protect and care for their children. Two of the survivors were incredibly physically, sexually and emotionally abused by their husbands throughout their marriages. Although continuously hurt, sick and afraid, they felt they did their best to protect their children from their husbands and to keep them fed and healthy. Thus it is for them very painful that their grown children now reject them. This was discussed at quite some length, as all of the survivors' children now reject their mothers:

You know we go through so much with our husbands and when we come with our kids, what you went through with their father, there is no remorse from any kid to say my mother went through that because they treat you like a leper.

One survivor, though very hurt and sad about her children's rejection, rationalised it as follows:

The kids that grow up and don't want to acknowledge us... the kids were just taught to grow up selfishly, that's part of their defence, so now that they've got it made, they not going to spurred by Mommy. If they going to look after Mommy that is sharing some of their self-made palace or little kingdom and you are an intrusion into their kingdom you know though they love you, you're an intrusion into their kingdom because now they're going to have to ruin what they have in order to accommodate you. You've become from a protector to a liability and they can't afford that liability, unfortunately that's how it is today so I am judging by my kids...

Communication between parents and children are also absent, which is a further cause of SV. Children cannot speak to their parents about situations or people that make them uncomfortable and are thus often unable to avoid such situations or people. One survivor blames their culture for it:

...we don't really sit down and talk to our(children) ... it is totally totally true and I suppose that's where it all goes wrong because there are these traditions and coming from these cultural backgrounds it limits teenagers or children from speaking out you know, you are not allowed to call Dad and say Dad you know what (happened with) my friends today. So even should something go wrong, (the child thinks) how am I going to tell them?

For all of the survivors abuse (sexual, physical and emotional) was continuous for most of their lives. Apart from the consequences discussed above, it has also resulted in some suffering from insomnia, continuous anger which they cannot explain or get rid of, and continuous fear even though the person they were afraid of is dead. In trying to stay alive and provide for their children, some of them (or their children) had turned to prostitution and they are still trying to deal with the emotional wounds of doing so. It has also led to some of them putting up an aggressive, angry front to the community. One of the survivors admitted that she always avoided one of the other survivors, as she felt she is such a violent, angry person, only now realising it is not so. One of the survivors explained the behaviour as follows:

I learnt... to be... very rude at home, I had to be a, show you a little bit of that, the thing is when you've been pushed around and followed around you've got that side of you automatically that needs to protect you so you become this mean and this rude and this macho type of a person even though you know you are lying in the process... especially...when you live in Mariannridge... don't you have to be strong?

None of the survivors received the support they needed. They were scathing of the community, which they feel will never help someone who needs help. Nevertheless, one survivor whose husband

was abusive during the whole of their marriage (more than two decades) felt that her family was supportive, as they came to get her when she was very hurt, and that neighbours sometimes gave her a place to sleep when she had been very badly beaten up. Yet the survivors are very derisive of and angry with their families-in-law, who they blame for always picking the side of their husbands:

...but I'm saying to her this morning, that has affected me most in my ... whenever I think about it and I have in-laws coming to my house, I even get more angry, it's like I don't want you here. I don't want you here for one reason is that nobody heard or asked a question, new scar on your face, your leg broken.

In terms of discussing the support they needed and still need, they felt that support groups for SV survivors would be very good. They all felt the focus group session had been very helpful and that speaking out about what had happened and sharing with others are very healing. They also have a need for counselling sessions which they and their children/child can attend together. This would help them to know and understand what has happened in their children's lives, as they feel there are many traumatic things that their children are not telling them about. Lastly, individual counselling would be helpful.

4.3.5 Nominal group with community members

The group came up with the following suggestions for what the church should be doing about SV:

1. Pray
2. Network and partner with other churches
3. Create spaces where survivors can talk
4. Gender training
5. Pastors must be trained on women and child abuse issues
6. Do SV campaigns in community
7. On-going SV education in community
8. Bring experts in to teach in church
9. Report perpetrators to SAPS
10. Preach (in pulpit) about SV
11. Stop hiding the issue (SV). Ignore the cultural pressure
12. Teach appropriate dress code
13. Church members must be trained on SV counselling
14. Network with local chiefs (traditional leadership)
15. Workshops should separate ages and genders

After two round of voting, the following ideas were prioritised:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| #1: | Gender training |
| #2: | Workshops should separate ages and genders |
| Joint #3: | Pastors must be trained on women and child abuse issues |
| | Preach (in pulpit) about SV |

4.3.6 Focus group with youth from Mariannridge

While the group was supposed to be a survivor group, there had been some miscommunication and they were collected based on the understanding that they will have to take part in a conversation about SV in Mariannridge, irrespective of being a survivor or not. Thus the group was conducted as a youth focus group, as all of the participants were young women.

All of the participants agreed that SV is a big problem in their community. It has become normalised and socially acceptable, both to sexually violate and to be sexually violated. SV within families is common, and also amongst peers due to peer pressure. The group also mentioned cases where teachers were sexually violating pupils.

The community does not treat SV survivors well. They tend to gossip and blame the survivor, stating that she deserved it because of where she was, or how she was dressed, etc. One participant described the community as follows: "It's a very harsh judgmental set and all, and it comes from grown adults, because the young people talk like that because they hear the big people talking like that."

Therefore those who experience SV tend to never disclose it. If they want to keep it secret they cannot trust and disclose to anyone, for the community gossips and there have been numerous occasions where confidences have been betrayed. There is no supportive, confidential space where they can disclose. Furthermore, they have no expectation of getting justice. While the group thought that strong punishments can act as a deterrent, perpetrators are not even being arrested at the moment. So there is no benefit to disclosing:

There's a lot of sexual crimes happening here, but the girls won't go to the police station and report it, because nothing happens. The police are like very useless in that area, in a lot of areas, but in sexual crimes, you don't even feel like going to report, because you know what the outcome's going to be. There were so many before you, and ... Plus you go and report, and as I said, you see the person driving around scot free, nothing happens, and then you're like, why would I go tell the cops, now the whole community knows what happened to me, but there's this man still, he can drive past you after raping you, he can drive past you on the road, so you're like why go and report this.

Children and youth are also not receiving any support from their parents, for they have no real relationship with their parents. Should they be sexually abused in any way, they will not report it to their parents, as they know their parents will blame them. So even in their own household they get no support:

They have relationships with their parents, they just have bad ones, so every time you have a conversation, it's like, it's a fight, rather than a parent-child conversation should be, and always was done, and then if you because you're desperate and you say, ma, I've been raped, even though your relationship with your mother's bad, the first thing she does is, what did you do, what did you do to cause that to happen, and she'll start blaming you in any event.

In discussing the role of the church in addressing SV in Mariannridge, the participants emphasised that a big challenge is that most community members do not go to church. In any case, though, the participants felt that churches are not nearly doing enough. Sensitive, controversial issues such as SV are ignored. While they may say they oppose it, they in actual fact do nothing about it and oppose and/or suppress those who attempt to. One participant explained from her own experiences:

I would say that to pastors and to leaders in churches, because they cry out from the pulpit, we love people, we want to help people, we want to be there for people. But I'm speaking from personal experience, as soon as you go to them with a real situation, like someone being sexually violated, or someone, besides sexual violence, someone being physically abused. I'm telling you they will run. They run for the hills, you know what I'm saying, and I think it's about not being real, not wanting to face real issues, but you are constantly preaching from the pulpit, you need to be in charge, me to love the Lord, you need to have a relationship with the... But when you go to the church, it's true, when you go to the church with real issues like sexual crimes and abuse and all, they really, they sweep it under the rug.

What the church should do is become active and involved in people's lives, even if it is difficult and challenging. They must pro-actively go to people's homes if something is wrong, and not wait until they are invited. The church should start programmes that meet the needs of the community and not programmes that suit their comfort-level or interests. The main demand, though, was that the church should stop and talking and start doing: "Stop talking the talk, walk the walk."

