

Precarious lives

There was this one time I was with a girl who was a virgin, I took it as though its because she is scared as she was jumpy, they had said that you need to use strength on a virgin & I used that strength... things happened & it was all right....I felt like a winner who makes things happen
Nkabinde – just said that he has never raped a woman

I felt bossy and that I had fulfilled my wishes for that time because I thought that I was right...

Thembani – about hitting his girlfriend





Background

Extremely high levels of violence against women, including non-partner rape and intimate partner violence, characterize interactions between young men and women living in South African urban informal settlements. Likewise, young people experience high levels of unemployment and food insecurity and are unable to access opportunities for further education and training. We sought to understand how young men's experiences of social and economic exclusion and their own experiences of violence, shaped their masculinities and in turn their relationships and perpetration of violence against women and girls.



Profile of male participants at baseline

Men (n=677)

- Age (mean) = 23.6
- Children 40%
- Past month earnings USD 28
- Any perpetration sexual/physical IPV past 12m 56.9%
- Non-partner sexual violence past 12m 38.8%
- Depressive symptoms (CESD) 66.0



Methods

We undertook qualitative data research with a sub-set of men involved in the cluster randomised control trial of Stepping Stones and Creating Futures conducted between 2016 and 2018 examining the impact of the intervention on violence against women and on livelihoods. To understand men's experiences of IPV and non-partner rape, we conducted 16 in-depth qualitative interviews at baseline, 12 months and at endline with young men aged between 18 and 20 years in two urban informal settlements to explore young men's networks, their income generating strategies and their relationships with women. We also conducted limited ethnographic research, following some young men as they interacted in their social contexts. All data were thematically analysed.



Precarity and Precariousness

Existential precarity (Butler) – fear of violence and loss of social connection

Labour precariousness (Standing)

Precarity as a labour condition (Millar) - Impact on subjectivity and lived experience

Producing socially disordered communities

Individual emotional alienation

Violence



Failure

In my childhood I looked like someone who would have made it in life by now. It saddens me because it has been 5 years since I completed matric (high school leaving certificate) but there is no success in my life....
Thembani, 24 years old, Transit.



Fear of violence

“This place is not all right, you hear gun shots now, they fight everyday, people get hurt all the time, I don’t like a place like that I don’t enjoy it.” Jeque, Transit

“People from here live a rough life. The ones I know and see they live a rough life, they live by alcohol, they go to work and when they are not at work, they drink alcohol.” Thabiso, Timor



- **There is just nothing here.**
Bhejane Timor
- **It's a one room shack...., you see here it's just for me to sleep and wake up, go to work.**
Khanyisani (describing his "home")
- **Older people in my neighbourhood like to fight and make noise. The majority of them get drunk and swear at people and beat women.**
Manqezu Transit



Social precariousness

So now there is no one who has ever sat me down ... and said if you are at this stage in life these are the things you must do.

Khanyisani

Ehh I'm not used to sitting with dad and chatting. It happens on rare occasions. who is missing? I would say it's a person who is a mentor. I don't have anyone to advise me about life.

Manqezu Transit

Ayi that man you don't even know what kind of a man he is. If you speak to him or advise him, he will still do that thing. If you ask him for money, he will hide by saying he doesn't have money. But you can see that he does have money. Even at home, he comes and fights with people.

Sgede Transit (talking about his father)



