

CSW62 – BUILDING BRIDGES

Co-hosted by:



PERMANENT MISSION OF DENMARK TO THE UN IN NEW YORK
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

actalliance



In partnership with:



tearfund



**JOINT LEARNING INITIATIVE on
FAITH & LOCAL COMMUNITIES**



World Vision

#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

CSW62: BUILDING BRIDGES

Opening remarks

The Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations,

H.E Ambassador Ib Petersen



PERMANENT MISSION OF DENMARK TO THE UN IN NEW YORK

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

What is the 'harm' in harmful traditional practices: findings from the Joint Learning Initiative's research

Dr. Selina Palm

Researcher, Faculty of Theology, Unit for Religion and Development Research, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

@selinapalm



UNIVERSITEIT
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY

JOINT LEARNING INITIATIVE on
FAITH & LOCAL COMMUNITIES

#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Background

- **Consortium lead**
- Veena O'Sullivan
- **Research team**
- Elisabet le Roux, Brenda Bartelink, Selina Palm, Shereen El Feki, Elizabeth Dartnall, Diana J. Arango, Stacy Nam
- **FBOs/NGOs**
- CAFOD, Christian Aid, World Vision UK, ABAAD, Lutheran World Federation, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Episcopal Relief and Development, IMA World Health, US

Methodology

- Literature review
- Five case studies
- Online survey

- 1) FGM/C
- 2) Child and Early Marriage (CEM)
- 3) Son Preference
- 4) Honour-Related Violence (HRV)



HTP – HCP – HP – a contested concept

- **Traditional cultural practices** reflect values and beliefs held by members of a community for periods often spanning generations. Every social grouping in the world has specific traditional cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial to all members, while others are harmful to a specific group, such as women.... These harmful traditional practices include female genital mutilation (FGM); forced feeding of women; early marriage; the various taboos or practices which prevent women from controlling their own fertility; nutritional taboos and traditional birth practices; son preference and its implications for the status of the girl child; female infanticide; early pregnancy; and dowry price... Despite their harmful nature and their violation of international human rights laws, such practices persist because they are not questioned and take on an aura of morality in the eyes of those practicing them (OCHR 1995)
- **HPs - Persistent practices** and behaviours that are grounded on discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, age and other grounds as well as multiple and/or intersecting forms of discrimination that often involve violence and cause physical and/or psychological harm or suffering. (CEDAW 2014)



Key findings

What are we seeing?

#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

What's the harm with HTPs?

And we really had a pushback from the traditional leaders from that community when they heard us talking to the number of harmful traditional practices. And you know, they basically made an argument that there is no such thing as a harmful traditional practice: "What it is, is first of all you people from the outside, you are non-Tsonga people. You come in and you vilify our traditional practices because you don't understand them. So don't talk to us about harmful traditional practice." In a sense because that experience really made an impression on me, we stopped using that terminology because we realised it was shutting doors for us instead of opening doors.

Sandra, June 23, 2017.

Decolonising HTPs and their framing

I note you have tried hard to make it more palatable, but the term 'harmful traditional practices' is just too loaded. I can't swallow it myself, and I could not bring myself to try to use it with partners. If I thought we were going to look at binge drinking at hen nights and stag nights and adolescent over dieting, as well as FGM [then we could've taken part].... Magda, May 5, 2017.

What are we seeing?

The HTP term is often counter productive to addressing such practices in communities as it:

- Creates resistance and even backlash
- Enforces a simplistic vilification of culture and religion
- Perpetuates colonialist discourse
- Hides gendered nature of practices and violence
- Carries certain biases around religion

Recommendations

- Do not use the term 'harmful traditional practices' when working in communities. If a specific practice is being addressed, name it, by using the accepted contextual terms.
- Focus on challenging VAWG/GBV and gender inequality, rather than 'HTPs'. These acknowledge gender injustice as problems common to all societies and also does not hide its gendered nature.
- Reframe the language used to focus more on solutions rather than problems. E.g. programs on 'increasing education for adolescent girls', rather than 'child and early marriage'.

Partnering with faith on HTPs

- *“...[I]f you come to help [faith leaders] understand that no, these practices are not right but are harmful, these practices cannot be bound by scripture, it will take a long time...[W]e walk with religious leaders by helping them improve their capacity so that they change from what they thought was right before, to something that they can now see.” (Joseph, June 30, 2017).*
- *First of all you have to win [faith leaders’] respect, they must respect (...) what you are organising. And then they must understand your motive... So when they know you are helping their faith to do the best they can, [to] do as God want them to do, then things will become easier for you. To the contrary, if they think you have come to hinder their faith, then you are going to have it tough (John, June 23, 2017).*

What are we seeing?