4.4 Key findings

The way children are raised and treated by their **parents** again emerged as a central theme. Parents are not taking care of their children, are not teaching them properly, and are in some cases abusing them themselves. Clear examples of generational abuse could be seen, with one example being four generations of woman in one family all abusing and being abused. There is apathy or unwillingness amongst many parents to concern themselves in raising their children properly.

In the refugee community concerns with parenting took on another form. Parents find it difficult to connect and communicate with their children, as their children are growing up in a culture that is foreign to them. While the refugees are not opposed to South African culture, they wish their children to retain more of their home-country culture. But with their children going to South African schools and having South African friends, this is difficult. The parents find it very worrying and their traditional ways of parenting, and the examples they have from growing up, do not fit into this new context.

Youth and children appear to be the primary targets of SV. Family members are especially guilty of violating younger family members. Mention was also made of parents prostituting their own children. Children are unable to disclose SV to their parents, as they do not communicate well with each other, or as they know parents will instinctively blame them

Drug and alcohol abuse was discussed to an even larger extent than in the previous communities. It is seen as the major cause of SV and a grave concern. Poverty was again identified as a cause of SV, as is unemployment.

Repeated victimisation occurs. SV survivors are sexually violated repeatedly, by different individuals. Abuse becomes a way of life and it is only at a late stage in their lives that many survivors realise that it is not necessarily the way life should be.

The refugee community was an exception to this. The survivors are related only one experience of SV. On the other hand, they had all left the country where they had experienced SV and many of the survivors' experiences was related to armed conflict. The two exceptions were survivors who started experiencing SV within their marriage in South Africa.

The power of **language** was highlighted in the Durban research. The way people speak about men and women, and SV, as well as the words that people use create a climate that is conducive to SV. The type of jokes that are made influence what people will find acceptable. In order to bring change in how people think about gender equality and SV, one must change how people talk about women and SV.

The same applies to the church. The church uses a lot of misogynist language and gender insensitive terminology. This creates the context wherein the privileging of men becomes acceptable. Concerted effort must be made to change such language. The church is also guilty of doing **misogynist theology**. Much of the theology that is done in churches is contributing to SV as it is quite misogynist. Church leaders do inaccurate exegesis of texts, either on purpose or due to poor or no training at seminary school. Church leaders must be trained on doing gender-sensitive and –accurate

exegesis of texts. Church members must also be trained on this, so as to make them less vulnerable to the vagaries of their leaders.

A desperate need for **education** and training on SV and related matters was highlighted in the research in Durban. People need to be trained on sex, sexuality, the causes and consequences of SV, and relationships. Yet training on factors indirectly affecting SV, such as parenting, human rights, communication, counselling, etc. is also needed.

Currently, very **little is being done**. SV is common and taking on new and worrying forms, such as rape-murders. Yet little is being done either to prevent SV or to care for survivors in the aftermath. Survivors still feel that they are receiving no support and being neglected and stigmatised. Their central need is for a supportive space where they can disclose what happened to them, knowing that it will be kept in confidence, and receive counselling.

The **church's role** is not being fulfilled, as it is not doing what it should be doing about SV. A grave concern is the fact that many accuse churches of wilfully ignoring SV and/or survivors, to protect prominent church leaders or members. In order for the church to be able to respond to SV with any credibility, it should boldly disclose and address the SV being done by its own members and leaders.

The church is expected to directly address SV and its central role should be to bring awareness and educate the masses. Campaigns, workshops, rallies, classes and teachings should be done on SV and all its related issues. Secondly, the church has a central role in supporting survivors. This can be done through providing counselling that respects confidentiality and through launching SV support groups.

On many levels the **refugee community** was different to the other Durban communities and to the ones in other areas. The key difference is that the church is experienced as very important, enormously influential, and as very involved in the community. This is possibly because refugees are very vulnerable within South Africa. As they have few support structures here, the church becomes a very important one. Therefore the church's authority to educate and rebuke people is considerable. The fact that survivors also experience the church as positive means that the church is not abusing this power, but is actively seeking to meet the needs of its members.

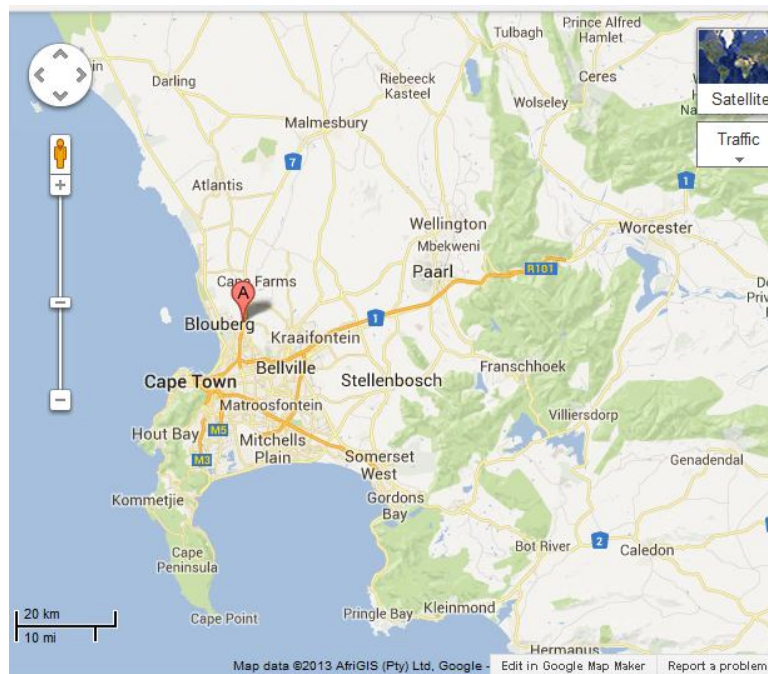
The refugee community was also the exception in how it is willing to name the practices in its own cultures that promote gender inequality and SV, and how it displays a willingness and eagerness to change these. This is possible because the people who are part of the refugee community are per definition people who are willing and able to handle change. They all left their home countries, which demanded a great deal of adaptability. This is possibly why they are willing to identify weaknesses in their current practices and display an eagerness for guidance on how to change it.

Chapter 5

Du Noon

5.1 Introduction

Du Noon is an informal settlement in the Table View area of Cape Town, approximately 18 kilometres from the city centre. It is a provincial government RDP housing project which was meant to address the overcrowded conditions of the nearby informal settlement Marconi Beam. In 2000 people moved from Marconi Beam to Du Noon and Joe Slovo Park, assisted by a government housing subsidy which provided support in acquiring a permanent dwelling (Cooper, 2009:5-6). Since then many others have moved to Du Noon, especially from other areas in South Africa (often the Eastern Cape) and Africa and Du Noon is seriously overcrowded. Du Noon has the dubious status of being the place where xenophobic violence in Cape Town first broke out in May 2008 (Cooper, 2009:2).



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5.2 The research process in Du Noon

All except for one of the research participants in Du Noon were Xhosa. This is not representative of Du Noon, which also has strong coloured and foreign communities. The research participants were as follows:

- 15 participants took part in the survey, of which 13 were women and two were men. All were Xhosa.
- Eleven Du Noon leaders were interviewed individually. Four were female and seven were male. All were Xhosa, six were church leaders, four were community leaders, and one was a NGO leader.
- Five leaders took part in the focus group with leaders. Four were men and one was a woman. One Malawian formed part of the group, while the rest were Xhosa.
- Twelve people took part in the nominal group with community members. Ten were women and two were men, while everyone was Xhosa.

