

Challenging Men to Change:
A Case Study of a Men's Group
in the
Valley of a Thousand Hills,
KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

By

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Men's groups are increasingly recognised as an important strategy in improving health and well being in communities affected by poverty and deprivation (Tsey, Whiteside, Patterson, Baird and Baird 2002). Despite this recognition, there is a lack of documentation of such groups in the literature (Tsey *et al* 2002:279) and of the process of addressing gender issues within men's groups in particular. Research into men addressing issues of gender in groups is generally based on work in support groups with men who have histories of violence against women (e.g. Silvergleid and Mankowski 2006; Garda 2001).

Whilst there exists documentation of the work of men's 'consciousness raising' groups, in which issues of gender were consciously addressed by men who wished to challenge the dominant gender norms of society, this work is generally based on groups operating in a western middle class context (e.g. Connell 1987:235-236). White (1997) argues that whilst the gender and development (GAD) literature recognises the need for men's gender perspectives to be included in development work, it remains largely silent on practical approaches to engaging men around gender issues in development.

This dissertation attempts to fill this gap by documenting and analysing the work of the Valley Trust, an non governmental organization (NGO) working with a group of men in a poor, rural context.

In the district in which the group works, between 61 and 68 percent of household's lived on less than R400 per month in 2001 (KZN DED 2005:10-11). Unemployment levels for the district were 45.5 percent in 2002 according to the strict definition of unemployment (KZN DED 2005:11). A further constraint on the population of KwaZulu-Natal as a whole is the high rate of HIV prevalence, which stood at 36.5 percent in March 2005 (KZN DED 2005:7). This has important implications for any development work that is undertaken in the province as there is a high likelihood that

participants in development projects and programmes will be either directly or indirectly affected by HIV/AIDS.

This men's group works towards producing income for the men through the use of their land. In addition to this, however, the group also works around other issues, including, gender, HIV/Aids, sexuality and nutrition. Land-use provides a practical platform from which to build a relationship with the group which enables these more sensitive issues to be addressed.

This men's group is an important and interesting case study for several reasons. Firstly, the approach used in facilitating the group provides a practical means of incorporating men's gender perspectives into gender and development work and gender and development theory (Cornwall 1997:9). Secondly, the broad focus of the group's work is in contrast to the more common approach of working with groups around single issues, what could be termed an 'either-or' approach. The men's group is thus innovative in terms of the challenge presented by global attempts to mainstream gender, particularly because of the grassroots level nature of the work (cf. Clisby 2005:23; Hemson 2002:3). Thirdly, in the context of the very traditional, patriarchal beliefs prevalent in the area, the group's intention to address gender through changing household decision making patterns is of particular interest because it provides practical assistance and examples of how it is possible to work towards gender equality (cf. Cleaver 2002:24). This is crucial if 'gender' is to become conceived as a real issue with relevance to the spectrum of South African society, and not a foreign construct of western origin (Porter and Smyth 1998:62).

This research considers the experiences of the men in the group, their wives and the staff members of the Valley Trust with a view to unpacking the ideas, processes and relationships that have influenced the work of the group. In engaging with these experiences the research will be able to explore whether and how the group has affected the lives of those involved in it. The broad problems explored in this research include: the effects of working with the group on patriarchal relationships and women's

empowerment in the participating households, the effects of the group as a means of social support for its members, whether this work has implications for government and NGO policy and the effectiveness of using land use as a platform from which to explore more sensitive issues.

Having identified the research gap in chapter one, chapter two examines the theoretical framework that informs this dissertation. The changing conceptions of men and women in the field of development and key advances in development theory around gender are documented. The application of recent work on masculinity to the field of development theory and practice is then reviewed. Chapter three examines the historical context in which this study is located, and explores the construction of masculinities in South Africa. Women's roles in the liberation struggle and the post-apartheid period are then considered, noting the varying effects that these roles have had on a range of gender issues in contemporary South Africa. Chapter four describes the research methodology and discusses the research process and methods. Chapter five reports the findings of the study, first discussing the background and development of the group before exploring the effects that the group has had on the lives of the participants and their families with particular attention being to land use, social capital, health care, HIV/Aids and gender relations. Chapter six contains the conclusions of the dissertation and discusses policy recommendations and areas for further research.

Chapter 2: Gendering Development - The Changing Conceptions of Men and Women in the Development Process

The conceptions of men and women and how gender relations affect and effect development processes have changed dramatically over the past sixty years. This chapter documents these changes, noting the shift in emphasis from the women in development (WID) projects of the 1970's to the more recent evolution of gender and development (GAD) as a field of practice and theory. The chapter goes on to examine various areas of development work, relevant to this research, which have been influenced and informed by a gender and development perspective. These include land use and land rights, health care and gender based violence. Two key challenges to the uptake of gender and development on a broad scale are then documented. These challenges, mainstreaming and moving beyond the conception of gender as a women's issue are critical if a transformation of gender relations is to occur on a global scale. I argue that although gender and development is a crucial progression in development theory, there remains a lack of integration of men's gender perspectives in gender and development work. With this in mind the chapter reviews recent developments in the field of masculinity studies and how this work has been applied in the field of development theory and practice. I conclude by arguing that in light of the neglect of men's gender perspectives in development work, the facilitation of men's groups providing 'culturally safe spaces' in which men can examine their gendered identities, beliefs and practices may be a particularly effective means of redressing this lack.

2.1 Men and women in development theory and practice

Women in development (WID) emerged as a distinct field during the 1970's and aimed at encouraging women to participate in economic activities (Manion 2002:3). The WID approach may be characterised as based on the logic of efficiency in which women's roles are viewed as providing an untapped resource for development (Sen 1998:9-10). The explicit aim of the WID approach was to integrate women into existing development models in order to increase the efficiency of the projects and programmes

undertaken (Leach 1998:11). Essentially, WID viewed women's emancipation as following automatically from their participation in the productive sectors of the economy (Manion 2002:3), without adequately questioning the male bias inherent in the economic system and its power structure (Elson 1991:12). These criticisms of WID contributed to the formulation of women and development (WAD) theory.

Women and development pointed out that women were already an integral part of the economy and made visible women's work in production and reproduction (Deere 1995:53). Manion (2002:3) critiques WAD noting that it did not uncover the underlying framework of oppression and that it assumed that once equality was firmly entrenched in international structures, women's positions would improve. El-Bushra (2000:56) argues that WID and WAD treated women's concerns as add-ons to standard development practice, and excluded men from meaningful participation in changing patriarchal systems. Further, the treatment of 'woman' as an undifferentiated universal category served to alienate those women who did not conform to the Western assumptions behind WID and WAD (Cornwall 1997:9).

Gender and development emerged during the 1980's and 1990's as a field of theory, policy and practice as a result of the recognition of the limitations of previous approaches. Gender and development (GAD) involves the study of the social construction of sex and the effects of this social construction on the processes, practices and outcomes of development (Baden and Goetz 1997:3). The particular emphasis of GAD is on how the social construction of sex, and the associated uneven distribution of power between the sexes, has influenced development outcomes in ways that have resulted in these outcomes benefiting men to a greater degree than women (Manion 2002:3). The changing ways that women have been perceived in development theory and practice over the past sixty years offers a useful starting point for a review of the emergence of gender as a development priority.

By recognising the socially constructed nature of gender, GAD enables the social, cultural, economic and political processes and practices that result in the sub-ordination

of women to be addressed without placing the responsibility for their subordination solely in the hands of women. Crucially, GAD allows men's gender perspective to be included in planning and analyses of development policies and programmes (Cornwall 1997:9).

Recognition of the socially constructed nature of gender must lead to the recognition that gender inequalities are also context specific (Doyal 2000:936). Gender inequality and the relative degree of subordination experienced by women is, therefore, also dependent on other aspects of identity such as race, class and wealth (Doyal 2000:936).

Connell (1987:120) emphasizes that the institutions affecting daily human life play a critical role in reinforcing gender bias. Markets, the state, families and peer group relations, for instance, are all structured in terms of gender. The relationships between the gender regimes of institutions may be described in terms of complementing each other, conflicting with each other or running 'parallel' to each other. For example, the relationship between the family and the labour market may be described as complementary, in that women's heavier loads of domestic work justify offering them part time, low wage jobs (Connell 1987:134). Their husbands in turn justify women's heavier loads of domestic work on the grounds that their husbands contribute more income to the household. Whilst the relationships between the gender regimes of institutions in society don't necessarily always reinforce gender inequality in such obvious ways, the continued subordination of women is certainly dependent to a large extent on these relationships. In the context of the global 'development' project, it is crucial to recognise these relationships and the often unintended effects that they may have in reinforcing (or indeed challenging) extant gender regimes. The neo-liberal reforms imposed on many developing countries during the 1980's and 1990's are a useful example of such processes. Ott (2002:44) notes that the processes of privatisation of state services (e.g. in the health care sector) in many cases had the effect of increasing the workload of women in developing countries. Connell (1987:230), similarly, observes that cutting back on welfare and "... 'returning' care of

the sick, elderly or troubled to the 'community' or the 'family', in reality means loading extra unpaid work onto women."

The recognition of the differing effects that policies have on men and women respectively has become one of the most important contributions of GAD theory. Development practitioners and policy makers over the past sixty years have tended to treat households as undifferentiated units and have based policies and programmes on this conception (Moser 1993:15). Moser (1993:15-16) identifies three broad, generalised assumptions that tend to be made in the planning and policy making process. Namely, that the household consists of a nuclear family, the household functions as an economic unit wherein there is equal control of resources and power of decision making between adult members, and that there is a clear division of labour based on gender (Moser 1993:15-16). Recognition that these assumptions do not hold true in many third world countries is an important step towards policies that adequately address women's oppression. This recognition has found expression in debate around the feminisation of poverty and the increased attention paid to female headed households (Jackson 1998:41-43; Moser 1993:16).

Jackson (1998:40) argues that whilst gender issues have been explicitly included in the agenda's of governments and multilateral institutions, the focus of gender policy has taken an instrumental approach – whereby attention to gender is justified in terms of how this will facilitate other development objectives rather than focusing on women's emancipation as an end in itself. Jackson (1998:43-46) further critiques the focus on the feminisation of poverty as eroding the differences between gender disadvantage and poverty. Whilst there is no contesting the fact that attention needs to be paid to the plight of poor women, it must be remembered that women's subordination is not derived from poverty and thus that poverty alleviation in itself will not necessarily lead to greater gender equity.

An issue that is often neglected in GAD practice and theory, but one that is strongly debated in the mainstream gender literature, is the marginalisation of people who

diverge from the dominant norms of sexuality (Cornwall 2006:274). This might include homosexuals, bisexuals, transexuals, single mothers, women who choose not to marry or remarry and non-macho men (Cornwall 2006:274). Cornwall (2006:274) notes that women's agency in reinforcing and validating the dominant norms is also not generally perceived as a gender issue. The simplistic conception of power relations that casts men as brutal oppressor and women as helpless victim neglects gender based discrimination by men against men and by women against women (Cornwall 2006:273).

Connell (1987:140) conceives gender as '...practice organized in terms of, or in relation to, the reproductive division of people into male and female.' What is key here is the idea of gender as practice, as a 'process rather than a thing' (Connell 1987:140). In terms of gender and development, it is the practice of gender and the process of constructing gender, and the individual choice that is inherent in this process, that is vital to the creation of more equitable development outcomes. Attempts to transform gender relations have occurred, with varying degrees of success, throughout the range of development programmes and projects. In the following section I will review areas of gender and development practice that are particularly relevant to this research.

2.2 Areas of gender and development practice

2.2.1 Gender and land use

The literature on gender and land use is strongly associated with concepts of gendered divisions of labour. The basic thesis of this literature is that men and women use land differently but, ideally, with the common goal of a secure livelihood for the household. Women, as responsible for childcare and the domestic sphere, tend to use land for the production of subsistence crops to feed the family (Ott 2002:45-46; Sorenson 1996:609). Men on the other hand tend to use land for the production of cash crops for sale (Ott 2002:45-46; Sorenson 1996:609). Sorenson (1996:609) points out that this is a very mechanistic conception of the processes that lead to particular gendered outcomes in land use. Whilst such divisions of labour may occur in many cases, it is the socially constructed relationships between men and women, the interplay of the various

institutions in society and the specific cultural context that will ultimately determine the outcome of any process of creating gendered divisions of labour in land use (Sorenson 1996:609; Connell 1987:134).

A second, related, concern in the gender and land use literature is around land rights and land tenure. The concern with land rights relates to the fact that in many third world countries women are only able to access land through men. This has important consequences in terms of decision making power particularly with respect to what land is used for, how and whether investments are made in land and what is done with the proceeds of production on land. In areas where agriculture is the primary source of income, access to land is vitally important for securing a livelihood. Women are highly vulnerable to poverty if they have no entitlements or rights to the land upon which they depend for their livelihoods (Agarwal 2003:187).

The need for land rights for women in India has been argued for on various grounds including, family welfare, the efficiency of national economic development, gender equity and women's empowerment (Arun 1999:20). In terms of welfare, it is thought that by enabling women to have direct access to land they will more easily be able to meet the basic needs of their households (Arun 1999:20). Where women do not have independent access to land the degree to which they are able to use land as a basis for their livelihoods is strongly dependent on the beliefs and practices of the men that they live with. Women's agency in terms of claims to land is also strongly dependent on their individual subject positions and involves mutuality and interdependence as much as domination and subordination (Rao 2005:370).

Rao (2005:354) argues that land rights have come to be perceived as the 'magic potion for poverty reduction, agricultural growth and women's empowerment.' At the same time, gender inequality has become conflated with inequality in resource allocation, and particularly inequality in access to land (Rao 2005:354). This has, in some cases, led to a neglect of the other critical constraints that women face. Arun (1999:23) notes, based on research conducted in Kerala, India, that even where women own land, they

do not necessarily retain control over how it is used or over the income generated from it. It is vital to view land use and land ownership from the perspective of the existing gender regime in any society.