- Religion is *a* contributing factor to many HTPs, but not *the* causal one.
- Faith leaders are motivated to engage this when they see modelling alternative norms/behaviours as part of their faith ministry – make the link to religious principles
- A dual approach is needed – Scriptural/theological engagement combined with public health information can be a powerful resource. Small group discussions offer a safe space for engagement that needs careful facilitation.
- Engage faith leaders in a positive/constructive way as potential agents of change, rather than as complicit in perpetuating harm to offer a ‘champion’ role
- Take a multi level approach. To get to faith communities, one has to work through faith leaders, but can take a bottom up approach as well. Multi-lateral engagement – especially when it is interfaith and/or ecumenical – can be powerful

Amplifying Development: Partnering with faith

- Engage faith leaders as potential catalysts for sustained, positive, social change within communities, not just one-off points of entry into the community. Include non-ordained leaders and informal faith leaders.
- Situate this within a wider community-based approach, avoiding an exclusive focus on faith alone.
- Harness and amplify faith's positive potential around spiritual capital. This requires developing trust and respect between multiple stakeholders to build longer-term transformational relationships.
- The faith sector is diverse, fluid and plural and should not be homogenised. Multi-level partnerships and the developing of local, regional and global networks can engage inter- and intra-faith dynamics

From transaction to transformation

- *There are these two ways of thinking about partnerships...the transactional partnership where we just work together on something, and... transformational partnership. This is the more powerful one and especially with faith partners is the one we try to be aiming at where you both really know each other as partners rather than just picking a problem and just joining forces (Cheryl, violence and peace advisor, based in Ireland, June 29, 2017).*
- *BUT HOW? Tips on creating safe spaces and approaches that work*

Core Recommendations

- Avoid the term 'harmful traditional practices' when working in communities. Focus on challenging GBV/gender inequality or name the specific practice.
- Religion is a contributing factor to HTPs, therefore addressing HTPs requires engagement with religion.
- A public health approach should form part of engaging faith leaders on HTPs.
- Engaging FL on HTPs should include a theological, scriptural component, to address sensitive and complex issues in a framework they know and respect.
- Engaging diverse faith leaders is required, whilst also recognising hierarchies.
- Small group spaces are conducive to discussing HTPs with faith leaders/actors and should include contextual theological materials and creating safe spaces.
- Faith leader engagement is most effective when it is part of broader community-based approaches and not an exclusive focus on faith leaders.

Faith leaders as sleepy giants?

- *Faith leaders are sleep(ing) giants. They are not doing much [about FGM/C] now, but if they wake up, they can change it totally. Look what happened with Ebola here. With Ebola we had a game change when faith leaders came on board, it really changed things, it started reducing. So that is why I think we have to have faith leaders on board with FGM/C. It will be key (Engela, Sierra Leone, June 27, 2017).*
- *We should come out of our shells, meaning every [religious group] should go to the other in order to be able to come up with something which serves our country; something which evolves our society. (ABAAD 2017 dialogues)*

We are stronger together

#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

The summary research report

No more 'Harmful Traditional Practices': Working Effectively with Faith Leaders and the three policy briefs are available at:

www.jliflc.com

Dr. Elisabet le Roux (Stellenbosch University)
Dr. Brenda E. Bartelink (University of Groningen)
& Dr. Selina Palm (Stellenbosch University)

#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Panel 2 : Working effectively with faith actors to challenge discriminatory gender norms and practices: sharing best practices

- **Barbara Kalima-Phiri** - Gender and Inclusion Programme Lead, World Vision International
- **Kidist Belayneh** - Head of Programmes, Norwegian Church Aid, Ethiopia.
- **Duretti Haji** - Islamic Relief, Ethiopia
- **Irene Anena** - Programme Officer, Church of Uganda.
- **Reverend John Joseph Hayab** - Faith Leader, Nigeria.

Moderator: Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, Chief Executive
Rozaria Memorial Trust

Panel 2 : Working effectively with faith actors to challenge discriminatory gender norms and practices: sharing best practices

Barbara Kalima-Phiri

Gender and Inclusion Programme Lead, World Vision International

@bkalimaphiri1



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Engaging Faith actors to end FGM and Child Marriage in Ethiopia

The experience of NCA and its FBO partners (2010-2017)



Kidist Belayneh

Head of Programmes,
Norwegian Church
Aid, Ethiopia



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Why Faith Actors?

2010 UNFPA Ethiopia study:

- 87% of women **regularly visited** a church or mosque.
- Most **accessible** - travel to religious places takes an average of less than 30 minutes compared to 2 hours to hospital(in rural) and 50 minutes (in urban).
- High **coverage and reach** compared to the formal sector.
- Big **constituency**.
- **Respect and influence** -daily life of families - custodians of individual and communal belief.

Drivers of change

#CSW62

#BuildingBridges



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

How?