Organisers found it difficult to identify survivors, even though they have been present and active in Du Noon for six years. While different leaders were consulted, everyone found it difficult to identify survivors to attend the group. Survivors are very hesitant to disclose, also to their church leaders. In the end no SV survivor focus group took place. One was arranged, but when the time came none of the survivors had the courage to attend. Three attempts were made to arrange a survivor focus group, but all three failed. The fact that those who did commit to come did not have the courage to do so can arguably be seen as (at least partly) indicative of their fear that the community will learn of what has happened to them.

5.4 Data collected

5.3.1 Survey with community members

Only three participants stated that men and women are equal within their community. Two participants felt that women are more important than men, as women actually do what they say they will do. The rest felt that men have more power than women. One of the main reasons is that it is mainly the men who have jobs, so women are financially dependent on them.

The majority of the participants felt that SV is a very serious problem in Du Noon, as it is happening very often. Five participants stated that SV is not such a problem in their particular part of Du Noon, as they are not really hearing of any cases. According to the survey participants, SV happens most often between adults and children, with the adult usually being a stranger. One woman stated that it is women who are raping small children. SV amongst adults is either between husbands and wives or boyfriends and girlfriends.

In attempting to explain why SV happens, five participants felt that there is no reason for SV, especially if the victim is a child, and that no-one deserves to have SV happen to them. Causes of SV include:

- The behaviours some women engage in, such as going to clubs and pubs and having men buy alcohol for them, as well as walking alone at night
- Poverty, for if a man has money and a woman does not, he has all the power and the woman has to have sex with him whenever he wants

Nine of the 15 survey participants did not personally know someone who has been sexually violated. All of the participants sympathise with SV survivors, feeling that what happened to them is not right. Six participants stated that the community also sympathises with them. Yet some participants stated that the community only feels sorry for the survivors, but does not do anything to assist them. Seven participants find the community unsupportive, as they gossip about them and are generally mean to them.

Only three participants said that anything is being done in Du Noon to address the SV. A crèche that has social workers that provide counselling, some churches that try to pray about it, and government social workers who call the SAPS, were identified as the parties that are doing something.

The majority of the participants felt that the main responsibility to address SV in Du Noon lies with everyone in the community. This is as it is happening in the community and it is community members who are perpetrating such acts, thus the community itself must take action to address it. Furthermore, everybody has the ability to do so, in various different and small ways. The church was identified second-most often. It is felt that it has many members, whom it can educate about SV and influence in general. Other responsible parties include parents, pastors, social workers, and community leaders.

In discussing what should be done to end SV, talking about SV and educating people about it, so they know what to do if it happens, where to get help, and how to prevent it. Secondly, the places where people are at risk must be addressed. For example, shebeens and clubs should be closed down and guards or patrolmen should be put in place in areas where old people are being sexually violated. Those who are at-risk must also be assisted more, either through deploying more policemen and social workers, or through community members assisting their neighbours (for example, providing food to hungry children). Community unity is seen as important to resolving SV, so people can stand together and not see each other as threats. Counselling and support groups for survivors are a way of addressing SV. Lastly, three participants felt that people should go to church and accept Christ, for that will change them for the better.

Eight of the 15 participants belonged to the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM). Interestingly, three participants did not belong to any church. The remaining four all belonged to independent churches. Nine of the participants stated that their churches are doing nothing to address SV. Two said their churches are doing something, which is praying and providing counselling.

The key thing that the church should be doing is creating community awareness of SV. This should be done through preaching, teaching, seminars and workshops. This will get the community to start talking about SV, which is currently not happening. Secondly, the church must pray about the issue. Church unity will be important to addressing SV comprehensively, thus the fighting and competition between churches must be resolved. Support to survivors, including counselling and support groups, must also be provided.

Interestingly, two participants did not really see a role for the church. One stated that it is more important that the community address the issue, since church leaders often do not live in the community. A second participant was quite scathing of the church, stating that “(m)ost people don’t want churches, don’t want to go to churches even if they have problems, so I don’t know what churches can do. People do not want to go to churches because churches have different sets of (petty rules).”

5.3.2 Individual interviews with leaders

The majority of the leaders felt that SV is a serious problem within Du Noon. Only two said that it is not such a big problem, with one adding that it is nevertheless a serious issue which is difficult to solve. It is important to note that the female community leader who said that SV is not a problem in the community, since she does not know of any cases, went on to later talk about the stresses in her life. One stress is the fact that her husband drinks too much over weekends and then proceeds to beat her and force her into certain sexual acts. It thus appears that there is not a clear understanding of what SV is, which is affecting some people’s perception of the scope of the problem.

Furthermore, disclosure remains rare. Children who are sexually violated do not disclose it and their parents do not want them to. Families are hiding the cases and, even though the community may know, nothing is ever done about it.

The overwhelming cause of SV is drug and alcohol abuse. Victims and perpetrators are often intoxicated and one community leader said that, with almost every case they are called in for, drugs or alcohol is involved. Alcohol is used by many as a way to survive their traumatic lives. Drug abuse has been sharply increasing in Du Noon, with some blaming the foreigners moving into Du Noon. The second main cause is poverty. Many people are unemployed and many go hungry. Thus they will prostitute themselves or their children in order to get food or money. A third cause is culture, with Xhosa culture normalising a male sense of superiority and men seeing it as their right to beat women. In the words of one (male Xhosa) leader: “The way we were raised undermines women.”

Only one participant could mention a person or institution that is doing something to address SV. The institution was a local church. Another leader stated that NGOs should be coming into Du Noon and assisting the community, especially in training them on healthy masculinity.

Generally, churches are not really doing anything to address SV. Even church leaders are despondent about their lack of action. A female NGO leader, who attends a church, condemned all churches in Du Noon for not supporting their members and the community in the ways that are needed, especially not with HIV and SV. A male pastor stated that they do try (as a church) to address SV, but are hampered by their own extreme poverty. Thus they cannot hand out the food or money that people need and that can prevent them from prostituting themselves. A male community leader explained why, according to him, churches are not engaging with SV:

The church should be playing a big role, but it isn't always so. There is a big gap between community members and church members. Church members think they are perfect, they think they don't have to connect with community members. It might be due to the way they interpret the scriptures. But the gospel is for the sinners! Church members distance themselves from the community.

One female community leader stated that the church is a safe haven for her in her abusive relationship. Just the fact that she can go there on Sundays makes her burdens lighter and makes it easier for her to cope with her life.

The key step for the church to take in addressing SV is to get actively involved in the community and the issue. It should stop only praying and reading the Bible. Such active involvement would include counselling and support groups for survivors. It would require that the church speaks about SV, train people about SV, and assist families with their SV problems (for example, help women decide how to deal with a boyfriend or husband that abuses her children). Practical assistance, such as providing food to the hungry, will also be needed.

Church unity remains a key prerequisite for the churches in Du Noon to be able to adequately address SV. Currently they are very fragmented, as many individuals wish to be leaders. In the words of one male church leader: "Everyone wants to be a bishop, so they rather stay separate." Churches also have different beliefs and ways of doing, which causes further divides. What is needed is that the leaders of the churches sit together and decide on a message and a strategy to address SV. Then they must speak with one voice, which means all their church members will have one voice, which will influence the community into having a united voice and stand on SV.

The leaders feel that the government is not doing anything about SV in Du Noon, but that it should. Partnership between government and the church in addressing SV could be possible, but then both parties first have to decide to actually get involved in addressing the issue.

In thinking of how SV should be addressed, funding emerged as a key problem. Churches and NGOs do not have the money, and do not know where to find it, to launch programmes and projects to address SV. Secondly, training on SV and how to address it is needed. Currently, both church and community leaders and members do not fully understand what SV is, what its causes are, and how it should be addressed. Especially training on counselling and how to assist survivors is needed.

