



Appendix

Learning from Practice: Engaging Faith-Based and Traditional Actors to prevent violence against women and girls

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Section A: Selection and description of projects

The 10 projects included in this brief were selected because all had PBK in their final UN Trust Fund reports relating to engaging faith-based and traditional actors in VAW/G prevention. There are interesting similarities, but also diversity, in the selected projects and in the PBK that emerged from their documents. The projects were intentionally selected to ensure diversity in terms of geographical region (East Africa (2), West Africa (3), Asia (2), Eastern Europe (1), Latin America (1) and the Middle East (1)), with a specific focus on low- and middle-income countries; faith-based and cultural traditions; the size of the grant received; the timespan of the grant; the type of CSO; and project and evaluation ratings (or perceived success levels) as assessed by the UN Trust Fund.

In engaging with faith-based and traditional actors, this diversity of projects ensures that considered and meaningful reflection on a range of issues is possible. Some projects focused on faith-based actors and some on traditional actors, while some engaged with both or saw them as entangled. For most projects, faith-based and traditional actor engagement was only one component of the project's broader community engagement. Some projects worked with faith-based and traditional actors on VAW/G prevention in general, but a significant number engaged with them to address a specific harmful practice identified in their context. For some projects, their engagement with faith-based and traditional actors was a planned component of their programming, and for others it emerged organically during programming implementation as an effective or important strategy. While most projects engaged with faith-based and traditional leaders specifically, a number also engaged with religion and/or culture as a wider belief system and spiritual resource for all that could support VAW/G prevention. Some projects engaged using an interfaith approach, while others focused on a specific religious group. Finally, in most projects, engagement with faith-based and traditional actors was effective and contributed to VAW/G prevention, but in one project it did not work as planned in the face of religious resistance.

The broad scope of this collection of 10 projects allows rich reflections on lessons learned from practice on why and how to engage faith-based and traditional actors in VAW/G prevention.

Section B: Description of 10 selected projects

Grantee, country, year, project title	Project description	Overall project goal	Project results (reported in external evaluations)
<p>Alafia Togo, 3-year grant: 2015–2016. <i>Eradication of customary practices for widowhood can reduce HIV infection</i>[^]</p> <p>Grant amount: \$54,232</p>	<p>Women’s organization ALAFIA worked in two rural regions in Togo, campaigning to eliminate the harmful practice of widow cleansing. This small grant included engagement with faith-based and traditional actors as key opinion leaders. African traditional leaders took a leading role in developing alternative ritualized eradication ceremonies to change this abusive practice.</p>	<p>The women and girls of the prefecture of Haho enjoy new customary widowhood provisions and practices in accordance with modern law, for the respect of their dignity, their sexual rights and their right to equitable sharing of property.</p>	<p>According to the external evaluation, the project engaged with 10,200 women and girls in 24 villages, exceeding its target, informing them of their rights and encouraging community commitment to end harmful customary widowhood practices that can spread HIV. It built trust between the communities and ALAFIA. For more on the results, see the project evaluation here.</p>
<p>Amref Health Africa – Tanzania Tanzania, 3-year grant: 2016–2018. <i>Female genital mutilation elimination project (Tokomeza Ukeketaji) in Serengeti District</i></p> <p>Grant amount: \$1,000,000</p>	<p>International development organization AMREF used this large grant to work on ending FGM/C in the Serengeti district in Tanzania. The project focused on girls, taking a whole-of-community approach, assisting them to create alternative rites of passage by working with traditional actors.</p>	<p>Young women and girls in Serengeti district are free from effects of FGM/C practice and have more opportunity to exercise their legal and social rights by 2018.</p>	<p>According to the external evaluation, a total of 15,747 out of 24,533 (64 per cent) women and girls living in Serengeti DC were reached and sensitized by the project through films, public meetings and training. According to police reports and the database and records of safe houses in Serengeti, more than 621 girls aged 8-17 years managed to escape FGM/C and go to the police or a safe house because of the project’s contributions. The girls also became more able to seek help at the police gender desk or a safe house. Project intervention enabled 78 per cent of traditional leaders engaged by the project to sign an anti-FGM/C petition/declaration, committing themselves to abandon the practice and advocate for its abandonment in the community. For more on the results, see the project evaluation here.</p>