- **Engagement ‘Model’**
- **Top leadership** – making the issue known to them – share the extent of the problem – facts and allow reflection- role and contribution.
- **Theological Reflection**– explore scriptural ground for the practice - reflecting on beliefs and norms surrounding the practice– produced ‘social norm’ change communication document to build consensus.
- **Declaration** –Commitment for change (Institutional)
- **Dissemination of declaration**- share the commitment to wider faith community through series of dialogues, sensitization, using own media, clergy training center etc.
- **Institutionalization**- Integration/cascading into FBOs structure/ sermons –media
- **Accountability** –tracking changes and translation of commitments

What?



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges



#CSW62



#BuildingBridges

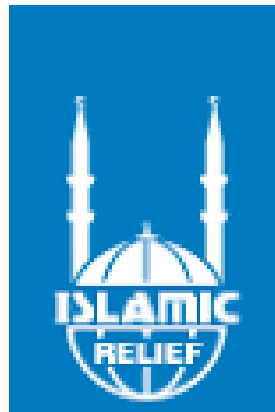
Learning?

- Faith actors are part and parcel of the community/ social change process;
- Find the right entry point, understand the context and ***no one size fits for all;***
- Understand **the diversity, power dynamics between and within faith actors;**
- Faith Actors are drivers of change but **if only they own the process;** need continues accompaniment and capacity building.
- Keep the momentum, continue the dialogue, **but don't 'push';**
- Coordinated response at all levels e.g. MOU with government.
- Accountability – translate commitments.

Panel 2 : Working effectively with faith actors to challenge discriminatory gender norms and practices: sharing best practices

Duretti Haji

Programme Manager, Islamic Relief, Ethiopia



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Panel 2: Working effectively with faith actors to challenge discriminatory gender norms and practices

Irene Anena

Programme Officer, Gender and Social Justice, Church of Uganda

@areneug



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Working effectively with faith actors to challenge discriminatory gender norms and practices



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Best practices



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Best practices

Advocacy
and Media

Use of the pulpits
and other faith
structures

Policy engagement
FGM Act
Domestic Violence Act
Marriage Act

Use of church
theme events and
context based
documentation

Economic
empowerment

#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

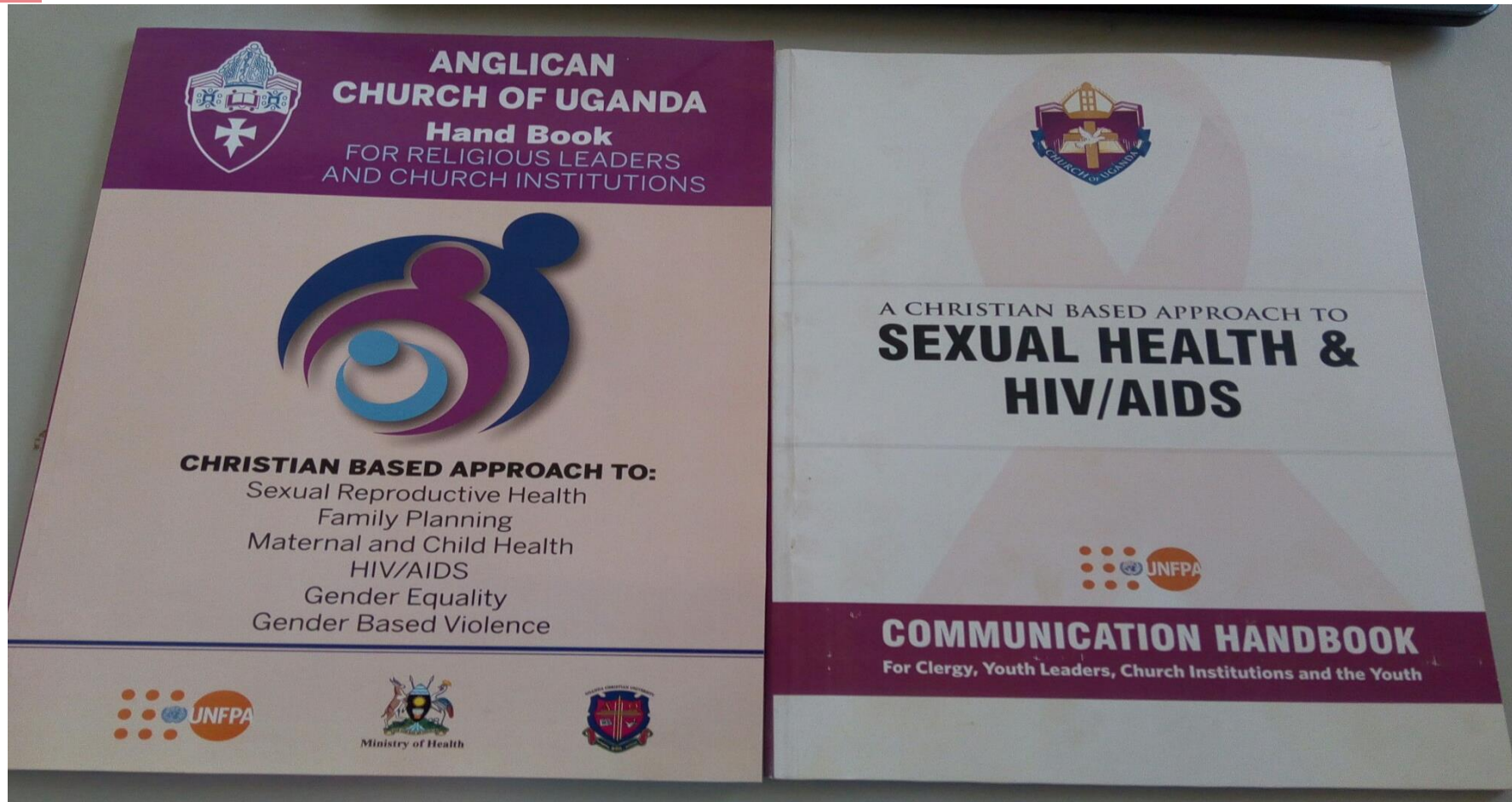
Faith leaders have the trust needed for change.