5.3.3 Leader focus group

All of the leaders agreed that SV is a problem in Du Noon. Du Noon used to be a quiet, safe place, but in the last seven years it has become increasingly dangerous. The biggest cause of SV is drug and alcohol abuse. As a Muslim faith leader explained:

...if you drink then you don't know what you are doing, which means it can lead to anything, you can kill, you can rape, you can do anything, because you are drunk. But drinking comes from where we stay ...

The high rate of unemployment and the general economic situation has led to many people in Du Noon living in poverty. In an attempt to survive, many prostitute themselves or their children. Others stay in abusive relationships because the perpetrator is financially providing for them. Furthermore, the township is overcrowded, housing many more people than what it was designed for, and thus there are limited resources available. This again leads to some being exploited, and these people are usually women. The RDP housing that is available, as well as the shacks in which many are living, are overcrowded and leads to children witnessing their parents having sex. This results in children experimenting with sex at an early age and often with their own siblings.

With so many different people from different areas in a small space, children are under many different influences. If they do not receive good guidance from their parents, this can lead to bad decisions and actions. For example, the easy availability of pornography leads to many children and youth experimenting with sex in unsafe and/or violent ways, and children have also been forced to take part in pornographic films. The media is blamed for many of these unsafe influences, especially pornography. The church finds it difficult to counter these influences, as South African laws allow for it. For example, the way women and girls dress – especially the wearing of mini-skirts – are according to the leaders one of these negative influences that put women at risk, but is allowed by the constitution:

...that a brother and a sister, staying in the same (house), they are siblings, they are sleeping together, having sex ... why? Because of the exposure of their nakedness to each other ... it (says) the matter is there in the constitution, freedom of dressing. Now someone who's got his religious faith will say this is wrong but the constitution, the South African constitution says it is right, so in actual fact there is a conflict there...

The leaders displayed a general concern about youth. Youth are often, some leaders said usually, the targets of SV. Some parents prostitute their children, in order to get money or food for the family. It is also family members who are perpetrating SV against them. Furthermore, youth are targeted because they do not receive the education, support, encouragement and guidance that they need. Many parents have difficulty in guiding their children in the midst of all the negative influences that are present in Du Noon:

There's no longer one village, it is a global village. So we've got the media world that is bringing in all forms of entertainment even depicting what, pornographic material, even vulgar language, so we find it that some family, some family leaders (are not able to restrict their children as to what they can take and what they cannot take.

An issue that was discussed throughout the session is leadership within Du Noon. The group sees the lack of good and united leadership in Du Noon as one of the main reasons why SV is not adequately addressed. The group was of the opinion that Du Noon is a very fragmented community and that it extends to the leadership. Not only is it very difficult to get leaders to work together, it is difficult to even get them together at the same meeting: "Because even to get leader(s) in Du Noon, it is something not easy...Because each leaders wants to be in his quarter and do what he believes best." The church leaders feel that the political parties make it even more difficult to mobilise for an issue, because one is only listened to if one affiliates with a political party. If one is 'only' a church leader, there is not space for speaking out or mobilising people:

The presence of the church is not held in high regard by the political family, let's put it that way, because the way things are, (the political family believes) the political authority is above the church...If you are not a member of a party then, even if you are in church, (or a) church leader, (they believe) there is very little that is going to be learnt from you.

In order to be able to address SV in Du Noon, the different leaders in Du Noon must unite. The group suggested some ways in which this can be done. In order to get all leaders together, a neutral space with a neutral facilitator must be used. In such a meeting SV must be discussed, facilitated by the neutral individual. Furthermore, it must be ensured that all leaders are present (political, religious and government leaders).

In discussing what the church is currently doing about SV, the church is preaching on moral and religious principles, based on the Bible, and at times presenting workshops and camps. Yet it is facing considerable challenges. For example, churches are not allowed access to schools, so they cannot reach youth in such a way. The biggest challenge, though, is poverty. The churches are poor, for their members are poor. With so much of SV being a consequence of poverty, it is difficult for the church to resolve it, for it does not have the money or resources to assist those in need. Lastly, two pastors told of how they counselled women who were prostituting themselves in order to survive. In both cases the women repented and turned to the pastor, expecting him to save her from poverty. This makes it difficult for church leaders to address SV and counsel survivors, for they cannot change survivors' immediate (challenging) reality:

I remembered, I have counselled (a woman who was) dating a married person, okay? Now, counselling this person (I) said, this is not what our God tells us to do, now she breaks into tears, telling, "but now I feel like stopping this, I don't like it but I don't have food, but I don't have money for rent, Pastor, okay pray for me to get a job", now it's oh my God, (now I'm responsible for her).

In discussing what the church should be doing, the leaders felt that SV and general abuse within a marriage is something that is easier for the church and church leaders to address. While it is challenging if one of the partners do not belong to the church, it is still a SV context that is relatively accessible to the church:

Yes. So, abuse inside marriage, is... one the church can easily be (involved in), it is easier for the church to handle that. You see, within the church capacity we are, the couples just need to be (properly) educated.

Secondly, the church should educate people on SV and its related issue. Yet, in order to do so with authority and credibility, church leaders must make sure their own lives, with their own families, are an example:

In education you can say the pastors, the leader, the church leaders can preach or educate people in church but before they go in church, all those pastors and church leaders, they've got their families, that's where that saying says ... when you clean, first clean inside before going outside because you can't clean outside there while inside is dark... Get it? The same, you can't preach there in church, first sort out inside. If you, we've got kids, first educate them your kids before you go and educate other people there in outside.

Thirdly, the church should be addressing the issue of poverty (and thus SV) by offering alternative ways for people to source money. The church can provide micro-loans for people, so they can start small businesses. It will be needed to partner with organisations in order to find the funding to do so, but it is possible.

Lastly, it was suggested that, in order to address SV, a workshop should be presented to church leaders. It must be done in a neutral space by a neutral expert. The church leaders can then go and deliver that same message to the people in their church, thus disseminating the information and message to the larger community. Learning from their experiences with previous workshops, the leaders find it important that facilitators spend a lot of time on training attendees on implementation:

(A workshop we attended on conflict resolution) was very good, but now when it comes to getting down on the ground to do what you have been taught to do, it is something else. So this is where we really, maybe we have to come up (with) a good strategy or following up... and that's the most critical one because whatever you are given, the whole idea is not for us to have it, it is for us to use so that we can implement it... So this is where facilitators must make sure that they put a lot of stuff, a lot of effort..

5.3.4 Nominal group with community members

The group came up with the following suggestions for how the church should be addressing SV:

1. Churches must unite, work together
2. Pray
3. People must unite, work together
4. Train church and community members on what to do if sexually violated
5. Let SV experts speak in church
6. Church members must be approachable, and help community members
7. Have events that educate people on what SV is
8. Teach people to respect each other
9. Have activities and spaces that keep kids busy and safe
10. Have a shelter for at-risk people
11. Have a feeding scheme (prevention)
12. Youth members must recruit more youth (so they are not so at-risk)
13. Have youth Bible Studies every evening
14. Teach about the risks of doing drugs
15. Have job creation projects

After two rounds of voting the following ideas were prioritised by the group:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Joint #1: | Churches must unite, work together |
| | Have job creation projects |
| #2: | Teach about the risks of doing drugs |
| #3: | Have activities and spaces that keep kids busy and safe |

5.4 Key findings

SV is happening in DU Noon, but it appears as if there is **less of an awareness** of it, compared to the other communities. More people do not personally know someone who has been sexually violated. Yet one tends to think it is a serious problem nevertheless, as the overwhelming majority of the participants still think it is a big problem, and also because of the instance where a leader denied any SV in her area, then proceeded to describe her own experienced with her husband who was sexually violating her, which she did not consider as SV.