The debate around land rights for women is often presented as a series of oppositional dichotomies e.g. as men against women and customary law against modern law (Rao 2005:354). This type of dichotomous thinking ignores the critical fact of the interdependence and mutual support between men and women in society and between the state and traditional institutions (Rao 2005:354). Dichotomisation of this sort risks alienating men and inciting increased levels of violence against women. Silberschmidt (1992:239) noted in her work in Kenya, that where men lost status due to their inability to meet their household obligations, they increasingly turned to violence as a means of enforcing their positions within their households.

To reiterate, giving land rights to women is an important step in the right direction, but is not a panacea to the multitude of other constraints faced by women. It is important not to let the allotment of land rights to women become conceived mechanistically as automatically improving levels of empowerment. Women's empowerment is dependent on change at multiple levels, from state and corporate policy to community and family life. Changing policy towards more equitable ends will have limited success if such changes are not supported by actions at a community and household level.

The concern in GAD theory and practice with uneven access to resources and opportunities is not limited to questions of land and property and extends into many other areas of daily life. An important area to examine in the context of this project is the work around health and access to healthcare in developing countries.

2.2.2. Gender and health

A high standard of health is recognised as a fundamental human right by the World Health Organisation (Global Health Watch 2006:1). The health of individuals across the world, however, varies very considerably, both within and between different

countries. 'Health' as defined by the WHO consists of physical, mental and social well-being and as such is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (Kabira *et al*:1997:25). Health is therefore fundamentally linked to social, economic and political conditions in any given country (Global Health Watch 2006:2). At a basic level, health is dependent on the requirements of human life such as food, water, shelter and physical and psychological security (Doyal 2000:932). Health is clearly strongly linked to poverty, and poverty can be both a cause of, and an effect of, poor health (Global Health Watch 2006:16). As Jackson (1998:48) argues, poverty is a profoundly gendered experience and the effects of poverty on health are thus also different for men and women. The design of policy and practice needs to be undertaken with this in mind (Doyal 2000:934).

Santow (1995:147) notes that a strong determinant of differences in health between men and women is the difference between the values placed on sons versus daughters. Where sons are perceived as being more valuable than daughters, various discriminatory practices may manifest that directly or indirectly lead to sons being healthier than daughters. Female infanticide and sex-selective abortion represent the extremes of this discrimination (Klasen and Wink 2002:298; Santow 1995:148). A more common form of discrimination against female children is the so-called 'benign neglect' suffered by girls in many countries. Neglect may be in the form of poor nutrition, a lack of preventative care and delays in seeking health care for disease (Fikree and Pasha 2004:824). Klasen and Wink (2002:298-299) note that unequal access to health care is the most important factor contributing to higher mortality rates among young girls.

It is important to examine the underlying socioeconomic factors that result in unequal access to health care. A particularly important development is the fact that health care is often no longer freely provided by the state in many developing countries (Kabira *et al* 1997:26). By turning health care into a commodity through privatization or cost recovery measures, modern health care has been absorbed into traditional familial patterns of behaviour (Santow 1995:154). This has lead to it being allocated, similarly

to food, along lines of sex, age and familial role with negative effects in terms of women's access to health care.

Women's access to education and employment opportunities are also important determinants of health (Klasen and Wink 2002:299). Santow (1995:156) argues that the relationship between education and improved health hinges on the 'confidence that education instills in women to deal with aspects of the modern world, to take greater personal responsibility for the welfare of her children and to assume a more important position in the family into which she marries'. In situations where women have little control over their daily lives the educational level of their husbands may play an important role in determining whether women have access to hospitals and to health related knowledge (Santow 1995:157). However, as Connell (1987:260-261) notes, education also plays an important role in reinforcing gender stereotypes. The content and context of education may strongly influence how effectively it contributes to women gaining access to health care and other resources.

It is clearly not sufficient to provide opportunities for education and employment without addressing the factors that prevent women from accessing these opportunities. Inequality in health status and access to health care is closely related to the gender regime of society. It is futile to attempt to address the problem of inequality in health and access to health care without also attempting to change gender relations at a broader level. This has to be done in the recognition that gender regimes may be closely identified with cultural beliefs, and that attempts to change the gender regime can be perceived as being threatening to traditional culture (Wendoh and Wallace 2005:70).

White (1997:15) states that, 'if women alone work for greater equality in gender relations, it will be an uphill struggle...where they have to take responsibility for changing not only their own ideologies and practice, but those of their men as well.' A focus on women alone is also problematic in that it doesn't demand change from men, denies men's ability to change, and further also denies men the opportunity to change. If men are constantly cast as 'the problem' there is a real risk of damaging gender

*cf. gender as
imperialistic*

relations to the point where men feel the need to resort to violence as a means of maintaining their positions in society and their families (Cornwall 1997:11; Sen 1997:12; Silberschmidt 1992:239).

2.2.3. Gender and sexual and reproductive health

The sexual and reproductive health of women is often very strongly affected by the power dynamics of patriarchal society (Baylies 2001:40). Decisions such as whether to have children, how many children to have and the spacing between children have profound effects on women's lives and health (Baylies 2001:42; Santow 1995:150). In some societies, child bearing is an important determinant of a woman's social status and women may experience considerable pressure to reproduce (Santow 1995:150). This in itself may have serious negative consequences for a woman's health and may exacerbate the effects of discrimination that women already endure. For example, discrimination in terms of the amount and quality of food provided to women may lead to various maternal depletion syndromes (Santow 1995:150). Ringheim (2002:170) notes in this vein that interventions around teaching women about nutrition during pregnancy may be undermined by the lack of power that many women experience in controlling their own food intake. The author illustrates this point with the following quote from a woman in India: 'Why don't you give this advice about what I should eat to my family members? If I start eating what you suggest, my husband and mother-in-law will beat me.' Importantly in terms of gender discourse, this woman identifies both her husband and her mother-in-law as controlling access to food in her household. This example thus also illustrates the complexity of gender relations and the power struggles that exist not only between men and women but also between women in different social positions.

Several authors suggest the benefits of involving men more directly in family planning initiatives. Potential benefits include improvement in access to health care for women, improved health and lower levels of maternal mortality, increased levels of negotiation around reproductive issues and increased support for women's family planning decisions (Ringheim 2002:170-175; Ndong *et al* 1999:S55; Moore 1999:107). It is

what about poverty
& having enough food?

necessary to address the direct needs of women for sexual and reproductive health care whilst also attempting to change the conditions that deprive them of adequate care in the first place.

The emphasis on women's sexual and reproductive health has in many cases led to a neglect of men's sexual and reproductive health issues (Ndong *et al* 1999:S53). Ndong *et al* (1999:S55) note that men's reproductive health needs range from screening and treatment for STD's and other diseases of the reproductive system, to counseling and education concerning contraception. Impotence and infertility are also identified as important aspects of men's reproductive health. Ringheim (2002:171-173) notes that the approach chosen to address these issues is also important. Contraception in a married couple, for example, may be most effectively discussed in the presence of both man and wife and may provide a basis for improving equity in decision making within the marriage.

The complexity of sexual and reproductive health care arises from the fact that it is so closely linked to the gender regime of society and the values accorded to masculinity and femininity respectively. It follows that interventions around sexual and reproductive health need to be very sensitive to these values.

Sexual performance and potency are aspects of male life that are in many cultures closely tied to ideals of masculinity (Segal 1990:219). Men may, at the same time, struggle to seek help with sexual problems due to other masculine ideals of self-reliance and avoidance of feelings (Segal 1990:219). Men's involvement in reproductive health must be designed to 'increase the likelihood that women's male partners are educated about, supportive of and positively involved in the range of reproductive health concerns that both women and men face' (Ndong *et al* 1999:S55). The need for men's involvement in reproductive health interventions is illustrated by the dilemma faced by the women in Baylies (2001) study in Zambia. These women wanted children but were afraid that they would be exposed to HIV/AIDS if they had unprotected sex with their husbands as their husbands had multiple sexual partners.

Baylies (2001:42) notes that the language of family planning and AIDS awareness campaigns emphasizes the reproductive rights that all should enjoy, but that this language obscures the complexity of the process of negotiating, or failing to negotiate, the nature of sexual activity. The complexity of this negotiation process is 'grounded in power relations, convention, the heat of the moment, and, sometimes, gender violence' (Baylies 2001:42). Men's involvement is clearly critical if the process of negotiating the nature of sexual activity is to become less one sided, and it is necessary for practical approaches to be developed to support men in changing their behaviour. For such approaches to be successful they will need to help men to identify the advantages of greater gender equity (Ringheim 2002:173).

2.2.4. Gender based violence

The high global rate of gender based violence is perhaps the most graphic expression of inequality in power relations between men and women. Such violence is a serious threat to the health and well being of women. High levels of gender based violence are associated with increased risk for women of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) including HIV/AIDS (Smith 2002:65). Sen (1998:10-11) argues that in addition to being a violation of basic human rights, gender based violence negatively affects development outcomes by limiting the efficiency and effectiveness of development interventions and acting as an obstacle to participation.

Wood and Jewkes (1997:42-43) note, in a study conducted in a township in South Africa, that many (up to sixty percent) adolescent women experienced violence during their relationships with men. Thirty percent of women in a separate study reported that the first time they had sex, they were forced to do so (Richter 1996, Buga 1996, Jewkes 1997 cited in Wood and Jewkes 1997:42). Gender based violence spans a continuum from verbal threats and emotional abuse through to beatings and rape (Britton 2006:149-150). Men are the main perpetrators of gender based violence. Gender based violence most often occurs at the hands of men who are known to the victims and occurs in a domestic context (Sen 1998:7). Violence generally is not a random

occurrence and the use and meaning of violence is connected with power (Britton 2006:148; Sen 1998:8).

Sexual encounters are sites where unequal power relations between men and women are often most explicitly evident (Wood and Jewkes 1997:41). These power relations determine whether women are able to protect themselves against pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease and rape (Wood and Jewkes 1997:41). Moffett (2006) argues that in South Africa violence against women, and rape in particular, serves as a function of patriarchal control and is rooted in the legacy of legitimised violence of the apartheid system. This conception of violence against women is based on the idea that men, in raping women, are buying into the notion that they are 'performing a necessary work of social stabilisation', i.e. that they are enforcing patriarchy as a main structure of society (Moffett 2006:132). Connell (1987:107) reinforces this point, stating that: 'Rape...is a form of person-to-person violence deeply embedded in power inequalities and ideologies of male supremacy. Far from being a deviation from the social order, it is in a significant sense an enforcement of it.'

Programmes that work around gender based violence often tend to focus on women as victims of violence rather than working with men as the perpetrators of violence (Hong 2000:269; Wood and Jewkes 1997:45). These programmes tend to use a format that emphasizes women being aware of dangers and taking precautions against these dangers (Hong 2000:269). Very rarely do these programmes address the agency of the perpetrator of violence and they also do not address the broader sociocultural determinants of behaviour that may supercede individual choices and actions (Hong 2000:269-270). Once again, by not working with men, these programmes reflect the assumption that men are unwilling or unable to change. They thus do not require men to change their behaviour and in so doing may deny men the opportunity to change. Men thus need to be fully incorporated into programmes that deal with issues of sexuality and gender based violence. Wood and Jewkes (1997:45-46) note in this vein that it is important to work with children, adolescents and adults to develop alternative patterns of interpersonal interaction.

2.3. Key challenges to gender and development

Having considered four core aspects of gender and development practice attention is turned to two key challenges that emerge from the literature on GAD – the mainstreaming of gender sensitivity and moving beyond gender as a women's issue. In this section each of these is considered in turn.

Baden and Goetz (1997:5) state that mainstreaming involves '...explicitly taking account of gender issues at all stages of policy making and programme design and implementation.' Gender, however, has often been included in policy at the level of rhetoric only (Clisby 2005:23). In spite of the adoption of gender policies in many countries and organisations gender is often still viewed as a separate issue rather than as an integral part of policy making and programme design (Wendoh and Wallace 2005:71-72). Clisby (2005:23) notes that where gender has been adopted at the level of rhetoric only, it may actually hinder women's access to resources and opportunities by blunting women's demands for change. In such a situation, responses from policy makers might point to the fact that gender policies are in place and that gender has therefore been 'dealt with.'

Gender mainstreaming is a process that must go beyond the mere implementation of policy. Policy makers and development practitioners need to acknowledge their own roles in systems of domination and subordination (Plantenga 2004:41). Porter and Smyth (1998:60) note that the ability and willingness of practitioners to understand and work for gender equality is controlled to a large extent by their context and their hierarchical place within it. The success of gender mainstreaming is dependent on the willingness and ability of policy makers and practitioners at all levels to undertake a personal transformation of their perceptions and ideas of gender in their own lives (Plantenga 2004:41-42).

The local context in which gender mainstreaming is undertaken has crucial consequences for the success or failure of mainstreaming. Gender is often perceived as

being a western construct that is imposed on other cultures as a condition of development assistance (Porter and Smyth 1998:62). This perception of gender presents a real challenge to successful mainstreaming (Porter and Smyth 1998:62). Wendoh and Wallace (2005:71) note that 'the 'foreign-ness' and lack of local ownership of the gender agenda often lead to different forms of resistance, including outright rejection, scepticism, or people masquerading as gender sensitive, with no real understanding or appreciation of the issues.' Gender inequality is often based on deeply held cultural and social beliefs, which tend to be taken for granted as the norm by both men and women (Plantenga 2004:41-42). Both the staff and participants in development projects and programmes may hold these beliefs. It is crucial, therefore, that sufficient time is allowed for culturally and socially sensitive gender training to be undertaken if transformation of gender inequality and gender mainstreaming is to be successful (Wendoh and Wallace 2005:75).