<p>Children Living in Rural Areas Côte d'Ivoire, 2-year grant: 2016–2017. <i>Capacity building, mobilization, social transformation for the development of protections mechanisms against GBV and HIV</i></p> <p>Grant amount: \$249,710</p>	<p>This project by CLiRA used a large grant to develop community-based institutional mechanisms and multisectoral services, to prevent and respond to VAW/G and eliminate discrimination against HIV-positive women in the remote communities of Biankoma, Man, Côte d'Ivoire. A core group that the project engaged with were traditional leaders, including chiefs, with a central outcome being the development and passing of customary laws to address VAW/G, including entrenched FGM/C practices.</p>	<p>By 2018, women and girls in remote areas of Tonkpi live in a safe environment free from domestic violence thanks to improved community mechanisms and strong institutions for prevention and response.</p>	<p>According to the external evaluation, the capacities of 200 men and 200 women among faith-based and traditional leaders and members of committees to end VAW/G were strengthened to increase their knowledge on prevention measures against sexual and physical violence so that they commit to putting them into practice. Four types of mechanisms were set up in each locality and the project was able to reach a population of 22,940 people through awareness sessions. 108 survivors sought information on procedures for accessing integrated care, and a further 126 survivors have benefited from integrated care by specialized services, including 55 cases in social centres and 71 cases in community health centres. For more on the results, project evaluation is available upon request.</p>
<p>Episcopal Relief and Development Liberia, 3-year grant: 2015–2017. <i>Engaging faith-based organizations to prevent violence against women and girls and increase survivors' access to services</i></p> <p>Grant amount: \$680,216</p>	<p>This collaboration between Episcopal Relief and Development and Episcopal Church Liberia – Relief and Development worked in two counties in Liberia, targeting Christian and Muslim faith leaders (including youth leaders), capacitating and mobilizing them to speak out against VAW/G in their communities and support survivors. With a large grant, it developed a GBV toolkit for faith-based leaders that engaged with the Bible and Qur'an, relying on an experiential training model.</p>	<p>Women and girls experience greater freedom from intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence and have increased access to services in six districts of Cape Mount County and Rivercess County in Liberia.</p>	<p>According to the external evaluation, in the project areas significantly fewer women and girls in contact with the project reported violence by intimate partners (down from 14.8% to 5% from baseline to endline survey) and by non-partners (down from 16.1 per cent to 2.6 per cent). Ninety-seven per cent of youth faith leaders surveyed spoke out against GBV at various events, and 98 per cent of faith leaders were found speaking out publicly against GBV using various platforms and events, compared with none at baseline. Eighty-one per cent of youth faith leaders took some form of action to support members of their congregation in this regard; and the majority of female members of the congregations said they had learned about GBV</p>

			support services from their faith leaders. For more on the results, see the project evaluation here.
<p>Fundación Mundubat Colombia, 2-year grant: 2017–2018. <i>Afro-descendant and indigenous are strengthened for the eradication of the violence exercised against them in public and private spaces and exacerbated in the context of dialogues for peace and post-conflict agreements</i></p> <p>Grant Amount: \$210,446</p>	<p>This two-year large-grant project focused on establishing adequate and culturally relevant accompaniment for survivors in the rural area of Buenaventura, Colombia. Working with partner organization Red Mariposas, it specifically targeted Afro-descendant and indigenous women, engaging in various activities (training, psychospiritual care and support, and advocacy around legal frameworks and public policies) to improve the protection and care these women receive.</p>	<p>Women survivors of violence receive adequate and culturally relevant support during the activation of the care route, counting on quality services for the protection and care of violence against women, in the rural area of Buenaventura.</p>	<p>According to the external evaluation, the replication activities were moderately satisfactory because they were shorter and more punctual in time. However, the use of the traditional practice among Afro-descendant women called “comadreo” is noteworthy because it allowed them to reflect and approach issues related to violence against women and their rights, to problematize their own reality and to build trust to accompany each other in cases of violence and protection networks. For more on the results, project evaluation is available upon request.</p>
<p>Psycho-social Counseling Center for Women State of Palestine, 3-year grant: 2015–2017. <i>Combating gender-based violence</i></p> <p>Grant Amount:</p>	<p>This large-grant project was implemented by three partner organizations: the PSCCW, QADER and Al Muntada. The aim was to support girl and women survivors, including those with disabilities, so that they received quality services and protection, and it included work with women mosque preachers.</p>	<p>Women and girl survivors, including those with disabilities, increasingly receive quality services that meet their needs and are better protected through improved legislation.</p>	<p>According to the external evaluation, 86 per cent of women gained knowledge and awareness of the justice system and referral pathways in the State of Palestine. The number of women who received justice and protection services increased from 3,138 in 2015 to 9,388 in 2017. Ninety-three per cent of service providers said that they gained professional knowledge on topics including: the national referral system; self-care; security; GBV and its causes; post-assault crises; the concept of trauma, post-traumatic</p>