One of the possible reasons why awareness of SV is less is because survivors do not disclose. This is arguably partly due to the very **fragmented** nature of the Du Noon community. If one has lived in Du

Noon for ten years one is considered to be a very, very old resident. With the 15 survey participants, only 2 have lived in Du Noon for more than ten years, and the majority have lived there for five years or less. With the constant influx of new people from all over South Africa and Africa, a sense of community and fellowship is not developing.

This fragmentation extends to churches. Du Noon has many different churches (one leader stated that there are currently 48 churches in the township) who generally view each other as competition. Despite belonging to the same faith, they do not work together and often do not even meet together. This can arguably be blamed on the church leaders, as many aim to keep their power, at the expense of creating unity.

The problem with **leadership** extends to the political realm as well. Du Noon is torn apart by the fighting between different political parties. The result is that even around issues that are of common concern, such as SV, leaders and their factions do not unite to address it. Church and political leaders are guilty of this. The lack of unity, within the church, leadership and the community in general, was often mentioned as one of the causes of SV, as well as one of the issues that must most urgently be resolved.

SV was mostly discussed with **youth and children** being described as the victims and strangers being the perpetrators. Yet in Du Noon many participants explained that this is a result of parents prostituting their children for money or food, and not strangers abducting and violating children or youth. Youth are not receiving the guidance, care and support that they need from their **parents**. Parents are not being the examples that they should be.

Drug and alcohol abuse was identified as the biggest direct cause of SV. People who are intoxicated or high easily perpetrate sexually violent acts. With drugs becoming increasingly available in Du Noon, drug and alcohol abuse is rife, partly because people see it as a 'easy' escape from their immediate problems.

Poverty was described as a major cause of SV and also one of the reasons why SV is not being addressed. Du Noon is a very poor community, with high unemployment. Thus some adults, youth and children prostitute themselves (or are forced to do so) in order to survive. Others choose partners based on their ability to provide, which easily leads to SV, or stay in abusive relationships simply because they have no other way to survive.

This is a challenge for any SV intervention, for one has to either offer alternative ways of handling poverty or eradicate the poverty. Thus one has to provide money, food, clothing and housing, or create jobs, so people can provide for themselves. This is challenging for any institution, but especially for institutions based in Du Noon, for they themselves are usually also poor.

Du Noon is seriously **overcrowded**. It has more inhabitants than it was designed to accommodate. The RDP houses and shacks are filled to overflowing, as is the township in general. There is simply not enough space for everyone. This facilitates SV, as it is difficult to supervise one's children and for youth and children to find safe spaces to play. People have little or no privacy or security.

Little is being done to address the SV in Du Noon, not by government, the church, civil society in general, or the community. Du Noon does not even have its own police station. This might explain the almost fatalistic attitude of many participants. They do not see how SV can be resolved in such circumstances.

The **church's role** is not being fulfilled, as it is doing very little to address SV. This is partly due to its own fragmentation. Church leaders are so busy playing their power games that they have little time for the actual problems in the community. Secondly, the churches' members are Du Noon citizens.

This means that the churches are poor, for their members are poor. Thus they find it difficult to address SV, which they see largely as being a result of poverty. Churches are expected, though, to unite and take an active role in educating the Du Noon community, especially through targeting the youth. Furthermore, it must help address the general poverty, through job-creation projects and through practical assistance of those in need.

Chapter 6

Findings and recommendations

The following section summarises the main findings from all four of the research sites. It is followed by a set of recommendations on how the church should be involved in addressing SV in South Africa.

6.1 Findings

The findings set out in the following section are based on the research participants' experiences, opinions and ideas.

6.1.1 The context

Everywhere it was agreed that SV is a **serious problem**. Nevertheless, the church, community and survivors are still hesitant to speak about it and survivors prefer to not disclose it. Thus the participants' opinion on the seriousness of SV was not necessarily based on factual knowledge of the quantity of SV cases, but more on the nature of the violence and their instinctive impression of how common it is in their community.

SV was mostly discussed as targeting **youth and children** and perpetrated by adults. It is not clear whether it is necessarily the case that SV against youth and children is more common than another form of SV. It might be that this is the kind of SV that is being disclosed, as the survivors and their families are relatively sure that they will receive support from the community. It might also be that it is cases of child and elderly SV that are getting community and press attention and thus the ones that people are more aware of. With SV within relationships, on the other hand, is a less clear-cut form of SV, especially due to traditional constructs of relationships, and such survivors are therefore less willing to disclose. It can also be that such survivors are not even aware of it being SV, as was the case with one Du Noon community leader.

Nevertheless, the fact that youth and children are common SV targets is very worrying. Various reasons for their vulnerable state were offered. They are not properly supervised by their parents, are not raised and disciplined properly by their parents and thus engage in risky activities, and do not have anything to occupy their free time nor have safe spaces to be in.

The vulnerability of youth is directly related to the **poor quality of parenting**. It was for the participants in each of the research sites a great concern that parents do not have the willpower and/or time to socialise, educate, encourage and guide their children. Parents do this as they are drinking or high, apathetic, or literally or emotionally absent. This is especially the case with fathers, and children are raised without good role-models.

Even worse, parents are at times the ones perpetrating the abuse. SV was often defined as perpetrated against a child by their parent/s. This is especially the case where a household has children from different sets of parents. In cases of poverty, some parents also prostitute their children to paying adults. Lastly, some parents implicitly condone the SV perpetrated against their children by not reporting it, as the perpetrator is the financial provider for the family. Children also find it difficult to report SV to their parents, due to poor communication in the family and/or knowing that the parent will blame them.

Bad parenting was explained as often being the result of a repetitive cycle, i.e. bad parents were themselves raised by bad parents. Parents default on the form of parenting they themselves were exposed to. Furthermore, parents within abusive relationships often abuse their own children, even

if they care for and are fiercely protective of them. The abusive nature of the intimate relationship affects the entire family.

SV perpetrators are often someone from **within the family**, for example a father, stepfather, uncle or cousin. This makes disclosure especially difficult, as the victim fears being disbelieved and/or tearing the family apart. The family themselves also often take a role in covering up the SV, which can then continue. This seems to lead to the type of situation where entire households have been sexually violated, where all the men in a family have sexually violated at least one woman, or where generations of women within the same family have all been sexually violated. It appears as if SV within a family contributes to the normalising of the act for all family members.

This is (possibly) related to the issue of **repeated victimisation**. Almost all of the survivors who took part in this study have experienced more than one sexual violation, perpetrated by different men and women in different situations and at different times of their lives. One can argue that they put themselves at risk repeatedly, but many of their stories revealed that they did not engage in any risky behaviour. This issue of repeated victimisation is difficult to explain from the data at hand. While some of the survivors were continuously within sexually abusive situations (for example growing up in a family of men who rape, where all of the women in the family have been raped), others could not be explained so easily. One wonders whether South Africa is simply such a risky place that SV can just happen repeatedly.

The issue of **anger** was also brought up. Survivors were described as being angry, youth were said to be angry, and South African society was reported to be angry. This anger is both a cause and consequence of SV.

6.1.2 The causes

The main cause of SV, identified in all four research locations, is **drug and alcohol abuse**. In all of the communities the participants felt that drug use is increasing at an alarming rate. SV can usually also be tied in, directly or indirectly, with drug or alcohol abuse. SV perpetrators and victims are often high or intoxicated when the SV is perpetrated. Addicts engage in risky behaviour in order to get money for their drug or alcohol of choice. Yet drug and alcohol abuse is also a consequence of SV. Many survivors related how they turned to especially alcohol in an attempt to forget the traumatic event.

Another cause is **overcrowding**. In all of the research locations the governmental RDP houses were mentioned specifically. Especially with the one-bedroom RDP houses, all of the family is forced to sleep in one room. Houses and shacks usually have to provide shelter for more than it was designed for. This means children are sharing beds with other children and/or adults and are often in the same room as people who are having sex. This can lead to early, unsafe sexual experimentation and/or SV, whether perpetrated by adult or peer.