The success or failure of mainstreaming is, further, dependent on what understanding of gender equality is being mainstreamed (Walby 2005:455). There are several different ways of understanding what gender equality means. Walby (2005:455) lists three predominant models of gender equality. The first model is based on 'sameness' between the sexes and focuses on women entering domains previously only occupied by men, whilst retaining the existing male norm as standard. The second model is based on moving towards the equal valuation of the contributions of men and women in a gender segregated society. The third model is based on developing a new standard for both men and women i.e. a transformation of gender relations. Walby (2005:455) argues that the third model offers the only real potential for true gender mainstreaming as it is based on transformation of the institutions and standards necessary for effective gender equality.

The second challenge to GAD theory and practice is how to move beyond a conception of gender that focuses only on women to one that fully incorporates men and women and is based on gender as a socially constructed phenomenon. Such a conception of GAD would of necessity also have to incorporate subordinated masculinities and

dominant femininities and be flexible enough to be adapted to specific local contexts. The need for a shift in GAD practice seems to be most clearly articulated by practitioners in the field of sexual and reproductive health. Wood and Jewkes (1997) in studying the prevalence of violence in the relationships of teenage girls state that 'unless the spotlight shifts towards men, health promotion initiatives in the field of sexual health will continue to be inadequate.'

The subordination that women experience daily in many parts of the world makes it natural for development practitioners to focus on women. Baden and Goetz (1997:4-5) note that at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, considerable resistance to GAD was expressed by staff members of some southern NGO's. GAD was perceived by these NGO's as enabling a shift away from women when the oppression of women had not yet been adequately addressed. The problem that GAD attempts to address is the root causes of women's oppression, and how this oppression is intrinsic to the functioning of the social, economic and political system. The key issue in translating GAD from theory to policy and practice lies in truly recognising the basic thesis of GAD that gender is socially constructed, and hence that power relations between men and women are socially constructed. It is therefore necessary to address both the process of construction of power relations between men and women and the process of construction of individual gender identities. Policy, development interventions, projects and programmes that are introduced without consideration of their gendered implications will continue to play into patriarchal systems of dominance and subordination.

Gender and development work has to avoid the temptation to cast men as 'the problem' if transformation of gender relations is to occur. Cornwall (1997:12) states that it is not 'men *per se*, but certain ways of being and behaving that are associated with dominance and power.' A transformation of gender relations has to create alternative ways of being and behaving that men are willing to accept and that allow men to perceive the benefits of gender equity (Ringheim 2002:173). These ways of being and behaving will be different in different cultures and it is imperative that the blanket application of policy

across different countries is avoided (Cornwall 1997:12). It is evident therefore that men must be engaged at all levels, from participants in projects to bureaucrats and policy makers, if genuine and lasting transformation of gender relations is to occur.

2.4 Masculinity and development

Men and masculinities have generally been neglected as an area of study and practice in the development field (Cleaver 2002:1). The recognition that lasting transformation of gender relations is inexorably linked to the actions, behaviours and beliefs of men has led to a recent increase in the attention paid to men and masculinity in the development process. It is, however, important to be aware of the need for men and masculinity to be studied not only as a means to women's empowerment, but also towards the end of empowering both men and women to lead more fulfilling lives.

Development as a field of practice has profoundly gendered outcomes and the dilemma faced by, often under funded, development agencies and NGO's is how to justify an interest in men without losing ground in overcoming women's oppression (Cleaver 2002:24). In this section I will review some of the recent literature on masculinities and how this work is being or could be applied to the field of development.

2.4.1. Multiple masculinities and hegemony

Everyone has 'multiple and interlocked' identities and these different identities are associated with different privileges and vulnerabilities in different contexts (Plantenga 2004:41). Connell (1998:475) emphasizes the multi-leveled and multi-dimensional character of gender as an important consideration in defining masculinity. The qualities that are perceived as desirable for men to possess in one context do not necessarily translate into other contexts (Connell 1995:76). In a patriarchal society, a particular masculinity is generally regarded as embodying the dominant position of men. This is a key idea in recent thinking about masculinity and has been termed 'hegemonic masculinity.' Hegemonic masculinity is the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations. Connell (1995:77) defines hegemony, after Gramsci, as the 'cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading

position in social life.' This 'leading position' in social life is characterised in the case of gender by male dominance of all the institutions of authority and control in society (Segal 1990:97). Whilst most men may benefit from gender inequality and male dominance of institutions in society, not all men benefit equally (Vincent 2006:355).

Within a single society different masculinities may assume a dominant position in some contexts and be subordinate in other contexts. Connell (1995:37) emphasizes that recognising a diversity of masculinities is not enough, and that it is necessary also to recognise the relations between different kinds of masculinity. These relations include alliance, dominance and subordination (Connell 1995:37). Hegemonic masculinity subordinates other masculinities and positions itself in relation to these such that the values they express hold no value or legitimacy (Morrell 1998:608). The relations between different masculinities are clearly also subject to change in different contexts. The characteristics of hegemonic masculinity are also subject to change and may be challenged as conditions in society change (Connell 1995:77).

A large amount of work around masculinity has been concerned with the question of why gender inequality exists and how men's dominance of society can be challenged. Connell (1995:71-72) argues that gender is a way in which social practice is ordered and that social practice responds to particular situations and is generated within definite structures of social relations. Masculinities are thus constructed through relationships in society. White masculinity for instance is constructed not only in relation to white women, but also to the diversity of other masculinities (black, working class, bourgeois, gay etc) and femininities extant in society (Connell 1995:75). A process of changing masculinities can not occur in isolation from the social relationships, contexts and institutions that shape masculinity in any society. Connell (1995:73) states in this vein that:

'Any one masculinity, as a configuration of practice, is simultaneously positioned in a number of structures of relationship, which may be following different historical trajectories. Accordingly masculinity, like femininity, is always liable to internal contradiction and historical disruption.'

Theories of masculinity, whilst emphasizing the social construction of gender must also take into account the contradictions and dilemmas that face men at an individual level as they act out their masculinity or are challenged to change their masculinity. Segal (1990:103) argues that it is 'only by placing the psychology of men within the social context of those broader patterns of existence which maintain and disrupt male domination that we can understand the contemporary dilemmas of masculinity.'

2.4.2. Men, masculinities and development

Development as a field of practice and theory has always involved men, however, men are tend not to be explicitly mentioned in gender policy documents (Cleaver 2002:1). Arguments for explicit attention being paid to men and masculinities in development range from those concerned with gender equality and social justice, to the gendered vulnerabilities men and women are exposed to, to concern about 'crises of masculinity', to the negotiation of gender roles and relations and the creation of strategic gender partnerships (Cleaver 2002:2-4). What these various arguments have in common is dissatisfaction with traditional masculine norms and the associated diversity of inequalities experienced by women and subordinated masculinities across the globe.

The approaches to tackling gender inequality will be different in the differing contexts in which inequality occurs. In the context of development projects and programmes in the global south, Elson (1991:3) suggests that the process of development in its current conception is fundamentally biased in favour of men. Problematically, this does not register as irrational among the funders and practitioners of development work. Elson (1991:8) further argues that in a system that is fundamentally biased in favour of men, it may be rational, from a highly constrained woman's position, to behave in ways that perpetuate male bias and deny women the exercise of substantive freedoms. Development projects that do not explore gender inequality thus are likely to end up perpetuating existing unequal gender regimes.

Working with men to transform their masculinities towards more constructive ideals of manhood is a vital aspect that has been missing from much gender and development work. This process will always tread a dangerous path as ideals of masculinity are often closely associated with cultural traditions and societal expectations, and international development programmes risk the charge of neo-colonialism. This points to the need for transformation to be driven by communities themselves. The crucial question then is how to initiate a process of self examination and reflection among men?

2.4.3. Men's groups as development initiatives

Tsey *et al* (2002:280-282) suggest that men's support groups may be a useful means of engaging with men around issues of masculinity. If such groups can develop an understanding of how men's behaviour is damaging to women, without alienating group members or falling into the trap of creating an exclusive 'men's club' type atmosphere, then this could well be successful. White (1997:21) argues, however, that so-called 'consciousness raising' groups for men may not be an ideal approach to transforming masculinities because men do not have a common structural interest in changing gender relations. The record of men's consciousness raising groups in western nations is testament to the dangers of this approach, as Connell (1987:235-236) notes, the focus of men's groups often shifted from a political project of counter-sexism to a personal project of masculinity therapy, which essentially validated traditional masculine values. Connell (1995:141-142) argues that men may be more likely to change in ways that benefit women when gender relations are questioned in the context of other shared struggles. The example Connell uses is of the environmental movement which, whilst not explicitly dealing with gender issues, seems through its methods of organising and protesting against environmental destruction to have caused men and women to seek alternative gender principles by which to live (Connell 1995:141-142). The context of most contemporary studies of men's groups and movements is the western, industrialised nations, and relatively little work has been done on men's groups in developing country contexts, especially around questioning traditional masculine values.

Development work that focuses on masculinity has often tended to focus on areas such as sexual and reproductive health and violence where the implications of unequal gender regimes are most blatantly obvious (Thomson 2002:166 citing Chant and Gutmann 2000). Thomson (2002:166-167) argues that it is necessary to work more explicitly with boys and young men around the social construction of masculinity. This point is echoed by Wood and Jewkes (1997:45) who stress the need for work with adolescents and pre-adolescents around communication skills and the provision of alternative ways of interacting with each other. The social construction of masculinity and the development of effective communication skills could be effectively addressed through men's groups if the men in these groups are able to act as role models for their own children and the children in their surrounding areas. The principles around which such men's groups are formed and the ways in which they operate are thus of vital importance to their success in transforming gender relations. Cornwall (1997:10-11) argues that feminist activism in the past tended only to offer men a series of negative images of masculinity and that in this context men could only change by abandoning the attributes that were culturally valued as masculine. It is imperative that work with men does not fall into this trap, and that it rather provides positive alternative ideals of masculinity around which men can structure their behaviour and beliefs.

Other practical means of working to change gender norms in development processes have been suggested by several researchers. The need for role models of alternative male behaviour is identified as a key aspect of changing gender norms, but recruiting men to do such gender awareness work is problematic (Cleaver 2002:20). The use of participatory workshops that aim to create space where gendered roles and responsibilities can be questioned is also mooted as an effective means of initiating processes of change in gender relations, particularly if they are conducted with children (Poudyal 2000 cited in Cleaver 2002:20). The role of the education systems of countries globally in reinforcing gender inequality is noted by Connell (1995:239) who argues that a transformation of school curricula around the basis of social justice is required. This would mean 'organising knowledge from the point of view of the least advantaged,' rather than from the point of view of the privileged as is the current trend.

Bujra (2002:229) asks how 'masculine' values can be challenged without alienating men? Men's groups may be a means of challenging destructive masculine values by offering culturally 'safe spaces' in which men can examine their ideology, values and behaviour and develop new ways of being and behaving. As important as creating such safe spaces, is the way that the insights gained from working in men's groups are incorporated into the lives of individual men and hence how men's groups affect the lives of women, children and other men.

2.5 Conclusion

The theoretical advance from the very one dimensional perspectives of women in development and women and development to the more holistic perspective of gender and development has been very important. Gender and development theory has enabled a move towards recognising the unique constraints and challenges faced by women who become involved in development projects and programmes. However, in spite of the opportunity afforded by gender and development theory to incorporate men's gender perspectives into development work, this opportunity remains under explored. In light of the increasing amount of research into masculinities there is potential for this work to be applied in the field of development theory and practice with the aim of working towards a transformation of gender relations. Men's groups may be an important means of involving men in work around their gender ideologies, and providing a space in which they can examine, discuss and change these ideologies without fear of intimidation or ridicule (Tsey *et al* 2002:282). It is this use of men's groups as a means engaging men and of working towards gender transformation that this dissertation aims to explore.

Chapter 3: Context – Masculinities and gender in South Africa

The history of South Africa has had particularly important effects on the contemporary construction of gender. This chapter documents the historical development of South African masculinities through apartheid, the liberation struggle, the transition to democracy and the post apartheid period. I argue that although apartheid has ended, many of its structural legacies remain which continue to exert strong influence on the construction of masculinity. The role that women played in the liberation struggle and the transition to democracy also had important effects in terms of gender relations and gender awareness in contemporary South Africa, but to differing degrees in different spheres of South African life. Gendered divisions of labour and land use and land rights for women in former homeland areas remain strongly affected by the legacy of apartheid and the migrant labour system. In light of this, I argue that the constitutional entrenchment of gender equality combined with the government's technocratic approach to gender transformation has not led to significant changes in the lives of many rural women. Given that this research focuses on a rural men's group who are working around gender issues with an NGO the chapter then explores the state of affairs with regard to gender in the non profit sector in South Africa and argues that grassroots approaches to gender transformation need to be implemented for real change to occur in the lives of many South Africans.

3.1. The development of South African masculinities

The experience of apartheid and the process of transition to a democratic society have profoundly affected masculinity in South Africa. Inevitably under such a racist regime, race played and still plays an important role in the construction of masculinity in South Africa. Morrell (1998:618) documents several different white and African masculinities that were constructed both in concert with and in opposition to the apartheid and colonial systems.