\$356,667			forms and effects; and the rights of women and girls with disabilities. For more on the results, see the project evaluation here
<p>Restless Development Nepal, 3-year grant: 2015–2017. <i>Towards the abolition of chhaupadi in the far and mid-west regions of Nepal</i></p> <p>Grant amount: \$417,880</p>	<p>This youth organization worked with a large grant in the far and mid-west regions in Nepal, campaigning to lower incidence and promote the abolition of <i>chhaupadi</i> (menstruation stigma) and promote better nutrition and health, social support and education for women and girls. They targeted traditional healers and underlying spiritual beliefs in their campaigns.</p>	<p>Women and girls experience fewer incidents of <i>chhaupadi</i>, better nutrition and health, social support and access to education during menstruation in the project implementation areas by the end of the project.</p>	<p>According to the external evaluation, the project exceeded its target of reaching 28,000 women and girls, reaching 45,990 women and girls. The project reduced the proportion of women and girls sleeping in a <i>chhaupadi</i> hut by 73 per cent (from 19.4 per cent to 5.5 per cent) in targeted districts. Far fewer women and girls (aged 15–49) were reporting that they had restricted access to dairy products during menstruation. All male community leaders believed that <i>chhaupadi</i> practices should be eliminated (compared with 71 per cent at baseline). For more on the results, see the project evaluation here.</p>
<p>Sindh Community Foundation Pakistan, 2-year grant: 2016–2017. <i>Curb early marriages through human rights education and advocacy</i></p> <p>Grant amount: \$99,980</p>	<p>With a small grant over two years, this local youth organization worked to curb child marriages through human rights education and advocacy in 30 villages across the Sindh province of Pakistan. It focused on child marriage and trained Hindu and Muslim faith-based leaders as part of a connected range of multisectoral service providers, including the police and media.</p>	<p>Girls in three districts of Sindh have increased protection against early marriage by Dec 2017.</p>	<p>According to the external evaluation, the project reached 3,915 primary and secondary beneficiaries in the 30 villages including 694 girls. The number of child marriages went down by 200 and 10 girls were protected from early marriage and went back to school, including three because of timely action by police officials trained by the project. <i>Nikahkhawan</i> and <i>pundits</i> (faith-based leaders) were trained on laws prohibiting child marriages and equipped with knowledge to advocate for ending early marriages. For more on the results, see the project evaluation here.</p>
<p>Trócaire Kenya, 3-year grant: 2017–2020.</p>	<p>Trócaire, a faith-based development organization, received a large grant over three years to work with four local</p>	<p>Adolescent girls and young women (aged 15–24 years) in eight</p>	<p>According to the external evaluation, during the project, the average level of violence, abuse, discrimination and stigmatization experienced was</p>

<p><i>Preventing violence against women and girls in Nakuru Town</i></p> <p>Grant amount: \$999,946</p>	<p>partner organizations in Nakuru Town in Kenya. It used a community-based multisectoral GBV prevention approach centred on young women’s empowerment, as well as seeking to tackle social norms and piloting the SASA! Faith methodology to stimulate community mobilization.</p>	<p>informal settlements in Nakuru experience a reduction in levels of violence, abuse, discrimination and stigmatization by March 2020.</p>	<p>reduced by 7.6 per cent in public spheres and 3.6 per cent in the home (based on an 8-item index measured on a 4-point rating scale, which measured level of perceived safety from GBV in public spheres among the targeted women and girls / direct project beneficiaries). Stigmatization of women and girls living with HIV/AIDS declined from 59 per cent among those surveyed to under 2 per cent at the end of the project. On average, 94.3 per cent of community members demonstrated knowledge of specific acts of VAW/G, as a direct result of the social norms transformation intervention, engaging men as allies and using the SASA! Faith methodology. For more on the results, see the project evaluation here.</p>
<p>Women’s Support Center Armenia, 2-year grant: 2016–2017. <i>Creating a coordinated response mechanism to prevent and combat domestic violence in Armenia</i></p> <p>Grant amount: \$86,281</p>	<p>This project received a small grant to roll-out training on domestic violence to a range of service providers in government, police and civil society to enable development of a multi-agency response mechanism to domestic violence. They aimed to also work with and train faith-based leaders, but were refused permission.</p>	<p>By December 2017, women and girls in five regions of Armenia are supported and protected against domestic violence by skilled service providers through a capable multi-agency response mechanism.</p>	<p>According to the external evaluation, the project contributed to government actions to improve domestic violence mechanisms, including passing a new law. A coordinated, multi-agency response mechanism was created for domestic violence. The project increased awareness of domestic violence in Armenia and issues related to GBV, and positively impacted on the practices of service providers and police officers through training. For more on the results, see the project evaluation here.</p>

