

WEDNESDAY, 23 OCTOBER, 2019

16:30 – 18:00 UNDERSTANDING VAW

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# “*Good* Masculinity” versus “*Real* Masculinity” related to IPV

## - Qualitative findings from Rakai, Uganda

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<sup>1</sup> UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, <sup>2</sup> Rakai Health Sciences Program

# Funding acknowledgements

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A gender-transformative approach to involving men in  
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# Rakai District, Uganda



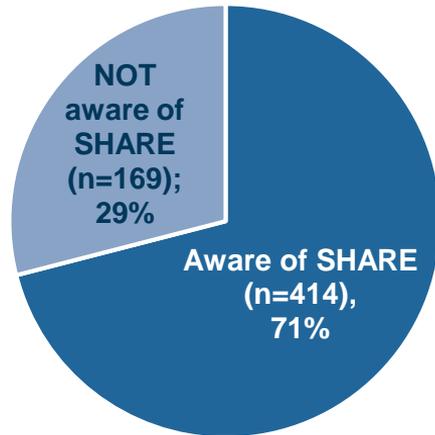
- Where first AIDS cases identified in East Africa<sup>1</sup>
- Est. population: 518,000<sup>2</sup>
- ~95% rural / >85% relies on subsistence agriculture
- Past year IPV: 30%<sup>5</sup>
- Prevalence of HIV
  - In Rakai: 12%<sup>3</sup>
  - In Uganda: 7%<sup>4</sup>

Research done with Rakai Health Sciences Program

# Background

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- Most men in Rakai perceived violence prevention to be “women’s work”
- Despite focused “men’s programs” in past violence prevention efforts, significantly fewer boys and men participated in activities (relative to girls and women) and programming had no effect on boys’ and men’s reporting of violence



- Most popular activities among men:
  - Public, entertainment-based events (theater, shows)
- Least popular activities among men:
  - Small and focused activities (seminars, support groups)
- Main reasons for non-participation:
  - Stigma, lack of awareness, lack of time



Sakhumzi Mfecane

October 7th, 2019

## An Africanist approach to ending gender-based violence

Source: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2019/10/07/africanist-ending-gender-based-violence-masculinity/>



# Why don't 'masculine transformation' programs work with African men?

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*“Programmes to tackle gender-based violence by men in Africa have been dominated by western constructions of masculinity, where behaviour change is focussed on the individual. These programmes, argues Sakhumzi Mfecane, ignore the African ways of conceptualising gender, which emphasise values and status conferred by the community.”* **The programs:**

- Are premised on notion that gender-based violence is rooted in dominant constructions of masculinity – the socially constructed notion of what it means to be a ‘real’ man.
- Depend on western definitions of masculinity and overlook the African ways of conceptualising gender.

# Research Aims

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**Aim:** Explore concepts of masculinity and their associations with men's perpetration of IPV in rural Uganda

Research questions:

1. How do men conceptualize gender and masculinity?
2. How do men learn about gender, masculinity and manhood?
3. How does masculinity relate to sex and sexuality?
4. How does masculinity relate to intimate partner violence (IPV)?