White Afrikaner masculinity, based on strong religious, cultural and ethnic ideals, was constructed as a superior masculinity under apartheid (Vincent 2006:354). Afrikaner masculinity was based on 'rigid austerity and strictness in conduct and morals' combined with heterosexuality and political conservatism (Vincent 2006:355 quoting Du Pisani 2001:159). 'Afrikaner nationalism constructed a dominant form of white masculinity in direct contrast to black masculinity' (Vincent 2006:355). Whilst white Afrikaans men wielded a large amount of political and economic power under apartheid, Afrikaner masculinity was by no means hegemonic in all spheres of South African society. Morrell (1998:618) documents a different form of white masculinity that was constructed amongst English speaking white South Africans, many of who lived in Natal province. Settlers in the British colonies, like Natal, created tight knit, racially exclusive communities with a hegemonic masculinity that was strongly based on metropolitan ideals of manliness but which also reflected an engagement with indigenous culture. Although political power was strongly associated with Afrikaner masculinity, English speaking white masculinity was in important ways 'complicit' with this hegemony, receiving ample share of the 'patriarchal dividend' to use Connell's (1995) terminology. White masculinity was thus hegemonic in the urban areas and in the white dominated agricultural regions of the country.

Waetjen (2004:67-68), in her study of the political power of ideals of masculinity in the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), argues that African masculinities were constructed around and in opposition to the hegemonic masculinity of apartheid. The homeland system and the associated migration of men back and forth between the homelands and the urban centres significantly dislocated black men's experience and construction of their masculinity. The dichotomy between the experience of powerlessness and humiliation in the white dominated urban areas contrasted with African men's own experience of hegemonic masculinity when they returned to the homelands (Morrell 1998:620). The practice of migrating to the urban centres to work in generally very physically demanding jobs became important aspects of rural African masculinity (Waetjen 2004:80). 'To become a man, the individual has to migrate, to undergo that initiation, and then fulfill the masculine function of breadwinner in the workplace'

Waetjen (2004:80). Masculine identity was thus actively created and incorporated into the strategies that men used to cope with the movement between modern workplaces and the customary practices of their rural homesteads. The wages that one could earn as a migrant worker also accorded status to the men who went to work in the cities. Ngwane (2003:695) argues that the return of the migrant workers to the rural homestead over the December-January holiday was an important aspect of affirming their masculinity and their place in rural society. The return of migrant workers to the rural homestead was in an important way a process of re-becoming a man (Waetjen 2004:80), and these men placed strong emphases on their ethnic and gender identities and expected the respect of younger men and women in particular (Morrell 1998:624).

A further important aspect of the migrant labour system was the gendered division of labour that it set up. In order for men to be available to migrate, women had to be responsible for virtually all productive and reproductive labour in the household (Waetjen 2004:81). Homestead production to a large degree rested on the agricultural labour of women (Waetjen 2004:81). It is possible that this division of labour has created a legacy where agricultural labour is considered women's work even in the absence of formal employment for many men.

During the postwar period increasing numbers of Africans began to take up permanent residence in the urban township areas and as a result the masculinities constructed in the townships began to differ from the masculinities of the migrant workers (Waetjen 2004:88). Morrell (1998:621) distinguishes between the two as African (rural) masculinities and Black (urban) masculinities. Black masculinities were also characterised by an emphasis on the importance of work as a defining aspect of being a man. The urban townships, from the 1950's onwards, became 'melting pots of gender, race and class' (Morrell 1998:624). In this context a new black masculinity was constructed, in opposition to the state with strongly held views about the place of women and with work as a central feature of its identity. Black masculinity gradually came to find its expression through oppositional politics, with professional men such as

Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo as its leaders and symbols of masculinity (Morrell 1998:625).

Morrell (1998:627) argues that the male youth in the urban townships differed in their construction of masculinity from the masculinities described above. Gang membership became an important feature of young men's lives and they constructed an oppositional or protest masculinity that was often asserted in violence against other gangs and women. This masculinity, although showing links to rural roots, did not look to African elders or traditions for inspiration but found their symbols in Hollywood. Later, during the 1970's and 1980's this oppositional masculinity was adopted by the youth and students in their protest actions against the apartheid system. Violence was again an important expression of masculinity and was directed at workers, women and symbols of authority.

3.2. Masculinities in the transition to democracy and the post apartheid period

The period of the late 1980's and early 1990's during which apartheid was conclusively dismantled was beset with violence in many areas. Violent encounters occurred between government forces and protestors, and between supporters of the different liberation movements and political parties. In important ways these violent encounters may be considered as contestations between differing masculinities. Waetjen (2004:95) notes that the various political movements called upon manhood in mobilizing support, and political actions were interpreted in the language of manhood. Violent clashes between supporters of the ANC and the IFP in particular were characterised by notions of manhood and what being a man entailed. These clashes were particularly acute in KwaZulu-Natal, the site of this study. For many young men political violence was an initiation process, or rite of passage (Waetjen 2004:111).

The success of the anti-apartheid struggle, culminating in the democratic elections of 1994 was potentially a process of publicly undermining the institutionalised white hegemonic masculinity. In a transitional society struggles over masculinity are ceaseless (Morrell 2001:25). Vincent (2006:356), however, argues that white middle

class masculinity continues to control the 'hegemonic centre' even under the transitory conditions of contemporary South African society. Vincent (2006:352) asks 'is this [white] hegemony being challenged, accommodated or appropriated by young black men? are there differing masculinities vying for dominance in the process...and if so, which is gaining the upper hand?' The context of Vincent's study is a relatively privileged group of university students, but it is fair to pose her question in the broader context of South African society as a whole.

This implies that the range of South African masculinities continue to be defined with at least some reference to white middle class masculinity. This seems likely in light of the fact that the validity white middle class masculinity as hegemonic has never been questioned on a broad scale in South Africa. Bond (2000:26) argues that the neoliberal basis of South African economic policy since the late 1980's until the present day resulted in the entrenchment of the inequalities generated by the apartheid system. This point is echoed by Marais (1998:150) who notes that the need for macro-economic stability in post apartheid South Africa, 'became interpreted as demanding fiscal and monetary stringency and calls for deregulation, liberalisation, privatisation and export led growth gained favour among ANC leaders and their economic advisors.' Natrass (2003:1) argues that, 'the labour market and industrial policy environment has benefited relatively high productivity firms and sectors,' and that this has in turn encouraged business to reduce its dependence on unskilled labour. The incentive for business to reduce dependence on unskilled labour has further marginalised poor black men and women. At the same time there has been a significant increase in the number of black people entering the upper income quintiles (Gelb 2003:5). In light of this trend, Seekings and Natrass (2002:12) argue that class may slowly be becoming a more important indicator of inequality than race. Race, however, is undeniably still associated with inequality in South Africa in spite of the existence of a growing black middle class.

What then are the characteristics of this white masculinity that controls the 'hegemonic centre'? Vincent (2006:360) suggests that white middle class masculinity is based on

rational-intellectual ideals, emphasizing intellectual prowess but with importance also attached to an interest in sports and physical activities. Rational-intellectual white masculinity certainly influences the masculinities of men who come into contact with it on a daily basis. Vincent's (2006) study shows this clearly in documenting the pressures that black men felt in entering a white dominated tertiary institution. These pressures are likely to continue to be experienced by these men if they enter the corporate sector. However, the majority of the South African population is unlikely to be exposed to such pressures. The high rates of poverty and unemployment in South Africa mean that relatively few people are able to attend tertiary institutions and enter the corporate world. For men in these situations, masculinity is likely to be constructed around different ideals.

In the context of this study the construction of masculinity in rural, former homeland, areas among older Zulu speaking men is of interest. Rangan and Gilmartin (2002:638) note that ethnic tradition in the former homelands still has a strong influence on daily life in these areas. Many men in these areas were previously migrant labourers who are currently unemployed (Rangan and Gilmartin 2002:637). The centrality of employment as a masculine ideal is important here in light of the very high levels of unemployment in South Africa (Morrell 1998:626). The roles that women play in these areas, being expected to be subordinate, but at the same time being primarily responsible for household production and reproduction may have important effects on how men construct their masculinity and also on what men perceive as viable income generating activities. Sorenson (1996:609) argues, with reference to gendered divisions of labour, that it is the socially constructed relationships between men and women, the interplay of the various institutions in society and the specific cultural context that are of critical importance in any process of transforming gender regimes. The particular roles that women have played in South Africa through the liberation struggle, the transition to democracy and the post apartheid period have had important effects on the gender regime of South African society.

3.3. Women and gender equality in the struggle and the post apartheid period

The degree of gender equality and gender awareness in political discourse and policy in South Africa is strongly influenced by the role that women played in the anti-apartheid struggle and the subsequent transition to democracy. Waylen (2007:541) argues that in South Africa the particular context of the transition to democracy enabled women to organise and effect changes in favour of gender equality. This context revolves around several key characteristics. The existence of a favourable 'political opportunity structure' due to the long established existence of women's organisations as legitimate parts of the broad opposition movement, the fact that the ANC was relatively open to gender concerns and the lengthy period over which negotiations took place which enabled effective contributions to be made (Waylen 2007:524). Strategic alliances between feminist 'insiders' within the ANC and outsiders also enabled gender concerns to be placed on the agenda of the negotiations (Waylen 2007:541).

Whilst the ANC remained committed to gender equality through the transition period, it was still necessary for women's organisations to exert significant pressure during the negotiation period in order to secure the constitutional recognition of this ideal (Waylen 2007:522).

Women's actions in the liberation struggle spanned the range of anti-apartheid activity from joining Mkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the armed wing of the ANC, to organising public protests. These various engagements in the liberation struggle are likely to have significantly affected the gender consciousness of the women and men involved (Suttner 2006:247). The Federation of South African Women (FSAW) which formed during the 1950's and was comprised of women's organisations representing a cross section of South African society is a particularly vivid example of women organising against apartheid apart from men (Gasa 2006:210). A critical consideration when studying the women's organisations that operated against apartheid is whether it is possible or necessary to separate the struggle for liberation from apartheid from the struggle for liberation from patriarchal oppression. Waylen (2007:529) notes that the

ANC Women's League (ANCWL) explicitly recognised the fact that liberation from apartheid did not guarantee the emancipation of women at the Malibongwe conference in 1990. Gasa (2006:214), however, argues that the anti-apartheid struggle was in important ways also a struggle against male domination for the women involved, it was a struggle to enter the public sphere, the traditionally male domain. Certainly, without a history of women's organisation against the oppression of apartheid it is unlikely that women's organisations would have been able to push for the gender reforms and the constitutional entrenchment of gender equality during the transition period of the early 1990's (Waylen 2007:541). Equally though, the favourable political opportunity structure would not necessarily have existed if key political figures (both male and female) were not already sensitive to, and supportive of gender equality (Waylen 2007:541).

Hassim (2006a:352-354) argues that the women's movement in South Africa adopted an 'inclusionary' approach to the politics of gender. Feminism viewed from this stance focuses on the relationship between women and formal political institutions. The most pressing issue for feminism to deal with in this view is women's exclusion from the political arena (Hassim 2006a:351). The Women's National Coalition was formed as an alliance of a wide range of women's organisations with the aim of ensuring that women participated in negotiating the transition from apartheid to democracy. An inclusionary approach was thus the most logical for the women's movement within the framework of the crafting of a multiparty democracy. The Women's National Coalition was successful in terms of ensuring that women's demands were recognised and entrenched in the new South African Constitution (Hassim 2006b:157). The focus on ensuring women's representation and political participation resulted in 27.7 percent of elected parliamentarians being women after the first democratic elections of 1994 (Hassim 2006b:175).

Hassim (2006a:350-352) contrasts the inclusionary approach with a 'transformational' approach. A transformational approach to the politics of gender aims to address the structural basis of gender inequality and to examine the 'particular ways in which

power operates within and between the political, social and economic spheres of specific societies' (Hassim 2006a:351). These approaches are not mutually exclusive and within any women's movement there are likely to be interests that span the continuum between the two. The inclusionary approach to the politics of gender in South Africa, whilst resulting in the inclusion of women in the formal institutions of the state, has not led to change in the structural bases of inequality (Hassim 2006a:364).

The current state of affairs with regard to gender equality in South Africa varies considerably across South African society. The relatively high levels of women's representation in government posts is indicative of the awareness and entrenchment of gender equality at high levels of government (Waylen 2007:534). The implementation of a 30 percent quota for women's representation in the ANC prior to the 1999 elections resulted in an increase in the number of women parliamentarians to 30 percent in 1999 and 32.75 percent in 2004 (Hassim 2006b:174). By the ANC's second term in power the number of women in government had increased to 33 percent of ministers and 56 percent of deputy ministers (Waylen 2007:534). Although the relative number of women in government and the legislature is low, South Africa ranks among the highest countries globally in these areas (Waylen 2007:534). Representation in government does not, however, imply that gender equality is embraced by all members of government, or society at large. Measures such as the introduction of quotas for political representation are steps in the right direction, but without a thorough process of gender training and continuous attention to gender in policy and implementation, political representation remains more symbolic than transformative. This is noted by Meer (2005:37) who argues that in the post-apartheid shift from 'struggle to development' the mainstreaming of gender equality has become more a technical concern than a political one. The technical approach to gender equality has meant that there has been little change in gender relations at a grassroots level and concerns such as the sharing of childcare and domestic labour remain largely unaddressed (Meer 2005:43). Decision making power over the control of household resources is an area in which gender inequality is blatantly expressed. The roles of women in the former homelands as being primarily responsible for subsistence agriculture and household

reproductive labour means that development interventions that aim to involve men in these areas need very careful consideration from a gender perspective. These interventions may, however, also provide opportunities for gender transformation from a grassroots level.

3.4. Gendered divisions of labour in South Africa

In South Africa, gendered divisions of labour and land use have been profoundly affected by the apartheid system. The conundrum faced by the apartheid state was essentially the question of how to secure a labour force whilst at the same time limiting the potential political threat of an urbanised, unified working class (Waetjen 1999:656). The deprivation of the indigenous African population of their land and the implementation of the homeland system deliberately undermined their independence in order to create an impoverished proletariat (Terreblanche 2002:386). The homelands subsidised industrial development in white urban areas by absorbing a part of their production costs. Women were responsible for raising children and caring for the aged through subsistence agriculture and remittances sent to them by their husbands (Bezuidenhout and Fakier 2006:465-466). In terms of land use, this had the effect of placing the responsibility for the production of crops and the care of livestock mainly in the hands of women and children. Consequently, it seems likely that subsistence agriculture came to be viewed as women's work and was not perceived as a viable occupation for men. However, as Jacobs (1998:72) notes, agriculture is at present not a main activity in the former homelands and most people rely on a variety of different sources of income, including remittances and state support in the form of pensions and child support grants.