Poverty is a key cause of SV. Many poor people choose a partner because that person has financial means, which gives the financially-secure person the power within the relationship. Some turn to prostitution in order to get money, while others prostitute their children. Poverty is also contributing to non-disclosure, with many survivors and/or the families of survivors refusing to disclose, as the perpetrator is the financial provider of the family.

Culture was identified as one of the main causes of gender inequality, which in turn facilitates SV. In many cases participants also directly blamed culture for the preponderance of SV in the community. Cultures which identify men as superior to women are guilty of creating the expectation that all women have to submit to a man's sexual wishes. Cultural beliefs, such as that women who drink alcohol or wear mini-skirts are promiscuous, contribute to SV and to SV survivors not receiving the

support they need. Some participants felt that such beliefs are a corruption of their particular culture, or are part of a 'new' culture that has developed among most South African men, which constructs women as something to be conquered and owned.

The **language** that is used creates an environment conducive to SV. The terms used to refer to women and the way people speak about women is often misogynistic and upholds gender inequality. Even the jokes people make and find humorous create a climate that condones gender inequality and the disempowerment of women. In churches, the liturgy and hymns usually reflect the same gender insensitivity and privileging of the male. Language has an insidious way of influencing people. Thus, though people might find patriarchal and chauvinist humour and language harmless, it paves the way for acts of gender inequality and SV.

The theology that is done by churches can also be, and is often, **misogynistic theology**. Texts are read, interpreted and preached in ways that advance men at the expense of women and is then used as a justification of various acts that violate the dignity of women.

The **abuse of the grant system** is seen as both a cause and a consequence of SV and abuse. In all of the communities participants stated that the grant system is being abused. Young girls have babies in order to get a child grant. Some even drink alcohol excessively during pregnancy, so the child is born with FAS and they can get the higher disabled-child grant. These children, whether disabled or not, is often neglected by their parents. Thus they are easy targets for SV perpetrators and the cycle of neglect and abuse continues.

The **way women dress** was discussed by many participants in each research location. Particularly mini-skirts were vilified for enticing men, who were described (by male participants) as unable to control their sexual reactions. Thus women were indirectly blamed for the SV that they fall victim to. Some of the participants from the refugee community countered this, saying that men from certain cultures do not react in such a way to mini-skirts, and that men can therefore not say they automatically, unavoidably react in such a way. Other causes that indirectly blame women for being sexually violated were that they go to shebeens and clubs and drink alcohol, and that they walk alone at night.

6.1.3 Addressing sexual violence

It is clear that **very little is being done** to address SV in the community. Interventions that were mentioned were of a small scale and/or short duration. Most participants did not know of any interventions within their community. While this does not necessarily mean that there are no interventions, it does indicate that SV is an issue that is not receiving attention within the community. The government, civil society, and the church are all guilty of doing very little about SV.

Addressing SV is made even more of a challenge by the fact that **communities are fragmented**. It is one of the reasons why community leaders do not initiate interventions and programmes that address SV. Each group is only focused on itself and every leader focused on protecting its constituency from 'poaching' leaders. Thus there is not only no joint effort to address SV, SV is not even considered important in comparison to the community leadership politics. This fragmentation extends to churches and the political scene as well. It thus appears that the community is so busy fighting one another (on various levels), that it does not even realise that SV is a problem, not to mention a problem affecting everyone.

In looking at the refugee community, one sees clearly the effect of having a unified sense of community. The refugees, while coming from different countries and living in different places in Durban, have a very clear sense of identity and community. This means they support one another on various levels. Their community leaders are respected and constantly active in identifying

problematic issues and individuals. Leaders confront perpetrators (of various acts) and are usually listened to. Leaders are also launching interventions, such as workshops or seminars, to address problems that are affecting the entire refugee community.

The first step towards addressing SV is to create awareness of SV. This must be done through various ways of **SV education**. The community needs to be educated on what SV is and its causes and consequences, but also issues directly and indirectly related to SV, such as sexuality, parenting, human rights, communication, counselling, etc. This can be done through workshops, seminars, campaigns, rallies, educational pamphlets, or church preaching and teaching.

An important part of addressing SV is **addressing the needs of SV survivors**. All of the SV survivors who took part in this study received no or very little support. The community is experienced as judgemental. The questions asked by the SAPS at reporting of SV was for everyone one of the most traumatic experiences they have ever had.

Based on what SV survivors communicated during the research, their main need is for a supportive space where they can disclose and receive practical assistance and support, as well as attend support groups. A key prerequisite for such safe spaces is that it must be confidential spaces. Those who work with survivors must be aware of the importance of keeping information confidential and honouring confidentiality.

A decided gap in the research is the fact that no male SV survivors formed part of it. This was as none could be identified by the partner organisations and as a survivor focus group remains challenging to do if both genders are present. Yet this means that the particular needs of male SV survivors are not given a voice in this research. Nevertheless, one would believe that confidential, supportive spaces are also important to male SV survivors.

The challenge to creating such supporting spaces and to addressing SV in general, is that a **culture of volunteerism seems to be lacking** in South African society. People do not want to engage in activities for which they are not paid. While participants acknowledged the fact that people are poor, they nevertheless feel there is no excuse for not volunteering some of your time. Especially as most of the participants see SV as a community problem that must be resolved by community members.

6.1.4 The church

In all of the sessions the participant was asked to discuss what the church is currently doing about SV and what the church should be doing about SV. From the responses it appears that the church is doing woefully little in responding to SV. This is understood to be because the church does not see SV as an issue it should be addressing, and it is concerning itself with 'higher' matters, such as prayer, Bible reading, and messages of salvation.

Yet participants are expecting the church to do exactly the opposite. It should embrace SV as its own issue, as it is one that is truly affecting the people that the church is supposed to serve. The church must **take action** and not just talk about, or even against SV. Talking is no longer enough.

In taking action, the following key areas were identified for the church. Firstly, it must take a leading role in **creating awareness and educating the community** about SV. The church is perfectly suited for this role, as it has presence and authority in every community. Education should be done on SV and all its direct and indirect causes and consequences. Workshops, seminars, rallies and campaigns are just some of the ways in which this can be done. Creating awareness will go some way to enabling disclosure, as survivors will realise the extent of their circumstances and what can be done

about it, and (hopefully) also create a more supportive environment for survivors. Through awareness the community can also be mobilised to confront perpetrators and report them.

Awareness-raising and education should have a special focus on men and youth. With VAW a lot of the focus is on women. Yet training for men, on issues such as healthy sexuality, alternative masculinity, healthy gender relations, and gender equality, will be of particular value. Another focus should be on youth, especially since they appear to be a particular SV target. Youth-friendly materials and ways of training should be designed. Alternative ways of education, such as through mentoring, can be particularly effective with boys who have no positive role-models.

Secondly, the church must get **involved at grassroots-level** in the community. For church leaders this will mean going to people's houses, even if not invited. Church leaders must not wait until a parishioner or community members discloses a problem, but must go if he/she hears about there being a problem. In order to hear about such things, church leaders have to be actively involved in their communities. Addressing issues and confronting perpetrators will be an act of boldness, but must nevertheless be done. Furthermore, the church must become a space where all community members can go for help, not only church members.

Thirdly, the church must **confront the SV in its own constituency**. Many church leaders and members are guilty of perpetrating SV, but are not confronted by the church leadership because they are persons of authority. But the church can only have the credibility to address SV in the community if it confronts and eradicates the SV in the church.

Fourthly, the church must **partner** with other churches, the government and civil society in order to address SV. Churches must unify around the issue of SV. Thus SV can have a positive consequence, as it can be a way for churches to overcome their fragmentation. Churches must also partner with civil society and the church, as together they can design and implement a multi-level response to SV. At the same time the church must always be careful in their workings with the government, so that it is not co-opted in political agendas and does not lose its independence and ability to address governmental wrongdoing.