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Key Challenges to engagement of faith Actors



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Key Challenges to engagement of faith Actors

- Context within which the church is working (Multi - ethnicity)
- Limited capacity among most faith leaders
- Interpretation of the sacred text
- The church and finances

Panel 2: Working effectively with faith actors to challenge discriminatory gender norms and practices

Reverend John Joseph Hayab

State Co-Ordinator, Faith Actors Dialogue Forum, Nigeria
@revhayab



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Achievements from the Collective Action for Adolescent girls initiative (CAAGI) project in Kaduna State, Nigeria

- Developed and Produced the first ever Faith Leaders Toolkit with scriptural references from the Quran and Bible to aid advocacy and sensitization campaigns for Adolescent girls issues in Kaduna State and beyond.
- Both State & Community FAs have reached over 25,150 people through their joint/individual sensitizations campaigns across religious gatherings/conferences.
- Distributed 273 copies of the FL toolkit across platforms
- The FADF through sensitization campaigns across Religious platforms and places of worships contributed to reduced Hawking, early marriage and increased the enrollment of Adolescent girls in school and empowerment programmes across project communities in the 3 pilot LGAs(Makarfi, Chikun and Zangon Kataf LGAs.
- Fostering peace among community people through sustained interactions and engagements of Christian & Muslim FAs

Achievements

- Contributed to the passage of the Child Protection Law in Kaduna State through awareness creation, sensitization of Faith Leaders on the importance of such law to children especially AGs in Kaduna State.
- Increased awareness on the CAAGI project and 3AG issues as a result of engagement with media and featuring as discussant on the Radio drama “Mahada” presently aired at Nagarta & Freedom radio stations in Kaduna state, Nigeria

Panel 3: Mapping the way forward: building strong partnerships between faith and secular development actors to challenge discriminatory gender norms and practices

- **Dr. Azza Karam** – Senior Advisor on Culture and Social Development, UNFPA
- **Dionne Gravesande** – Senior Ecumenical Relations Manager, Christian Aid
- **Diana Arango** - Senior GBV and Development Specialist, World Bank Group and JLI GBV Hub Co-Chair
- **Selina Palm** – Researcher, Faculty of Theology, Unit for Religion and Development Research, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Moderator: Natalia Lester-Bush - JLI SGBV Hub Secretariat Coordinator

Panel 3: Mapping the way forward: building strong partnerships between faith and secular development actors to challenge discriminatory gender norms and practices

Dr. Azza Karam

Senior Advisor on Culture and Social Development, UNFPA

@Mansoura1968



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Panel 3: Mapping the way forward: building strong partnerships between faith and secular development actors to challenge discriminatory gender norms and practices

Dionne Gravesande

Senior Ecumenical Relations Manager, Christian Aid

@DGravesande



#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Panel 3: Mapping the way forward: building strong partnerships between faith and secular development actors to challenge discriminatory gender norms and practices

Diana Arango

Senior GBV and Development Specialist, World Bank Group and JLI
GBV Hub Co-Chair



JOINT LEARNING INITIATIVE on
FAITH & LOCAL COMMUNITIES

#CSW62

#BuildingBridges

Panel 3: Mapping the way forward: building strong partnerships between faith and secular development actors to challenge discriminatory gender norms and practices

Dr. Selina Palm

Researcher, Faculty of Theology, Unit for Religion and Development Research, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

@selinapalm



UNIVERSITEIT
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY

JOINT LEARNING INITIATIVE *on*
FAITH & LOCAL COMMUNITIES

#CSW62

#BuildingBridges