* Ngwane (2003:695) notes that migrant workers in his own hometown were accorded high status due to the money that they contributed to their households and community. This status is however easily lost through the loss of one's job. Where a gendered division of labour has developed that makes subsistence agriculture the domain of women, and the earning of cash income the domain of men, it may be difficult to

encourage men to participate in subsistence agriculture as this could be perceived as lowering their status.

3.5. Land rights for women

In South Africa Rangan and Gilmartin (2002:637) argue that constitutionally enshrined gender equity in terms of access to land is undermined by political attempts to evade reform of institutionalised practices that were shaped by apartheid and colonial rule. The authors list three constitutional contradictions that inhibit women's access to land and resources in the former homelands. Firstly, whilst the system of homelands has been abolished, the traditional authorities put in place by the apartheid and colonial governments are still legally recognised. Traditional authorities are allowed to 'exercise power over spaces of concentrated African settlement (*de facto* homelands), even though the *de jure* spatial categories of their administrative powers have since been abolished.' Secondly, the constitutionally enshrined right to governance by elected representatives is contradicted by the constitution's recognition of traditional authority based on heredity. Thirdly, whilst the constitution endorses equal rights for men and women, the customary law that is constitutionally recognised in the former homelands is not based on principles of gender equality. Subsequently, in these areas, there exist very few formal means through which women's independent claims to land can be addressed. These constitutional contradictions seriously inhibit women's ability to own and work land independently of men in the former homelands and thus also limit the decision making power that women have over how land and the produce from land is used (Rangan and Gilmartin 2002:638). The degree to which individual women are able to exercise rights over land in these areas is therefore dependent on the beliefs and practices of the men that they live with.

Many NGO's are directly involved in working with communities at a grassroots level. The gender policies of these organisations and the gender ideologies of their staff may have important implications for the outcomes of their work. If gender is not explicitly addressed by NGO's they risk reinforcing inequality in gender relations in the communities in which they work (Ott 2002:44).

3.6. Gender in the non-profit sector

This study deals with the attempts by an NGO to initiate gender awareness among the people with whom they work, and within the organisation itself. With this in mind, it is of interest to examine the broader context of gender as a field of practice in NGO's in Africa and South Africa. Hassim (2006b:256) notes that the most numerous of women's organisations are those at the community level around women's practical needs. Paradoxically, in spite of their number, these organisations tend to be the furthest from the state and NGO's that engage the state. Hassim (2006b:257) importantly, notes that whilst women at the community level often act as shock absorbers for the state's inability to provide a comprehensive welfare system, this in itself may provide opportunity for the renegotiation of gender roles.

The literature on gender in the non-profit sector in South Africa is fairly sparse. Where research has been undertaken on gender in this sector it has primarily focused on NGO's that deal with gender as a specific part of their work. The prime examples here are NGO's working around gender based violence and sexual and reproductive health. A notable exception to this trend is Bydawell's (1997) article which documents the process of creating a gender strategy in an NGO working on rural livelihoods. The NGO concerned, the Association For Rural Advancement (AFRA), began attempting to integrate a gender perspective into their work from the early 1990's (Bydawell 1997:44). These attempts raised several important issues that are relevant in the context of the this study. Firstly, staff members of AFRA were uncertain as to how to address gender issues in the context of the strongly patriarchal traditions in the areas in which they worked without being disrespectful to the participants cultural beliefs (Bydawell 1997:44). A second, related problem was that gender was seen by some staff members to be a Western concern of interest primarily to 'white, lesbian women' and that gender held little relation to the lived reality of people in the communities that they worked with (Bydawell 1997:44). Wallace and Wendoh (2005:71) similarly, note that the perception of 'gender' as a Western concern was common in NGO's that they researched in several African countries.

The conflation of gender with racial identity makes it particularly important to consider who introduces gender issues into the work of an organisation, and how they go about doing so. Bydowell (1997:47) documents the different effects on the perceptions of gender issues within AFRA after separate gender workshops. The first workshop, run by white women, was met with suspicion and resistance (Bydowell 1997:46). A second workshop, run by a black man, was much more successful in raising awareness of gender as an issue that needed to be addressed (Bydowell 1997:47). This may have been due both to the specific process undertaken in the workshop and the explicit de-linking of gender and race (Bydowell 1997:47). Non-governmental organisations working at a grassroots level need to be explicit in dealing with gender as a personal, political and practical concern. It needs to be recognised that gender can not be worked on effectively with the participants in development initiatives without attention being paid to the personal beliefs and practices of NGO staff.

3.9. Conclusion

Masculinity in South Africa has been profoundly affected by the apartheid system and the process of the transition to a democratic society. Although the apartheid system is no longer in place there are important structural legacies of apartheid that continue to affect the construction of masculinity in South Africa. Particularly important in the context of this study is the fact that large numbers of people still live in the former homelands and have to migrate to find employment. This has important effects on the masculinities of individual men and the gender relations within their households. I have argued that although the constitutional entrenchment of gender equality in South Africa is a major achievement there is a need for gender transformation at all levels of South African society, and that there is a need for grassroots organisations to explicitly address gender.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

A qualitative case study approach was used to conduct this study because this approach affords the potential to use a variety of data collection methods and the ability to focus on relationships and processes (Denscombe 1998:30). This research made use of semi-structured interviews, analysis of relevant Valley Trust documents and a focused discussion group. The focused discussion took place at the end of the research process, and was used as a means of triangulation of the key findings and an opportunity to reflect on the research process with the men. The importance of reflection is noted in Tsey *et al's* (2002) and Vincent's (2006) studies.

4.1. Study Design

The choice of a case study approach implies that a particular set of preferences and ideals have been followed. These may be summarised as an in-depth study of a single case or instance, focusing on relationships and processes, in a natural setting, using a variety of methods (Denscombe 1998:30). The in depth nature of case study research is particularly advantageous in this study because of the unusual nature of the group being researched. The men's group is unusual in that it is tackling issues around agriculture and sustainable livelihoods whilst at the same time addressing more personal issues around health and gender relations.

A focus on relationships and processes is important in order to understand the men's group as part of the particular local context in which it operates. Denscombe (1998:40) argues that case studies are most vulnerable to criticism in relation to the validity of generalisations that can be made from their findings. In terms of the generalisability of the findings of case study data, Robson (1993:176 quoting Maxwell 1992:96), notes that it is useful to distinguish between internal and external generalisability. Internal generalisability refers to conclusions that are generalisable within the setting being studied, whereas external generalisability refers to generalisation beyond a particular setting or context.

The validity of the generalisability of the findings of this study within the local setting is based on the fact that the characteristics and experiences of these men are similar to many other men living in their area and in other former homelands in South Africa.

Robson (1993:176) notes that the external generalisability of case studies may be thought of in terms of the development of theoretical insights that help to understand other situations or cases. Given that working with groups is a common approach among NGO's globally and that the group consists of men who are addressing issues around masculinity and masculine values in the context of a strongly patriarchal society makes the findings of this study relevant in a far wider context.

Tsey *et al* (2002) made use of several methods of data collection in their study of a rural men's health group in Australia. These included participant observation, discussions with the members of the group, a review of the group's documentation and a review of the literature. The authors argue that a reflective approach to engaging men's support groups is most effective as it assists the participants to clearly define 'the principles and values which both define them and to which they aspire'(Tsey *et al* 2002:278). The context of Tsey *et al's* (2002) study is an on going participatory action research project, and thus the researchers were able to engage with the group for a protracted length of time. However, elements of their approach appeared applicable in the case of this research and were adapted accordingly. The emphasis on using a reflective approach was incorporated in to this research through the use of a follow up focus group discussion during which the key preliminary findings were discussed with the group. Reflection was also incorporated into the research through the use of a staggered interview process. Interviews were conducted over the course of two months, which allowed questions to be refined and modified where necessary. Vincent (2006:353-354) argues after Haug (1992) that the subjective individuality of participant's answers or narratives is precisely what is of interest in the research process. The author further states that 'It is in fact only by examining subjective memories, then, that we can achieve the aim of trying to make sense of the way in

which individuals analyse their everyday lives and in so doing reproduce society as a whole (Vincent 2006:354 quoting Haug 1992: 20-21).

4.2. Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the staff members of the Valley Trust who are involved in facilitating the group. Semi-structured interviews were used in order to allow for flexibility in the ways that respondents answered questions, while ensuring that the same issues were covered in all the interviews (Bryman 2004:321). These interviews were conducted at the Valley Trust offices.

Robson (1993:270-271) notes that semi-structured interviews are useful in flexible study designs as they allow the wording of questions to be changed and questions to be added or omitted according to their appropriateness.

The staff members interviewed included the manager of the Integrated Technology department, the groups primary facilitator, a second facilitator who manages the programme in which some of the men's wives are involved, and a facilitator who had recently been transferred to the department. Interviews with the manager of the department (male facilitator 1) and the primary facilitator (male facilitator 2) took place on the first of September 2006. The interviews with the two female facilitators took place on the fourteenth of September 2006.

The aim of these interviews was to find out why, given the general lack of work with men around issues of masculinity and gender, these particular development facilitators had decided to initiate a group of this sort (the interview schedule appears in Appendix 1). Further, it was necessary to find out about the facilitators personal ideas and beliefs around gender issues in order to gain insight into their facilitation approach around these issues.

In mid September an initial orientation visit was undertaken to meet the men and build rapport with the group. This visit took the form of attending a water harvesting

workshop run by the Valley Trust with the men's group at one of their homes. This entailed laying out contours and planting grass. I participated by digging trenches and planting grass. At this event the facilitators explained what participating in this study would entail and asked them if they would be willing to be interviewed. Given the complexity of the power dynamics in relationships between men and women noted by Baylies (2001:40) and Santow (1995:150) it was decided that the men's wives should be asked separately if they would agree to be interviewed as an attempt to mitigate the effects of their husbands presence on their decision to participate or not.

The interviews with the staff and a review of available documentation from the Valley Trust were used to inform semi-structured interviews with the group members and their wives. The interviews with the men and their wives were held at their homes during October 2006. An additional interview was conducted in May 2007 with the widow of the group member who died in 2005 as she was not available during the initial interview process. The men were all interviewed without their wives being present. Two of the six women were interviewed in the presence of their husbands. Unfortunately this was unavoidable as I felt uncomfortable asking the men to leave. Interviews with the men and their wives were structured following Robson's (1993:277) suggested sequence in which less sensitive issues were covered first as a means of settling into the interview process. More sensitive issues were covered later on in the interviews. All interviews were recorded on audio cassettes and transcribed. Translation from isiZulu to English was done by the primary facilitator of the group during the interviews

Interviews with the men aimed to explore the changes in their lives that had resulted from their work with the group and began by asking about basic demographic information with the aim of trying to establish whether these men's life experiences were similar to those of the men in the studies referenced in Chapter three (the interview schedule appears in Appendix 2). Given the potentially sensitive nature of issues such as sexual health, these issues were dealt with more indirectly, for example by asking about the establishment of the men's clinic or the workshops held by the

Valley Trust. These questions aimed to explore changes that may have occurred in the negotiation of the men's roles within their households and communities. The importance of how men perceive their roles in their communities as criteria in influencing men's self esteem is noted by Tsey *et al* (2002:280-282) and Silberschmidt (1992:239).

Interviews with the men's wives also began by asking about basic demographic information, again with the aim of establishing their similarity or difference from the women in the studies in chapters two and three. Questions then covered their perceptions of changes resulting from the men's group (the interview schedule appears in Appendix 3). Issues of communication and negotiation within their households were felt to be of particular importance given the documented inequality in decision making power experienced by women globally and in more traditional contexts in particular (cf. Baylies 2001; White 1997; Connell 1987).

Core findings from the interviews were used as discussion points for a focus group discussion held in mid December 2006 (Appendix 4). The aim of this was twofold - to report back on the research but also to triangulate the findings. All the members of the group, as well as two Valley Trust staff members attended. Findings regarding the changes in the men's land use practice were raised first, followed by the role of the men's group as a support network. The effects that the group has had on the men's ideas of masculinity and men's roles in their households and community were discussed next, followed by issues of men's health. These questions were of central importance to the study as they concern areas in which the effects of individuals beliefs concerning gender roles have particularly noticeable repercussions (Thomson 2002:166-167). The focus group discussion was recorded on an audio cassette and transcribed. Translation from isiZulu to English was again done by the group's primary facilitator.

Robson (1993:284-285) notes that focus groups have several important advantages, including: the efficient generation of large amounts of data and the ability to facilitate

discussion of taboo subjects as less inhibited members may break the ice or provide mutual support. This aspect of focus group discussion was useful in the case of this study as the men involved were asked to talk about very personal issues.

There are also, however, potential disadvantages to the method. These include: the limited number of questions that can be covered, the potential domination of the discussion by more vocal group members and the considerable expertise required in facilitating such groups (Robson 1993:284-285). The two youngest group members tended to be the most vocal and it was necessary to specifically direct questions to the other members of the group.

The Valley Trust's own documentation of the men's group was used as a further source of data and was analysed alongside the interview material. The three documents included, firstly, notes on their initial meeting with men, which includes notes on discussions around the challenges men face in their community and problems that they perceive in the community in general. The second document was a record of a discussion held with a community based health care facilitator after a workshop with the men's group. This document refers specifically to the need for men to be involved in health education programmes, particularly with regard to HIV and AIDS. Thirdly, the report back to the funders of the fencing scheme in which the men were involved was used.