Section C: Methodology

In August 2020, the UN Trust Fund commissioned a synthesis review of PBK on VAW/G prevention arising from 89 UN Trust Fund-funded projects. During the first phase of the synthesis review, 10 key **pathways towards prevention** emerged from the PBK data mined from these 89 projects as particularly relevant to VAW/G prevention evidence building, with PBK envisaged as a compass that helps projects navigate these different, interrelated pathways in practice. In the second phase of the synthesis review, each of these pathways was explored in more detail, by focusing on 10 projects for each brief that showed particularly relevant PBK on that specific pathway. This is the first brief in this series of 10.

This brief focuses on the pathway “Engaging faith-based and traditional actors”. Ten projects are covered (listed in appendix A). The broad scope of the 10 projects allows for rich reflections on lessons learned from practice and experiences on the detailed why and how of engaging faith-based and traditional actors in VAW/G prevention.

The research followed an inductive process to allow the concerns and reflections identified by project partners to drive both the research process and the final content. This in itself is a challenge to approaches that can require project data to fit into pre-existing theoretical frameworks and ensures that the PBK from the reports strongly shape the themes and issues explored in the brief. Nevertheless, a core guiding question helped focus the engagement with the literature and the PBK mining strategy, namely “What can be learned about how and why to work with faith-based and traditional actors in ways that support VAW/G prevention?” Two further questions of interest, which were taken into consideration when selecting organizations and mining data, were on how to work with faith-based and traditional actors in ways that do not strengthen heteropatriarchal systems and if there were particular roles that women’s organizations were seen to have played in engaging with faith-based and traditional actors.

While these guiding questions informed the mining process, the themes explored in the brief were in the end dictated by the PBK that surfaced in the project reports, centralizing the practitioners as knowledge co-producers, not merely data providers. This approach is in line with the PBK methodology.

The first step in the research process was a rapid literature review, focusing on existing evidence on engaging faith-based and traditional actors in VAW/G prevention, and what is known about how COVID-19 is impacting this work. Academic literature published since 2016 and focusing on low- and middle-income countries contexts was prioritized, although grey literature was also included.

In identifying PBK relevant to each specific brief, the focus was on textured PBK that was more than a description of what projects did, also including detail, context, narrative and/or cumulative learning, and/or examining complexity around why and how they did it. PBK around impact and listed activities was only included if there was specific reflection on lessons learned, and not if objectives were only listed as achieved. An inductive approach allowed this field data to drive both the analysis and the final report content.

Keeping this in mind, PBK mining strategies for this brief prioritized:

- critical reflection by implementors (and beneficiaries) on their embedded practice with faith-based and traditional actors

- textured insights that bring to the surface the **why** and **how** of faith-based and traditional actor strategies in a time and place
- unexpected adaptations made because of the wider context (e.g. laws passed on child marriage)
- challenges projects faced in relation to faith-based and traditional actors in practice and if and how they were overcome
- lessons from approaches to engaging with faith-based and traditional actors that failed or issues that emerged as complex or ambiguous
- similarities/differences seen to resonate in religion and culture between contexts.

With each of the 10 projects, PBK on engaging with faith-based and traditional actors was mined from the full external evaluation report, the narrative report section of each of the annual project reports, and the results chain (as captured in the annual project reports). Each project was first approached as a stand-alone unit and all relevant PBK captured in one document. These documents were then hand-coded to ensure that the researchers stayed accountable to the context (and “whole picture”) of the project – a key tenet of PBK. Once this was done for each project, a basic conceptual framework was developed based on recurring themes identified as emerging from the different projects.

The conceptual framework then guided the development of the interview guides for two FGD sessions to which all 10 project organizations, as well as their implementing partners, were invited. These two FGDs were empirical data collection exercises, where “new” PBK was sourced from practitioners. Representatives of 8 of the 10 projects participated in this exercise, either by attending one or both of the FGDs or (where they were unable to attend the sessions) by providing written answers to the FGD questions. All FGD participants completed a written consent form and, to ensure confidentiality, the recordings and transcripts of the FGDs were not shared with anyone apart from the FGD participants.

The notes, transcripts and written answers from the FGDs were hand-coded and the conceptual framework revised accordingly. Based on the conceptual framework, an outline of the brief was shared with the UN Trust Fund. After feedback, the outline was finalized and the brief drafted.