# Methods

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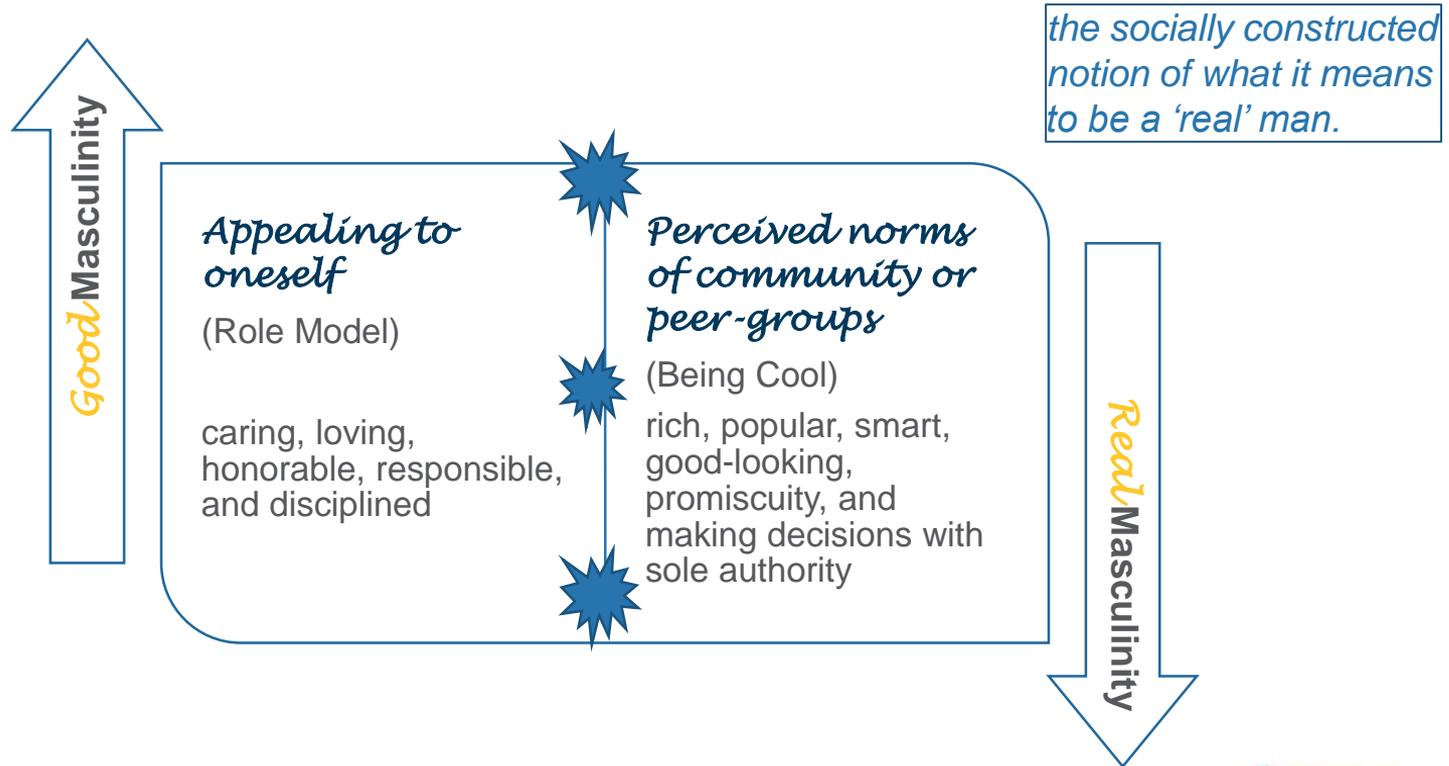
*February – July 2017*

- 40 in-depth qualitative interviews with males 15-49 years and male local leaders; and
- 12 focus group discussions with males 15-49 years, local leaders, men's health providers, key members from Rakai Health Sciences Program staff and community advisory board.

# Results



# “*Good* Masculinity” versus “*Real* Masculinity” in Rakai



# Perspectives of *Good* Masculinity

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Q. WHO IN YOUR COMMUNITY IS CONSIDERED *A ROLE MODEL* FOR WHAT A MAN IS SUPPOSED TO BE/DO?

A good man:

- Has a job and a house
- Respects and takes care of himself
- Has a wife and children
- Cares for his wife and children
  - Is faithful
  - Pays school fees

“He should **respect** himself and respect other people because you earn respect when you respect other people. He should be able to **take care** of himself, you should not go on begging from people’s homes or stealing “because the moment you can’t take care of yourself”, you will steal. So you should be able to take care of yourself and have an address where people can find you and not to keep moving around from here to there.” – FGD #04

“A person they consider a man is the one who **has a job, has his own house, has a wife, has children, the children are in school, has a car, has about three acres of land and has food security.** Such a man is regarded a real man.” – FGD #08

“It’s my actions. Ever since I **married my wife**, she has never left me, I have **never abused her** yet other men have been with two wives in four years. There is also someone else there, he stays right behind me, I am sure that **he is a strong man**, he has **never had any other woman** and he has **never chased away his wife.** He **cares a lot about his children**, he **pays school fees** so his children never sit at home, he helps a lot. I admire him because of what he is capable of doing. If I would also be able to do that, I would better than I am today.” – IDI #12, 44 years old

# Perspectives of *Real* Masculinity

## SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED NOTION OF A 'REAL' MAN:

- High sexual drive and many partners
- Loves women
- Money and “toys”
- Drinks alcohol and buys alcohol for others
- Has “swagger”