4.3. Biases and limitations

There are several potential sources of bias in this study. I am a young, white, middle class man seeking information from and about older black men and women. The men interviewed in the study are likely to have a very particular experience of white men.

Morrell (1998:620) and Waetjen (2004:80) both note the importance of the dichotomous experiences of migrant workers, being subordinate to white bosses in the cities, whilst being in a hegemonic position upon their return to the homelands in shaping their masculinities. The work history of most of the men in this study is similar to the men in the above studies, and whilst I do not think there was any conscious bias

against answering my questions, their past experiences could potentially have made them uncomfortable in being interviewed by me, and more reticent, particularly with more sensitive issues. Whilst the men had spoken about these issues before within their group, they may have been less open about them in my presence.

In mitigating this and attempting to be sensitive to the feelings of the men and women I interviewed, I made use of broader, more open ended questions around issues such as health care and sexual health. Whilst these questions did provide interesting insights into the lives of the interviewees, in retrospect I feel that I could have been more probing in seeking information around conceptions of masculinity in particular.

Two of the women (woman 1 and woman 4) were interviewed in the presence of their husbands. This is to have prevented them from expressing any negative aspects of the men's group that they may have experienced (cf. White 1997:14).

The use of the group's main facilitator as translator during the interviews and focus group discussion is likely to have introduced a bias into the study. The respondents might well have been more critical of the role of the Valley Trust, and perhaps less positive about the role of the men's group if a more neutral translator had been employed. Further, the men have an established relationship with the facilitator and this relationship is likely to have created an expectation of the types of answers that were sought from the interview questions. The fact that it was necessary to rely on translation during the interviews also means that some of the nuance and richness of the interviewees answers will have been lost.

Given the sensitive nature of some of the issues covered in the interviews, it was felt that the facilitator's already established rapport with the group and his role in facilitating discussions around these issues at their workshops would improve the likelihood of the men sharing their thoughts about these issues. The author does however acknowledge the bias this introduces into the study

Chapter 5: The Challenge of Change – Engaging Men and Creating ‘Safe’ Spaces

Men’s groups may be a means of challenging destructive masculine values by offering culturally ‘safe spaces’ in which men can examine their ideology, values and behaviour and develop new ways of being and behaving. The facilitation of men’s groups around practical concerns such as land use may provide the basis for relationships from which to address the need identified by White (1997) for practical approaches to engaging men around gender issues in development. This chapter begins by discussing the background of the men’s group, noting the Valley Trust’s emphasis on people centred development as a crucial aspect of the facilitation process. The staff members personal experiences of the men’s group and their conceptions of gender as an issue in development work are discussed with a view to understanding the particular circumstances that led to the group’s work around gender. In this vein, the life histories of the men in the group and their wives are discussed, noting similarities and differences among them. The chapter then explores construction of masculinity among the participants. I argue that the importance of employment as a masculine ideal has been a key aspect affecting the sustainability of the group, and by providing a means of ‘being active’ the Valley Trust has supported the men in affirming their value as men. The successful management of a fencing scheme has provided visible evidence to their families and community of this activity. The chapter then examines how in working together the men have created a support system for themselves. Trust is a key aspect of this support system, however, the high level of trust between the group members is mirrored by their lack of trust for other men in the community. This is a key constraint to the direct scaling up of this initiative. A form of scaling up is, nonetheless, evident in the men’s commitment to sharing information arising from their work around issues of health care, HIV/AIDS and domestic violence with their families and other men in their community. The chapter concludes by arguing that the improvement in levels of communication and negotiation within the men’s individual households is a key sign of the potential value that exists in facilitating men’s groups as a practical means of engaging men around gender issues.

5.1. Background and Development of the Men's Group

The Valley Trust was established in 1953 to complement the work of the Botha's Hill Health Centre (established by Dr Halley Stott in 1951). The Valley Trust has always positioned itself as an organisation focusing on health care, with the original idea behind the organisation being that people attending the clinic would also receive training in how to grow and prepare food (Paget-Clarke 2003:2). This broad approach to health has led to the creation of numerous projects ranging from preventative health care to the development of infrastructure. During apartheid the organisation became very involved in service delivery in the homeland areas in which it worked and employed over 100 people (Paget-Clarke 2003:2). After apartheid ended, the Valley Trust staff decided that it was necessary to rethink their role and the types of projects and programmes that they facilitated. Currently, the Valley Trust employs between 80 and 90 people across nine departments. These include: Advocacy, Community Based Health, Conference and Leadership, Information Management, Integrated Technology, Organisational Development, Whole School Development, Finance and Administration and the department of the Executive Director.

The men's group was initiated through a process of inquiry into the lack of men's involvement in the Valley Trust's community garden projects. The manager of the Integrated Technology Department, who had worked at the Valley Trust since 1993, was the main initiator of the group and was supported by a second male staff member. An initial meeting with men from the area was organised by sending invitations through women who were involved in farmer groups at the Valley Trust. This meeting involved a discussion of the challenges that men faced in their communities and an exploration of potential ways in which they could work together.

'We had a preliminary investigation into men and land use. We looked at the perceptions that people in the community had of men. We interviewed men about what they had to say about other men, and what women in other families, whose husbands weren't engaged in land use, said about those men who were.'
(Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006)

‘We began to ask, “when you engage women, why aren’t the men there, what are they doing?” At first it was fine for women just to roar with laughter and say, “oh they’re getting drunk,” but we tried to take our questioning deeper, because surely not all the men were just getting drunk? (Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006).

The Valley Trust’s ethos is to help people to realise their own potential. This is evident in their approach to working with the men’s group and the process undertaken in the formation of the men’s group has had important consequences for its sustainability. Documentation from the first meetings with men shows that the facilitators made it clear that they were not in a position to give men jobs or to provide resources for free. The dynamic that this type of facilitation sets in place from the very beginning may be a very important factor in influencing the sustainability of the group.

‘[the men said] “look we want a job,” and we said, “we really understand that, but we can’t give you jobs, we can work with you to develop something, what are your interests, what assets do you have?” (Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006).

‘...the important thing is that when we go out as facilitators we facilitate discussions, we ask questions’ (Interview female facilitator 1, 14/09/2006).

The group was initiated and began to meet on a twice monthly basis. One meeting per month was held with a facilitator present and the second was held by the men alone. Meetings were held at the men’s households. It was agreed that land use would be the focus of the group, since the men owned land and the Valley Trust had expertise in land use. The initial workshops with the men had covered a wide range of issues including men’s health, violence and alcohol abuse. These issues arose from the initial meeting with the men after a facilitated discussion about the challenges faced by men in the community. The group decided that in addition to land use, they would also like to address these other challenges. It is of key importance to note the innovative application of land use as a practical platform on which to base the relationship with the men. This relationship then enabled these other issues to be addressed.

The facilitation process undertaken by the Valley Trust is people-centred and participatory, and the men's group demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach. The process of initiating projects in a participatory manner needs careful management. As important as the participatory process is, reflection by development practitioners on themselves, their motives and possible sources of bias in their own approach to their work must also play an integral role in implementation of participatory projects. Participation in itself is not a panacea for the diversity of challenges faced in development work. Successful and meaningful participation must be based on an ethic of commitment to social transformation (Cornwall 2003:1326). Self reflection by the staff of the Valley Trust is a formal part of their planning as well as a more personal process.

'our planning is informed by our clients needs and objectives, and we work together to achieve these objectives. We review and reflect on our progress every three months with the entire department, and weekly within our own programmes.' (Interview with male facilitator 2, 01/09/2006).

'I think that when you plan to work with any issue, you take more time to try and tease out what is going on. So, for example, just by saying we'd like to work with gender issues makes us debate them, and think more about them.' (Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006).

5.2. Gender and culture – staff member's experiences of the men's group and their perceptions of gender

The cultural backgrounds of development practitioners affect the ways in which they approach their work. This may lead to the implementation of participatory processes that exclude women, the elderly, marginalised men and/or the poorest members of communities (Cornwall 2003:1325). Given the department's intention to address gender as an integral part of its work with the men's group it is of importance to examine how gender is conceived by the staff members of the department.

The issue of addressing gender within the Valley Trust was raised by the manager of the Integrated Technology Department and other senior staff members in the late nineties.

‘...when the issue of working with gender within the organisation was raised..., people roared with laughter. It wasn’t just women who laughed, men also laughed. We said, “listen, we’re serious, these are the issues.” I think gender is sometimes a bit of an uncomfortable issue. Now we see that gender is very much on the agenda, so our gut feeling was right.’ (Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006).

Whilst gender is being addressed as an issue within the organisation, it seems that the men’s group is the only group among the Integrated Technology Department’s projects in which gender is being explicitly addressed. The process of initiating gender work was based on the practical field experience of the facilitators and their own observations of the gendered dynamics among the participants in their projects.

‘...none of us are trained in gender, but our insights into gender issues have emerged from our practical experience of working in the community with groups of women, and noticing the lack of men’s involvement in our initiatives’ (Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006).

The department’s primary focus is on land use and sustainable agriculture, and prior to engaging with the men’s group, most of their work had focused on working with women. The decision to consciously work on gender issues has affected the gender consciousness of the staff in different ways and varies between the male and female staff. The dynamic that exists within the department itself, where there are more women than men employed has also had effects on the gender consciousness of the staff members:

‘...there was a time when women really dominated this department and their contributions were so valuable to me as a man. That really helped me to realise the importance of gender equality.’ (Interview with male facilitator 2, 01/09/2006).

The cultural background of the facilitators also has a clear influence on their perceptions of gender. Most of the facilitators in the department are Zulu and as

Waetjen (2004) notes, there is a strong patriarchal tradition in Zulu culture. This is recognised by the staff members and is not necessarily seen as problematic.

‘...in the context of Zulu culture there are culturally accepted norms concerning men’s control of the household. These norms may seem problematic to a gender specialist, but they are not necessarily issues for people who live within that culture.’ (Interview with female facilitator 1, 14/09/2006).

‘My personal experience of men in my (Zulu) culture has been that they treat women as articles that are owned by them. Women accept this treatment as normal.’ (Interview with female facilitator 2, 14/09/2006)

Plantenga (2004:41-42) notes that gender inequality is often based on deeply held cultural and social beliefs and is often taken as the norm by both men and women. Due to the sensitivity of gender work, the way that such work is approached is of vital importance to its effectiveness. It is necessary to recognise that levels of gender consciousness vary considerably among both the staff members and the participants in the department’s projects depending on their individual backgrounds. Gender issues are at present being most explicitly addressed with the men’s group and to a lesser extent with the various women’s groups. This presents a challenge that is recognised by the facilitators:

‘...ideally you need to be working with both men and women, because they impact on each other, and the impacts might be very subtle, but they’re very meaningful. There is also the question of whether by working with men we are creating another gender issue. We need to work with men in ways that enhance gender dynamics, rather than creating more issues.’ (Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006).

In this vein, White (1997:15) argues that challenging gender inequality is most effective when women are empowered to demand change at the same time as men are empowered to accept change. Gender inequality in the communities in which the facilitators work is perceived as resulting in men controlling processes of decision making and also in controlling the resources in their households. This is a well documented feature of gender inequality and offers an entry point for working on

gender issues (cf. Rangan and Gilmartin 2002:638). The practical approach to working around gender that is used by the facilitators focuses on encouraging men to communicate and negotiate with their wives around a range of issues. These issues include land use, health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS amongst others and are generally related directly to the workshops that are conducted with the men's group. In light of the fact that only five of the original group of twelve men have remained part of the group, it is of interest to examine whether there are particular attributes that are common to these men that have made them more open to engaging with the group than other men in the area.

5.3. Masculinity and migration – gender and the life histories of group members

These men are not the poorest men in their area, the older men receive state pensions and the younger group member has sporadic employment. The youngest member is 47 and the oldest is in his seventies. All of the men except one have been formally employed migrant labourers for significant portions of their lives, but none were employed at the time of the interviews. The men all own, or live on, larger than average areas of land, but were not actively using their entire land areas. Prior to joining the group, the men were not close friends, but some of the men knew each other because of the proximity of their households. All but one of the men have children, their ages range from two to adult. At least two of the men have lost children through accidents or disease.

The men's previous experiences of employment and of having to leave their households to go and work in the city will have shaped their experiences in particular ways. Ngwane (2003:695) notes that the experience of migrant labour had very important effects on the construction of masculinity for men in homeland areas. Migrating to work also has important implications for the processes of decision making within households when men are absent, with women having to make decisions without the input of men. This may have influenced the gender awareness of these men. The men's openness to suggestions from their wives is indicated by the fact that the facilitators sent invitations to men via their wives, who were working with Valley Trust. In this

vein, several of the men's wives noted that their husbands were already quite good about negotiating and communicating with them before they joined the group.

'...there has been a change in him, he negotiates more and understands better, even though it is in his nature to negotiate, he still negotiates more than before' (Interview with woman 5, 19/10/2006).

'...my husband has not been bad in our household and he did negotiate before he joined the group, but sometimes he would do things by himself. Since joining the group he communicates more.' (Interview with woman 3, 19/10/2006).

It seems that the men who have remained involved in the group share similar characteristics in terms of their age and life experiences. Particular individuals in the group also play an important role in ensuring that the group stays committed to their work.

'one man in particular, Mr ----- has been active in terms of continuing with the fencing and helping out since my husband died. Before the group existed I wasn't sure if I was going to be supported, but because of the group the men have started supporting each other, and they have also supported me' (Interview with woman 6, 04/05/2007).

This quote emphasizes clearly the fact that the effectiveness of groups such as this one may be crucially dependent on the people who choose to join them. The group member mentioned by the widow has been particularly active and enthusiastic in promoting the group's work. He is also a priest in the local area and uses his position to share what the group has learnt with a wider audience.