Fifthly, the church has a key role to play in **support to survivors**. This includes a place to disclose, receive counselling and join support groups. In order to do so, church leaders need to be trained on SV and counselling. Yet church members in general must also be trained. It is very challenging for a church leader to pastorally serve all of the church members. With church members being trained on SV and counselling, they can start to serve one another. Furthermore, church leaders also need support. Many are traumatised by their own experiences, or experience secondary trauma from serving their church members.

Lastly, while decided action is needed from the church, its traditional roles of **prayer and salvation** should not be forgotten. Many participants believe that only God can truly end SV and SV must thus constantly be prayed about. Furthermore, people should join and attend church in order to be guided in living a safe life.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the key findings identified during the research, the following section gives recommendations for how the church can address SV. There is a considerable focus on prevention of SV, rather than care of survivors (although it is also addressed). This is due to the fact that prevention was emphasised by the research participants.

The overwhelming majority of the participants felt that the church must serve the whole community and not only its church members. The following section separates the measures that must be

implemented internally from those that have an external focus, though of course it is rather simplistic to separate it in such a way.

6.2.1 Internally

The following steps must be implemented within the church:

- **Resolve SV taking place within the church**

The fact that prominent church leaders and members are committing SV is often ignored due to their status within the faith community. This has to end. The church cannot address SV with any credibility if its own leaders and members are still committing SV with impunity. This is especially important in the case of church leaders, as their action set an example to the entire church community.
- **First focus on church leaders**

In order to be able to guide their congregation and community in addressing SV, church leaders must first be trained and supported into truly understanding and committing themselves to it. The church's SV interventions will not carry any credibility if its own leaders do not practice the principles that it is trying to instil. Church leaders need to be examples.
- **'Own' SV**

Many churches have ignored the issue of SV, seeing their own responsibilities as more spiritual. This has to end. The church must publically recognise that SV is a serious problem in the community and the church, and that it is the church's responsibility to address it. Appropriate actions must of course be taken, so that it is not only words. Truly engaging with SV will require much from leaders. They will need to be trained on many different issues. Yet, more importantly, many will need to change their outlook on gender relationships, women and sexuality (to name but a few). For many it will mean countering their traditional cultural beliefs. Church leaders will thus need to be trained, guided, encouraged and supported continuously.
- **Address fragmentation**

Churches fail to be effective social agents of change, as they are often too caught up in internal struggles, or struggles with other churches. While recognising that different churches espouse different beliefs and practices, these differences can and should be overcome in recognition of the fact that SV is a very serious problem affecting everyone. The fighting between churches makes the church as a whole lose credibility within the community. Uniting around SV can be an important first step towards general unity amongst churches. The churches in a community must have a unified message and stance towards SV. They should also partner in interventions that address SV, as they serve the same community and as they can save money in doing it in such a way. Furthermore, if all of the churches proclaim and carry the same message and attitude towards SV, it creates a much stronger pressure group.
- **Change misogynistic language and theology**

The liturgies and hymns that are used in churches display gender insensitivity and promote a biased presentation of men at the expense of women. Adapting these liturgies and hymns is a long-term, challenging process, yet an important one. In doing so one counters the subtle way in which the official language used in church creates attitudes conducive to gender inequality and SV. In adapting liturgies and hymns, one can look for examples (and even just copy) the changes made by denominations that have already committed to gender sensitive official language, such as the Methodist Church. Another challenge is to counter the misogynistic exegesis and preaching done by many church leaders. Many leaders interpret Scripture in a way that benefits men at the expense of women, often through a cultural reading and interpretation of the text. As church leaders preach these interpretations from the pulpit, it has a decided effect on the church and the community in general. Addressing such misogynistic theology can be addressed in two ways. Firstly, gender must be mainstreamed at seminary level, so that pastors learn to always read and interpret texts with an awareness of gender. This would also entail teaching pastors how to counter the

negative effects of inculturation, i.e. that they do not simply understand and use Biblical texts to justify cultural practices. Secondly, church members must also be trained, so they can recognise biased, misogynistic interpretations of texts.

- **Create a culture of volunteerism**

One of the big challenges that church leaders face is burn-out. In order to be able to address SV as a church, it cannot only be the church leader/s that do so. Church leaders must therefore be equipped on how to grow and nurture a culture of volunteerism within their congregations.

- **Overwork and traumatising of church leaders**

Within the church structures there should be counselling and support available to church leaders. Whether they are SV survivors themselves, or suffering from the secondary trauma of dealing with the issue, church leaders also need support. If the denominational structures do not provide such support, church members themselves can do it, by assigning one or two people to counsel and support the church leader/s. In such situations it will require the church leader to communicate his need for such support. An alternative method, which can promote inter-church unity, is that different churches' leaders can provide such support and counselling to one another.

- **Mainstream gender**

In addressing SV the church must be careful that gender equality, SV, and related issues are not assigned a separate space, with a certain set of leaders and church members who concerns themselves with it. Gender and SV must be mainstreamed. All church leaders and all church members must address the causes and consequences of SV in all of the spheres that they are active in.

- **Make SV a theological concern, not only a pastoral one**

When churches do address SV, the focus is usually (only) on the social distress and pain caused by the act and on the importance of church action as a form of Godly love. Yet, if SV is seen as only a pastoral concern, it becomes one of the many social issues on the Christian agenda, where it runs the risk of being displaced by other issues that the church finds more comfortable to address. Therefore it is of key importance that the pastoral motivation be linked to a theological motivation. SV should be seen, described and recognised as part of the Christian story.²

6.2.2 Externally

The church should not only focus on its internal structures and actions in addressing SV. It should also have a very strong external focus. This would entail the following:

- **Serve the entire community**

The church has to change the mind-set that the Christians in its congregation are the only people that they must serve. A church in a community must serve the entire community, not with the aim of gaining new members, but as it is the reason why the church is within the community. All SV interventions must aim to address SV within the entire community and assist any SV survivor. The community should experience the church as a place where they can go for help and will be warmly welcomed and accepted.

- **Education**

The key role for the church is to educate people on SV and all the issues contributing to and flowing from it. Creating awareness will (arguably) lead to more disclosure and reporting of SV, a more supportive environment for survivors, and to the addressing of issues contributing to SV.

² The work of David Tombs explores the importance of both a pastoral *and* theological approach to SV. See, for example, his *Crucifixion, state terror and sexual abuse* (1999) and the upcoming *Silent no more: Sexualised violence in conflict as a challenge to the worldwide church*. Challenging interpretations of theological texts can be disturbing, but in the process lead to recognition of the SV at the heart of the biblical story. For example, Tombs explores the death of Saul and the Passion of Jesus of Nazareth as two examples of SVAM, to be read alongside other well-known biblical passages on SVAW.

Furthermore, it appears that, despite media and educational emphasis on gender equality, South African people still do not fully understand, or have not taken ownership of, the concept. The church, as a trusted institution, can arguably have a greater impact in helping people to understand and embrace the gender equality.

Trainings should be done in a gender- and age-aware manner. Therefore, where needed, men and women should be split into separate groups, or children, youth, adults and the elderly must be taught in separate groups. When and how such groups should be formed will depend on each individual church.

In terms of education, the church should focus on the following topics in order to address SV comprehensively:

- Defining SV
- Causes and consequences of SV
- What to do if you've been sexually violated
- Human rights
- Gender equality
- Parenting
- Sex
- Sexuality
- Healthy relationships
- Communication
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Entrepreneurship
- Counselling
- Supporting SV survivors
- Volunteering

A central body that can develop the curricula needed for these education sessions, and do train-the-trainer sessions, will mean that every church or church denomination need not develop its own curricula. This will mean a saving in time and money and also enable churches to have a unified voice and message.