“A boy who is good in term of sexual intercourse. A boy who is **always involved in having sexual intercourse**. A boys who always loves to associate with girls is also regarded as very cool. KI is very cool as far as associating himself with girls” [Informant laughs loudly]. Again this makes you to be considered as man.” – IDI #09, 21 years old

“I think he is someone who would be driving cars; he **has money** and spends it the way he wishes. This is someone who **buys alcohol for people**, he **engages in sexual relationship with every girl** and actually most people would refer to him as someone with “swagger” [mentions it in English] and for them they think that such a man is so cool. According to our age, they do not think of him as someone spoilt but most of them say that, “that man is so cool he has no money and he cannot fail to get a girl he likes” – IDI #13, 34 years old

# Masculinity, sexuality and HIV

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## COMMON EXPECTATIONS ABOUT SEX AND SEXUALITY THAT ARE CONSIDERED MANLY

“We mostly talk about **circumcision** together and **testing for HIV** plus sports although we don’t talk about that a lot.” – IDI #38, 27 years old

“Not using a condom does not make a man be regarded as a real man. **If a man uses a condom, he is still a man because he is protecting himself from some things.** In fact is a full man. He can prevent himself from getting some diseases like HIV and other infections.” – IDI #18, 17 years

# Learning about masculinity and sexual relationships

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Generally, participants said they had no formal education in school, at religious institutions or from parents/family

Some learned from an aunt or uncle.

Most participants learned about manhood/masculinity and sexual relationships:

- From friends
- Through television and movies
- By experimenting

# Learning about Masculinity

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Q. HAVE YOU EVER TALKED WITH ANYONE ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MAN?

**“No, I have not talked about it with anyone.** I have been at school most of my time and I have few friends and the friends I have we have never talked about it. I cannot come out of the blue and talk about such. It has to have a beginning...with my friends, we have never got a basis for us to talk about that.” – IDI #29, 17 years old

“Personally, I do emulate from other people. I do hear others say “ person x is not considered as a man.” I also first keep this as a secret for myself. It also reaches a time and then you witness it yourself. You also think twice deep in your heart that indeed such a person is not supposed to be like that. **I don’t need to first get educated about this.** It is also a fact that I have never been taught about anything on what it means to be a man.”  
– IDI #09, 21 years old

# Learning about Sexual Relationships

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## Q. HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH WOMEN?

Most of **my friends** are youths and basically I talk with them because we always interact. Most of them engage in making sexual relationship with different women but I always tell them that a man must have one wife and should have a family. For them they say that a man has to be with two wives something I do not agree with because you can be contented with one wife.” – IDI #03, 24 years old

“The first information that I got was about condoms but not from the teacher, it was **from friends**. They were **books** written by “Sengas” [people who educate youths about sex] about styles, they also educated us on what to do.”– FGD #04

# Masculinity and intimate partner violence (IPV)

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- Antisocial acts of violence (e.g., crime) are seen as negative
- Violence for no reason is seen as negative
- Violence-related to alcohol is negative
- Violence against women for discipline is considered part of a man's job

**“If you have a wife who doesn't respect you. If you beat her as a punishment she will come to her senses and start giving you respect.” – FGD #10**

# Violence is necessary when a woman is not obedient

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“It is mainly women; for instance a man would decide to leave some money at home, then his wife starts complaining that the money is little. In case the husband is also faced with other problems, **he is likely to reply through slapping and kicking a woman as a way of informing her that there is no more money.** Sometimes you may decide to abandon this woman at home, you return when she is already angry. **Unfortunately you may start disciplining the woman because you cannot recognize your mistakes.**” – FGD #06

“**Violence is necessary when a woman is not obedient when it comes to the following things;** if you bought coffee beans and spread them out in the compound to dry by yourself and you go on to do other things. You find that she left them outside, she is careless. You tell her things and she does not listen. If it happens for a while, there will be problems. I think that violence is necessary then.” – FGD #07

# Conclusions

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- In a rural African setting like Rakai, it is important to learn about and account for cultural beliefs and local value systems when designing gender-based violence prevention programming.
- Many boys/men receive no formal or informal training on sexuality, gender and/or masculinity.
- Interventions should be conceptualized with regard to how boys are educated and brought up in their community, and planned in their own language, using local concepts of gender and masculinity.
- Boys and men should be involved in all steps of the process of planning, implementation and evaluation.

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# Thank you!!

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