'I work hard to show others that there is value in being in a group because you need to see evidence of the outcomes of the work' (Interview with man 3, 05/10/2006).

In addition to the above characteristics, the men's shared cultural and socio-economic contexts are likely to have influenced the construction of their masculinities in similar ways. The ways in which masculinity is constructed has important effects in terms of

the success or failure of attempts to engage with men around gender issues (Cleaver 2002:2-4).

5.4. Masculinity and men's roles in the study area

The perceptions of men that are held by men, the members of their communities and their family members are shaped by beliefs and norms about what men are supposed to be and the roles that men are supposed to fulfil. As Connell (1995:72) states gender is a way in which social practice is ordered. The relationships between men and their families and communities are strongly affected by whether men are seen to be fulfilling their masculine roles. In the community in which this study was undertaken, men's roles are strongly centred around work and the provision of income for their families. The centrality of work to masculine identity is widely documented (e.g. Waetjen 2004; Ngwane 2003; Morrell 1998; Connell 1995). Work and 'being active' is clearly an important aspect of masculinity in the study area:

'Men who work have a different status in their households to those who do not work. Even if you are employed and you drink too much people will lose respect for you' (Valley Trust, notes on preliminary workshop¹ with men 21/08/2003).

'...before joining the group there was a lot of standstill in his life' (Interview with woman 1, 05/10/2006).

'...he is an unemployed man and he used to spend his time being useless and going to shebeens.' (Interview with woman 2, 05/10/2006).

Formal employment is clearly an important aspect of masculinity in the study area, and this perception was also held by the group's main male facilitators:

¹ This document includes notes on discussions around the challenges men face in their community and problems that they perceive in the community in general. Specific issues discussed include among others: sexually transmitted infections, impotence, HIV and AIDS, rape, the perceived loss of conscience in people in the community and the difficulty faced by men who want to grow crops due to lack of resources and infrastructure.

‘...men who don’t work feel useless because they do not make any contribution to their households.’ (Interview with male facilitator 2, 01/09/2006).

‘...these were men who were useless and in women’s eyes, if you don’t have a job and you’re not bringing in income, you don’t have much status.’ (Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006).

The loss of status associated with being unemployed is thus an important motivating factor behind men’s involvement in the group. Part of the Valley Trust facilitation of the men’s group involved an exploration of names used to describe men by people in their community. These names are listed in table 1 below:

Names	Definition agreed in the workshop
Qwayilahle	Someone who is so poor that they do not have even matches so they use a coal from the fire to light their cigarette
Mashelela	Someone who just sits next to the fire all day watching other people cook and when it is ready they eat
Uskhotheni	A man who does not work, someone who should stay in the bushes because they are useless
Uguluva	A man who does not work and who wears the same clothes every day.

Table 1. Names used to describe men. Source: Valley Trust 21/08/2003

These derogatory names are all centred around men’s lack of employment and lack of activity. This focus on formal employment as the primary source of status for men in their community may have limited their perception of other income earning activities as valid activities for men. Their wives have, in the past, thus been primarily responsible for any food production on their land. Several of the men’s wives are also engaged with the Valley Trust in women’s farmer groups. This type of division of labour is a fairly common occurrence in most of the former homelands in South Africa (Bezuidenhout and Fakier 2006:465-466). It is possible that as a result of these factors, small scale agriculture has become perceived as ‘women’s work.’ Although several of the men and their wives said that the men were working their land prior to joining the group, this did not seem to be considered as ‘being active’.

‘...I was just sitting, I was just planting and spending my time on my land.’ (Interview with man 1, 05/10/2006).

‘...before I joined the group I was just working on my land’ (Interview with man 5, 19/10/2006).

‘He had no work and was just working on the land around the house’ (Interview with woman 5, 19/10/2006).

When the men joined the group and decided that they would work their land as a means of earning income, the distinction between what they were doing and their wives smaller scale plots may have been important in their own view as a justification of engaging in agriculture. This was not mentioned explicitly by the men, however, it was picked up on in interviews with staff.

‘...the men wanted to work in their whole extensive areas which requires a lot of planning and physical labour’ (Interview with male facilitator 2, 01/09/2006).

‘...it seems that the men want to develop the bigger area of the household and that they would cultivate some fruit trees’ (Interview with female facilitator 1, 05/10/2006).

It would appear that it is important for the men to be seen to be doing something different from what their wives are engaged in. Apart from employment, other important aspects of masculinity that were raised during the course of this study included sexual potency and trustworthiness. These issues are dealt with below. The facilitators have, in basing their relationship with the group on land use, recognised the challenge Cornwall (1997:12) presents in finding ways to work with men and women to build the confidence to do things differently and to ‘open up spaces for change.’

5.5. Good fences make good neighbours – building group spirit and self esteem

One of the most visible achievements of the group is the purchase of fencing for all of the men’s land. This provides a useful example of the facilitation process undertaken by the Valley Trust. Initial discussions with the men led to the decision that fencing was a

key pre-requisite for the men to use their land effectively. The Valley Trust agreed to try and secure funding for fencing. Funding was secured on the basis of a Rand for Rand contribution from the men.

‘For the group to access a contribution from TVT for fencing they needed to produce R600 cash per household and meet certain criteria. These criteria were agreed on with men and the ITD are formally documented. They include: draw a plan for their proposed land use, provide labour to work the soil, cut truncheons and plant them to support the fencing, use an ecological approach to land use, reflect and review their achievements and processes within the group’ (Valley Trust documents², report back to DED, 01/12/2005).

The Valley Trust staff feel that it is very important that all the work they undertake with the groups they work with is guided by formal documents that can be referred back to. This provides a means of monitoring the work of the groups and also allows the groups to challenge the Valley Trust if they feel that they are not living up to their side of the agreements. The men were not pressured into paying for the fencing and they initiated a scheme whereby each man contributed R100 on a monthly basis so that one household could receive fencing each month.

‘...we haven’t put pressure on the men to produce these funds, rather, we’ve said “this is what we’re offering you, when you’re ready, come to us”’ (Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006).

The fencing scheme was developed and managed by the men themselves and was completed in mid 2006. The fact that they were willing to contribute a significant amount of cash on a monthly basis to a scheme that did not have immediate results for the entire group is indicative of the levels of trust that the men have for each other.

The facilitators try to encourage a high degree of ownership in the process of facilitating the group and an aspect of this is that they do not give things away for free, but rather let things grow at their own pace. A second aspect of this is that the facilitators insist that the men themselves make the decisions about what they want the group to undertake and achieve. Dilts (2001:18) argues that the empowerment of participants in development initiatives is one of the most effective means of

encouraging sustainability and scaling up. Using the example of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) movement in Indonesia, Dilts (2001) argues that the effectiveness of the IPM movement was in large part due to the empowerment of the participating farmers to develop the confidence and capacity to experiment and share their learnings with other farmers in their communities. These processes may, however, take a long time to reach maturity.

The purchase of fencing has had a strong impact on the men's confidence in their group and has, further, made a strong impression on their families and other community members.

‘the visible difference besides the attitudes themselves is the fencing which I have because I engaged with other men. I have gained something and this makes me different from other men who are not active’ (Interview with man 5, 19/10/2006).

‘...one of the best things is that he got this fence, I plant a lot of medicinal plants and now the land is very well protected and livestock can no longer destroy them’ (Interview with woman 2, 05/10/2006).

‘...the most important effect that this group has had is in helping us to think of possibilities for ourselves. For example, we never thought to fence off our large area, but through the involvement of my husband in the group we have fenced it off and it is now protected from livestock’ (Interview with woman 3, 19/10/2006).

The tangible evidence of having a fence around their land is important as it has shown both the men themselves and their families and neighbours the value of their group. This has assisted in increasing the men's commitment to the group. In the context of the high levels of poverty in the area, the fact that this group is working on their land with the goal of earning an income is important and provides motivation for the group to continue working together. In working together on each others land, trusting each other to contribute to each others fencing and in discussing sensitive issues with each other in workshops with the Valley Trust the men have come to rely on the group as a significant means of support.

5.6. Men supporting each other – masculinity and social support

The beneficial effects of social networks as means of poverty alleviation are well documented. The creation of social networks through the facilitation of groups around particular issues may be an effective way of building social support. The Valley Trust staff see the building of solidarity among community members as an important aspect of their work.

‘...we need to work in a way that builds the social fabric of people, even though this will take a long time.’ (Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006).

The benefits of belonging to a group are important. In practical terms, belonging to the group provides the men with greater labour power with which to work their land.

‘...being a member of a group enables you to work your land more effectively.’ (Interview with man 1, 05/10/2006).

‘...the group members really assist each other and when one member asks for help they all go and assist him. For example, they helped each other to cut poles for their fences and also to erect each others fences.’ (Interview with woman 5, 19/10/2006).

‘We achieve our goals because we work together very closely. We help each other to work on our land and we hold meetings to follow up on our decisions.’ (Interview with man 5, 19/10/2006).

Membership of the group has also allowed the men to gain access to resources through pooling their own resources. The purchase of fencing by the men would not have been possible without the men’s combined contributions to their fencing scheme. These examples illustrate the World Bank’s (2000:117) list of positive factors of social networks. Their list includes: improving the productivity of assets e.g. through the joint working of land, creating strategies for coping with risk, increasing the capacity to pursue new economic opportunities e.g. through the pooling of resources and improving the extent to which particular voices are heard when important decisions are made (World Bank 2000:117).

The role of the group as a social support system is further illustrated by the group's continuing assistance to the widow of a group member who passed away in 2005. She was the first person to receive fencing for her land, and she feels that she can ask the group for help if she needs it.

‘...they give help freely when I ask for it and they don't expect any payment.’
(Interview with woman 6, 04/05/2007).

Critiques of social networks as means of social support emphasize that it is the context and content of such networks that determine their effectiveness as means of poverty alleviation (Bezanson 2006:248). The networks analysed in the literature have generally been in existence for long periods of time that have been formed within a particular framework of power relations. The group studied exists within a particular local framework of power relations, but being in a relatively new state is still open to challenges and changes. The critical issue is that the men's group was formed with the specific objective of addressing the challenges faced by men and the processes that are undertaken by the group are open to debate and may be challenged, whereas many of the groups analysed in the literature have long established traditions that make participation in them difficult or detrimental to poorer people (Cleaver 2005:894). The facilitation of groups with the aim of building social support networks is not unproblematic and the particular group dynamics that develop will have important effects on the role that groups play.

5.7. Trust and betrayal – reflecting on social capital

Trust is a key issue for the men's group. The group experienced a major challenge to the strength of their group when one of their members was accused of rape. This incident happened just prior to my engagement with the group. The rape accusation caused a great deal of concern among the men as they did not want to be associated with violence. The group also felt betrayed by the man because rape was an issue that they had discussed previously and that they had all condemned.

‘...as long as we can avoid men like Mr ----- then the group will be able to be more productive.’ (Interview with man 5, 19/10/2006).

‘It is really challenging to find that you agree with the members of the group about all of these issues and then to find that a member of your group has gone against all the things that you have discussed and committed such a crime.’ (Interview with man 2, 19/10/2006).

The man who was accused of rape had contributed to other members of the group getting fencing and had recently received his own fence. This further confounded the issue. The group decided to wait for the courts verdict before deciding what to do about the man, and he was still allowed to attend group meetings. The men decided to remove the man’s fencing until his case had been heard.

The man was subsequently acquitted, and the group agreed to return his fence. However, he claimed that a portion of the fence was missing with the implication that the Valley Trust staff had stolen some of it. The group decided that he could no longer be a member of their group and they removed his fence and returned the money that he had paid for it to him.

This incident illustrates the fact that, as positive as this intervention may be, it still does not solve some of the most pressing gender issues. The way in which the group dealt with this issue is, however, important. The fact that the man was dismissed from the group is noteworthy, as it indicates the potential role of such groups in monitoring members behaviour and reinforcing positive behavioural change. The consequences of betraying the group’s trust being dismissal and a loss of the benefits of group membership. If, as in this case, groups are committed to creating positive roles for men, the monitoring of each others behaviour may act as an important motivating factor for individuals to commit to real change. The incident as a whole was very disheartening to the men and it has made them wary of trusting people who want to join their group.

The men’s lack of trust for other men is mirrored by their perception that they are not trusted in the community at large. There is a feeling that the spirit of the community has

degenerated and that people no longer care for each other. As a group the men feel that they can set an example of how men can make a positive contribution to their community. This is, however, confounded to some extent by their perceptions of not being trusted by the community and their own distrust of other men

‘The most important thing about being a man is trust. We need to trust each other, and we need to be trusted as members of the community.’ (Focus group with men, man 5, 12/12/2006).

‘People have lost their *nembeza* (conscience), they do not feel for others, people are not supportive the way that they used to be. Even if you offer a child food these days, the child will question you and people are suspicious. This is also why rape happens, because people have lost their conscience and their care for others’ (Valley Trust 21/08/2003).

‘If you are walking along a path in the bush you feel that you are not trusted. If there is a woman walking in front of you she will walk slowly so that by the time you pass her she is walking with someone else. As men we are not trusted and I would say we are even feared.’ (Valley Trust 21/08/2003).

The men also feel that there is a lack of support for their initiative at local government level.

‘The councillors, who are chosen by the communities in the area, choose to ignore the most important issues and only do things that benefit themselves. There are no people in the local council who support our group’s work.’ (Focus group with men, man 1, 12/12/2006).

‘The men who sit on the council don’t like it when people approach them with ideas that they think should be implemented. They feel threatened if you take your own ideas to them and they don’t take you very seriously. I feel that the councillors don’t trust us.’ (Focus group with men, man 3, 12/12/2006).