Humiliation

An example bro, there was a time we were walking out of this hall, I think it was the second week of us attending here at Project Empower. When I walked out of here and sat under a tree there by where I live, the girls who also attend here came out of their group. There is a girl named Pumla here bro. When she was about to pass by where I was sitting, she smiled and I asked her why are you laughing. She said “Fuck-Off, do you think I can laugh with you?” you see. She said “you think I am laughing with you, I am not even laughing at you I am laughing with S’bo”, she mentioned someone who was not even there, and I don’t know why she said that. So I was hurt, “you even swear at me”, then she said “yes I can swear at you because you are minenhle (jobless person who basks under the sun all day—derogatory), I am laughing at the fact that you are minenhle. She said she is laughing at the fact that I am minenhle. So I said you know what, it seems like we are going into a conflict because you are the one who first picked on me. First of all you laughed, then I asked you why you laughing and now you are calling me minenhle. She then said of course you are a minenhle, you have nothing, of course you have nothing. And she just made me angry. But at the same time I did not take any action, I became quiet, I became quiet because I don’t know what was her intention, because she was picking on me, I didn’t pick on her. She was picking on me.

Mack Timor



Isolation

even around here (where he stays) I hardly speak...They don't even know my name...they don't know my name. It helped me at times to just have a straight face, not talk to people and just nod in greeting

Khanyisani talking about the community



That is why I always stay at home. I don't go around trying to be known and to be popular amongst people, no. Because I know they like to be friends based on what you have, people respect you based on what you have. So if I step out of the house, I may find my day ruined and my feelings hurt. So people respect you based on what you have. So in order for people not to disrespect you, its best not to be familiar with them. Mack, Timor



A woman that I say that I am in a relationship with? Firstly I am unemployed and if someone else who works were to come and do all the things that I cannot afford to do, surely that person would convince her to break up with me because I can't afford her.

Senzo Transit



worthlessness

I'm just a dot because I don't have anything. I still have to work and have something valuable, it doesn't help to say you are important but you can't even help with anything at your own home. You are still dependent on your parents yet you are old. I'm not that important if you think about it that way.

Manqezu Transit



Many people here do not work and end up doubting themselves to the extent that they don't take care of themselves and don't care even about their lives, it is done by unemployment... people like that become violent because they have anger inside them and they doubt themselves...in their families, when you are no longer working, your relatives do not respect you and then they talk to you in any way and you have that self-doubt...their relationships do not last because... as I have mentioned, when a person is unemployed, they have that self-doubt and they would be like "I am not working so what am I going to complain about", and your girlfriend will not hear you because you are broke ...

Sam, Transit



Men and violence

- Unemployment and exclusion from further education and training
- Violent and disordered communities
- No mentors or advisors
- Self-doubt, isolation and social withdrawal
- Anger and violence

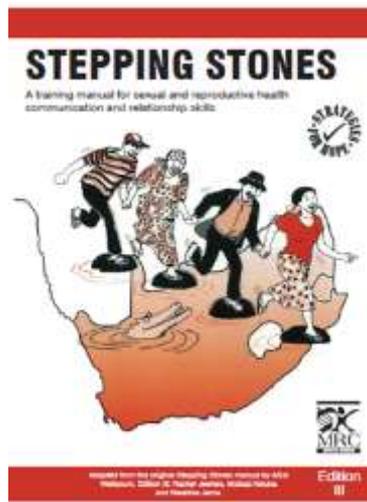


What is to be done

- Structural change: employment, access to further education, built environment upgrading, increased state support
- Interventions at individual level

Reducing men's perpetration of violence

Stepping Stones Creating Futures

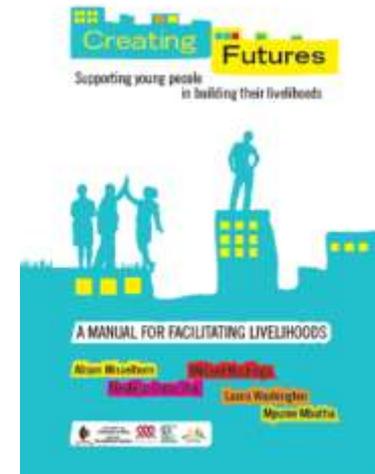


Connected men with peer support

Improved ability to engage with livelihood activities

Improved emotional regulation

Enabled better intimacy and reduced perpetration of IPV



Stepping Stones and Creating Futures, cluster randomized control trial

team

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