A core principle of PBK is decentring existing, often implicit, knowledge hierarchies and creating feminist, decolonized ways of creating new knowledge and being accountable. This has shaped the methodology and the report writing process, but also the review process, in which various stakeholders were involved. The draft brief was shared with all the representatives of the organizations, who were also invited to an online validation meeting. The UN Trust Fund’s internal and external advisory groups also reviewed the brief.

Section D: Focus group discussion guides

FGD #1

1. If you look back on the UN Trust Fund-funded project that you did, can you give me a concrete example from the project on how religion, culture or tradition in your context was an asset (positive help) in reaching your aim to prevent VAW/G?
 - a. *Can you tell me a story that shows why engaging religion or tradition was good, or a necessary part, of your programme's aim to prevent VAW/G? Did you, along the way, learn anything specific about what works or doesn't work with faith-based and traditional actors?*
2. Now I want you to think about the other side. Can you give us a concrete example from your project on how religion, culture or tradition was a liability or a problem in reaching your aim to prevent VAW/G?
 - a. *Can you tell me a story that shows how religion or culture hampered (was an obstacle) to your prevention work?*
 - i. *How did you address this? Why in that way? Did you learn things along the way that helped you here and that you can share with others?*
3. Did you work on social norms in your UN Trust Fund project with faith-based or traditional actors? If so, can you tell us more? How and why did you do it? Can you give us a concrete example of this, including which social norms you targeted and why? If you did not work on social norms, why not? Looking back, do you feel you should have?
4. Based on your own recent experiences in the field, what is it that you really want other practitioners who are working to prevent VAW/G and are considering engaging with faith-based and/or traditional actors to know?

FGD #2

1. Is any of your programming with faith-based and traditional actors from this grant continuing in 2020? If so, can you tell us how your VAW/G prevention work with faith-based and traditional actors has had to be adapted due to COVID-19?
 - a. *How did you adapt it? Why did you adapt it that way? What have you learned in the process? Would you recommend this way of working to others?*
2. If your programmes with faith-based and traditional actors have not continued, are there any tips from your programming experiences you can give those who *are* working with faith-based and traditional actors on VAW/G prevention in COVID-19 times that could help them adapt better to these realities?
 - a. *Why this specific tip? How do you think this can help?*
3. And now let's chat a bit about challenges or resistance from faith-based and traditional actors, or things that did not work so well in your projects around engaging them. Please feel free to be honest. We can often learn as much from each other around what did not work as from what did work. So please share an example of a strategy that you had for engaging faith-based actors or traditional actors for VAW/G prevention that simply did not work as you had planned, or was really challenging to implement in practice?
 - a. *Can you tell us about the specific challenge/strategy? Why do you think it did not work? How did you handle the fact that it didn't work? Did you try to adapt at all?*
4. I want us to talk a bit more just about traditional actors. Can you tell me a little bit about whether there are traditional actors in your context that you feel are relevant for VAW/G prevention and who they are?
 - a. *Did your project work with these traditional actors? Why/why not and how?*
5. What is it that you really want donors and policymakers to know about the how and why of working with faith-based or traditional actors?

Section E: Consent form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

We would like to invite you to participate in research collecting practice-based knowledge (PBK) on engaging with religious and traditional actors to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG). You are invited specifically because an organisation that you work/ed for implemented a project that was funded by the UN Trust Fund.

Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project and contact me if you require further explanation or clarification of any aspect of the study. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you or your organisation negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part. The information that has been collected from you up to that point will then be deleted.

We are asking you (as a representative of your organisation) to take part in two online focus group discussions (FGDs), where we will discuss the preliminary findings of the process of collecting and synthesising PBK from specific UN Trust Fund projects (including your organisation's), your specific experiences and learnings from engaging with traditional and religious actors, and share your thoughts and opinions. The online focus group will not last longer than one hour.

You will remain anonymous and your name will not be included in any reporting. You will not receive any payment for taking part in this study. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using codes instead of names and storing data on password-protected computers. Only the researchers will have access to any notes that are taken.

The session will be recorded. You will have the right to review/edit the recording after the session. These recordings may also be transcribed. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement and this transcription will not be shared with the UN Trust Fund.

In any reports, journal articles, or presentations prepared based on the data collected during this study, you will remain anonymous.

If you are willing to participate in this study please sign the attached Declaration of Consent on the next page and email it to the researcher.

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

By signing below, I agree to take part in this research study on engaging religious and traditional actors to prevent VAWG, conducted by Elisabet le Roux and Selina Palm.

I declare that:

- I have read the attached information leaflet and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- All issues related to privacy and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide have been explained to my satisfaction.

Signed on (date)

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Signature of participant