Different ways of educating the community should be used. For example:

- Workshops
- Seminars
- Campaigns
- Booklets/pamphlets
- Sunday School sessions
- Teachings during sermons

- **Parenting**

The state of parenting is a serious concern. Many of the current generation of parents did not have 'proper' parents either and thus have no example of how good parenting is done. Lack of good parenting and parenting skills is actively contributing to the vulnerability of children and youth, and their exposure to SV.

The church must get involved in this issue. Workshops on parenting, but also parenting support groups, will be of much value. Church leaders must also step in where they see parents are not doing an adequate job, either by confronting them or (if needs be) reporting it to Welfare.

In cases where people cannot be guided into becoming better parents, the church must provide alternative role-models. A system of mentoring, where one adult takes personal responsibility for a few children of the same gender, is a way in which the church can provide positive role-models and guidance to children and youth without proper parents.

- **Children and youth**

In addressing SV there must be a special focus on children and youth. They are being targeted by SV perpetrators. One of the main reasons why children and youth fall victim to SV is because they are not properly supervised. The church can help in this regard, especially since many churches own buildings that are not used in the week during the day. Churches should open

aftercare facilities, where children and youth can go after school until their parents return from work. At such a facility they can get a meal, do their homework, and engage in activities that are safe and educational.

The church should also attempt to create spaces and activities that are inviting to youth, but at the same time safe and positive. Camps, youth groups, dance clubs, and supervised dances are all ways to keep youth occupied safely and in a positive way.

Generally, though, the church must make sure that their SV messages and initiatives are tailored in such a way that it speaks directly to children and youth as well, and not only to adults.

- **Go into the community**

While churches are located within the community, many church leaders do not go out into the community, but wait for those in need to come to them. Such an approach will not work with SV. Church leaders need to be bold and go to individuals and homes where they know there are survivors and/or perpetrators. In order to be able to identify these individuals and homes, they need to be actively involved in the community. They need to do home visits, attend community functions, chat to people on the street, etc. in order to know what is going on in the community, but also to make it clear to community members that they are accessible people.

This should not be limited to church leaders. Church leaders should equip and motivate church members to display the same commitment and boldness. If church members become such agents, the community changes to one where SV is not and cannot be hidden.

- **Sexual violence within families**

To a certain extent SV within families is the most worrying context in which it takes place. SV within a family is easily hidden and destroys the family bonds that are very important for healthy socialisation of children and the security of family members in general. During the research process, SV within families was identified as the setting in which SV happens most often.

Therefore the church should have a special focus on addressing SV within the family. This will include it in its various forms, namely between husband and wife or boyfriend and girlfriend, between a child and adult, and between siblings/young family members. While these are obviously very difficult issues to address, general family interventions, such as family counselling, family camps and family services are ways in which work can be done with the entire family.

- **Support SV survivors**

The church should also focus on assisting and supporting SV survivors. This could and should be done in the following ways:

- Creating a safe space where survivors can disclose
- Counselling
- Support groups

In providing support it is of the utmost importance that those involved understand the importance of confidentiality. A way in which church leaders can facilitate this is by having everyone involved sign confidentiality agreements. While this does not necessarily mean they will not tell others, it does emphasise and formalise the importance of keeping the survivors' information and stories confidential.

In order to be able to create such safe counselling spaces, church leaders and everyone involved in providing these services must be trained. For example, one has to be sure that, should a survivor come to a church leader and disclose that her husband is sexually violating her, the church leader does not respond by saying she must submit. Thus it is very important that everyone involved in supporting survivors are trained on SV, its causes and consequences, counselling skills, and do not support discriminating cultural and religious beliefs and practices about women. A good suggestion would be to make survivors (who are ready to do so) counsellors.

Survivors should also be assisted in the practicalities of addressing SV. The church should provide someone to accompany a survivor when he/she goes to report the case at the police station. This person must support and guide the survivor through the process and also protect the survivor from mistreatment by police officers. Should the case go to court, survivors must be

supported throughout the process, especially by defending and protecting survivors from intimidation by the perpetrators.

Furthermore, counselling should not only be provided to the survivor of SV. Especially in the case of continuous SV and GBV within a relationship, the children in the family are often very traumatised. Counselling for children and family members should be offered. Group counselling sessions, to assist the survivor and her children/family in healing their wounds, should be available.

Lastly, the safe spaces that are created must also be accessible and inviting to men. VAM is a reality, yet men find it difficult to access support services and counselling. For this reason it is especially important that male counsellors should be trained and that, amongst those who provide supportive services, there should be a realisation of the reality of VAW and traumatised men.

Effort should be put into inviting people to these safe spaces. A possible way would be to have a church service that invites those with hurt and pain to come for anointing (such as was done in Bredasdorp). After such 'first contact' has been made they can be invited for counselling and/or support groups.

- **Addressing drugs and alcohol**

Drug and alcohol abuse was identified as the main cause of SV. While this remains a very difficult issue to address, there are some ways the church can and should be involved in this issue.

Firstly, the church should openly oppose and condemn drug and alcohol abuse. While many churches condemn drug use, they are less vigorous to oppose alcohol, possibly as so many of their members (and leaders) abuse alcohol, and possibly because alcohol abuse have become normalised in many communities. Secondly, the church should teach people, especially youth, on the effects of drug and alcohol abuse. Thirdly, churches should form community watches over weekends. They can patrol the neighbourhoods and assist those too intoxicated or high to get home safely. This has been done to great effect in some communities. Fourthly, church leaders and members must report drug dealers and illegal shebeens to the police. In many communities people do not report due to a mistaken sense of loyalty, or fear.

Ideally, the church should create such healthy unity within the community that it becomes a space where drug and alcohol abuse is not tolerated.

- **Addressing poverty**

Poverty was identified as one of the main causes of SV. Churches feel unable to address SV as they themselves are also poor. While recognising that lack of money does inhibit church response, it is important that churches realise that not all SV is due to poverty, and that not only money can fix SV. Even though poor, the church can still engage in initiatives (such as those already identified) that can address SV.

Yet the church can also address the issue of poverty by, for example, teaching on entrepreneurship. Or it can partner with a NGO or government that can provide funding for small micro-loans as start-up capital for small businesses. These are all activities that the church can engage in to assist people in overcoming poverty, even if it is poor itself. What will be needed is for the church to change its approach and understanding of SV, so that it does not only see money as the solution to SV.

- **Partnering**

SV is a huge problem that requires a multi-level response. Churches should thus partner with government, civil society, etc. in an attempt to create the needed range of responses. Different organisations and/or institutions have different strengths and all of these are needed in order to address SV adequately. Such partnering can also facilitate community unity.

With working with government the church should be careful in how these partnerships are constructed. The government has been guilty of forcing churches to accept its (political) agenda. The church should be a neutral voice, speaking for or against government based on a unbiased evaluation of the situation. If the church is too closely affiliated with government, it loses its ability to be a watchdog.

At the same time, the church should be more unified in order to make it easier for the government to work with the church. At the moment there are so many different factions and coalitions, often undermining one another, that it is challenging for the government to know with whom they must be working.

- **Advocacy**

The church must play an advocacy role in SV, especially in getting the government to address issues that is its responsibility. For example, the corrupt and ineffective judicial system, which results in many perpetrators going free, must be fixed. The church should advocate for this, on behalf of the community. Issues that the church should advocate on are:

- The judicial system
- The treatment of survivors by the SAPS
- Job creation
- The legal age for sexual relations

- **Prayer**

While the church has been condemned for only praying about SV, it does not mean it must stop praying. The church is based on its belief in a God that has the ability to address issues that seem impossible to mankind, and prayer as a way of communication with and supplication to this God. Thus, while action is important and much-needed, churches should continue praying.

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