This is an important constraint, as Cleaver (2005:895) notes, the inability to articulate successfully in public fora and the lack of weight given to their opinions limits the ability of the chronically poor to build social capital. Given this lack of support from government social capital represents an avenue of development that can occur outside of the framework of the state (Meagher 2005:218-219). Meagher (2005:231) notes, however, that in the third world in general, the emphasis in government policy on the

withdrawal of state support for public services and welfare provision has led to the economic overburdening of social networks and has increased the fragmentation of these networks along ethnic and community lines.

5.8. Trust and the challenge of scale

Whilst the men's group has had a positive effect on the lives of its members, its effectiveness in the wider community is limited by its small size. Increasing the scale of the group's work remains an important challenge. Gonsalves (2001:6) offers the following broad definition of scaling up: 'scaling up leads to more quality benefits to more people over a wider geographic area more quickly, more equitably and more lastingly.' The challenge inherent in scaling up is how to retain the quality of the intervention whilst reaching more people in contexts where funding is often limited and dependent on rapid results. This challenge is recognised by one of the facilitators of the group.

'How do you work in a way that you don't end up just working with eight or nine people for years? At the same time it's very tough trying to be inclusive all the time because more men come to start with, then some think, "ah forget this, I thought I was going to get hand outs," and they run away.' (Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006).

Trust in other men, or the lack of it, is an important constraint on the scaling up of the work of the group.

'...people are very interested in joining the group, partly because they can see that we have gained from being in the group, but also because of the spirit of the group in working together. But it's not easy for us to just bring in anyone. We have asked people to come to the meetings where we have explained what is required from them to become a group member, but when they hear what is required they just leave.' (Focus group with men, man 5, 12/12/2006).

'...there are a lot of people who have commented about the group and who have wanted to join, but I am careful not to say a lot to them because I feel that they are not trustworthy and I think they might damage the group's spirit or cause the group to break up.' (Interview with man 1, 05/10/2006).

The process that these men have gone through together in staying with the group since it formed seems to have built a very strong group spirit. Further, the fact that these men have supported each other in engaging around sensitive issues and in purchasing fencing for their land has made them very close knit as a group. It is understandable therefore, that they are wary of admitting new members, particularly if people want to join only after seeing the physical evidence of the group's achievements.

In light of these issues, a more indirect approach to scaling up this project may be more effective than simply increasing the number of members of the existing group. It seems likely that the Valley Trust will have to play a role in scaling up this initiative in terms of increasing the number of men or the facilitation of new groups. Taylor (2001:14) describes an 'additive' approach to scaling up which may be appropriate in attempts to scale up this initiative. Additive models are based on bottom-up management of interventions and develop at the pace of the community, but scaling up depends on top-down support (Taylor 2001:14). This seems likely to be the route that the Valley Trust will need to take to increase the scale of this work.

The number of people affected by the work of the group is already greater than the number of men in the group itself as there has been a conscious effort to involve the men's wives and families. Additionally, the men's commitment to talking about their work with other men may also be considered a form of increasing the impact of their work. This is particularly evident in the men's commitment to sharing information about health care issues.

5.9. Masculinity and the space to share – healthcare, sexual health and communication

The work with the men's group focuses on several different spheres of life. The gendered nature of these various spheres means that men and women experience them very differently. Health care is a particularly gendered area of experience in the study area and is strongly affected by masculine ideals. Men, it seems, are generally unwilling to talk about their health issues, especially with women.

‘...men do not generally talk about health with each other unless they have a very close friend that they can confide in. In general, men are afraid of coming out and talking about their issues.’ (Valley Trust 21/08/2003).

‘My personal experience of men is that we don’t often talk to women, and seldom talk about health issues.’ (Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006).

‘...in Zulu culture and in South African culture in general, men do not share their health problems with their families and wives.’ (Interview male facilitator 2, 01/09/2006).

Health is clearly a sensitive issue for these men and prior to joining the group many of them had not spoken about their own health issues. In addition to this lack of communication around health issues, ideals of masculine strength seem to prevent men from seeking medical attention until they are in desperate need of it. Men reported that clinics in particular are perceived as women’s domain, and men only rarely go to clinics. The men were unwilling to attend the clinic partly because women might see them waiting in the queue and would then know that they were ill. When men need medical attention they prefer to go to a doctor. This was noted by the men, as well as the staff of the Valley Trust.

‘Very few men go to the clinic and when we make household visits the men tell us that health issues are not their concern. If a man is very sick the he will go to the doctor, but not to the clinic.’ (Interview with female facilitator 2, 14/09/2006).

‘...often you only find out that a young man is sick if he is lying on the floor and not moving.’ (Focus group with men, man 5, 12/12/2006).

‘...we as men don’t like to go to the open clinic because we are too shy to say what we are there about. The men’s clinic is different because you can say whatever you want to because the doctor is a man and there is no female nurse there.’ (Focus group with men, man 3, 12/12/2006).

As a result of these perceptions, and in contrast to Fikree and Pasha’s (2004) and Klasen and Wink’s (2002) study’s, women in the study area seem more likely to seek medical assistance than men. The need for health education and particularly

information on HIV/AIDS for people living in the area was noted by a member of staff from the Community Based Health Care department of the Valley Trust.

‘During our discussions it became evident that there is a need for more information to be shared with the men relating to HIV and Aids. This is a daily challenge for them. Many men stated that they have lost relatives and siblings due to HIV related diseases’ (Valley Trust documents³, discussion with PN regarding meetings with men, 13/07/2005).

The men’s group plays an important educational role for the men involved and most of the men expressed their appreciation of the workshops that had been held around health issues. Santow (1995:157) notes that the educational levels of both men and women affect their decisions regarding whether or not to seek medical attention. The information that the men receive at the workshops is often passed on to their family members and other members of the community. Potential benefits of approaches that focus on men and women include, improvement in access to health care for the men and their families, improved health and increased levels of negotiation around reproductive issues and increased support for women’s family planning decisions (Ringheim 2002:170-175; Ndong *et al* 1999:S55; Moore 1999:107).

‘I find the workshops very useful because they touch on very important issues such as HIV and AIDS. They are also useful because you are able to share with other men the issues that are important to you personally.’ (Interview with man 4, 05/10/2006).

‘The workshops have helped a lot because now we discuss issues of health.’ (Interview with man 5, 19/10/2006).

‘...he comes back from the workshops and talks about health issues that are useful to all of us in our household. This information will help us to live longer.’ (Interview with woman 2, 05/10/2006).

Since the men’s group started, a doctor living close to the Valley Trust has started a men’s clinic which operates on a weekly basis. The men in the men’s group were the first men to attend the clinic and have since referred numerous other men to the clinic. The existence of the men’s group has been a key factor in increasing the effectiveness of the men’s clinic.

‘At one workshop a doctor came and explained to us about various health issues that affect men, and then invited us to come to a men’s clinic for a check up. The men’s clinic has helped because now we are more aware of illnesses that we may have, rather than a situation where we just die without knowing that anything is wrong with us.’ (Interview with man 5, 19/10/2006).

‘We have referred about twenty men to the men’s clinic, including men from far down the valley.’ (Focus group with men, man 2, 12/12/2006).

‘When we talk to other men about the men’s clinic we don’t specifically ask them about what their problems are. Rather, we tell them that there is a men’s clinic and that they should go there to have a check up.’ (Focus group with men, man 3, 12/12/2006).

In addition to more general health problems, the men’s group has provided a space in which men can discuss issues of sexual health. Sexual performance and potency are often important aspects of masculinity, but are equally often not spoken about due to the perceived shame that is associated with impotence (Segal 1990:219).

‘Men are also affected by women, when they cannot raise induku (get erections)...’ (Valley Trust 21/08/2003)

Men’s groups may provide a culturally safe forum in which men can discuss issues such as impotence without fear of shame or ridicule. The focus on discussing issues that affect men has provided a space in which the men can support each other on a more emotional level and where they can advise each other and discuss their problems.

‘I feel I really can rely on them, they are the only people that I’m so close to at the moment and I feel confident that I can share my problems with the group and that they will help me or give me advice.’ (Interview with man 1, 05/10/2006).

‘Working with the men’s group has really helped me to broaden my thinking and to understand ways of changing our situation.’ (Interview with man 3, 05/10/2006).

‘The most important thing about working with the group is that things have been made easier for me. I am able to share my problems with the group and get

help from them. The group has also helped me because I feel that they are some of the only people I can talk to.' (Interview with man 4, 05/10/2006).

Tsey *et al* (2002: 280-282) note that this aspect of men's groups is particularly important and that the establishment of 'safe' spaces in which men can share their personal issues may play a crucial role in helping men to shape more positive roles for themselves. The men's group has had several workshops that have dealt with issues of sexuality and potency, and the men have been very open about these issues in this context.

'As a health care facilitator what was interesting for me was to find a group of men who were so open. In my experience as a community health facilitator, it's not common for men to talk about their genitals so openly.' (Valley Trust 13/07/2005).

'...we know that alcohol and stress impact on potency, and that was one of the biggest issues that men had. We were also interested in how men talk about our problems, and where we talk about them, because often one finds that men talk when drinking beer, in shebeens or sometimes at church. Though it sounds like a stereotype, you are not going to talk about softer more sensitive issues in those places. Several of the men said to us after the workshops, "this is the first time I've spoken about these issues."' (Interview with male facilitator 1, 01/09/2006).

'At the men's clinic we have mostly dealt with issues related to reproductive health and impotence, for example, I was there last week because of problems with my erections.' (Focus group with men, man 4, 12/12/2006).

In the context of the very high rates of HIV infection in South Africa and in KwaZulu-Natal, facilitating more open attitudes to the discussion of sexual health is absolutely vital. Additionally, the confidence that has been instilled in the men to talk about these issues with their families and in their communities is a very positive aspect of the work of the men's group and is an important aspect of the positive roles that they are trying to shape for themselves in their community.

5.10. Working towards change – sharing information and working against violence

In addition to sharing what they have learnt with their families the men decided that they should try to spread knowledge about HIV/AIDS and men's health issues in their broader community. In this vein they have referred a number of men to the men's clinic. They also talk to other men about condom use.

'...the information is being passed on, for example, we have been telling younger men how important it is to use condoms, especially because so many people have HIV.' (Interview with man 1, 05/10/2006).

'We share the information that we get at the workshops with other men and people in the community, but whether they choose to use the information we share depends on the individuals themselves.' (Focus group with men, man 2, 12/12/2006).

'Most of us have shared a lot, for instance, if I know of a man who is having trouble or who is very sexually active, I will talk to him and try to make him aware of what we have learnt. Otherwise he will end up coming to us later asking for help, or to be taken to hospital, so we try to avoid that by telling people how to avoid these illnesses. We share information informally, but also formally in places where we meet.' (Interview with man 3, 05/10/2006).

These men feel that they have a responsibility to share what they learn, particularly around issues of health care and HIV/AIDS. This sharing of information is in ways similar to peer education models but whereas most peer education programmes focus on the youth, these men are sharing with people of all ages. The focus on the youth in peer education programmes is understandable in light of the fact that more than half of people newly infected with HIV worldwide are between 15 and 24 years old (Campbell 2005:50). However, it is vital not to ignore the educational needs of older people. Rosenberg (2002:230) notes that in Zimbabwe a major factor that increases the risk of HIV infection in adolescent women is the tendency for these women to engage in relationships with older men. The need for education about HIV/AIDS was noted by a community health practitioner after he held a workshop with the group.

‘During our discussions it became evident that there is a need for more information to be shared with men relating to HIV and Aids, they had many questions. This is a daily challenge for them. Many men stated that they have lost relatives and siblings due to HIV related diseases’ (Valley Trust 13/07/2005).

In sharing what they have learnt through the group with a wider audience the men are helping to address this need for education among older people around HIV and AIDS.

In addition to sharing the work that they undertake during workshops, the incident of the rape accusation against their group member, and his subsequent dismissal, prompted the group to work against gender violence.

‘The case of the group member being accused of rape had a major impact on the group, to the extent that they felt like deserting him. After discussing the issue amongst themselves, however, the group decided to let him continue attending the meetings until the court had reached its verdict. In the interim, they took away the fencing that he had gained through his engagement with the group.’ (Interview with male facilitator 2, 01/09/2006).

‘...the men decided that they should address issues of violence and abuse as a whole, because they had taken it for granted that they did not behave in violent ways. The men decided that they should talk about violence and rape within their own households, and in the broader community. Their perception was that most men in rural areas still beat their wives and that the group could preach against such violence and against rape whenever they met with other men.’ (Interview with male facilitator 2, 01/09/2006).

This is an important development in the group’s work, especially in light of the approaches that are often taken in programmes that aim to address rape. Hong (2000:269) argues that rape prevention programmes too often fail to address the agency of the perpetrator of violence. Further, they do not address the socio-cultural determinants of behaviour that may supersede individual choices and actions. South Africa is considered to have the highest rates of sexual violence in countries not at war or in states of civil unrest (Britton 2006:145). In this context it is crucial that men and women work together to address this issue. In order for men and women to work

together effectively it is necessary for men to communicate and negotiate with women as equal partners.

5.11. Challenging men to communicate and negotiate

The focus on land use in the men's group has provided an opportunity to encourage men to negotiate with their wives and families in making decisions about their land. Sorenson (1996:609) notes that in many parts of Africa, there exists a gendered division of labour in land use where women are responsible for subsistence agriculture whilst men produce crops for sale. This appears not to be the case in the study area where any agricultural production is generally undertaken by women. The decision by the men's group to use their land as a source of income thus had the potential to be undertaken in ways that would be detrimental to the gender relations within the men's households. The Valley Trust however, recognised the opportunity that this presented to encourage men to communicate and negotiate with their wives and families.

A practical example of how the Valley Trust encouraged men to negotiate with their wives and families was in the process of drawing up plans for their land. This process was facilitated by the Valley Trust through a workshop held with the group at one of the men's households. After attending the workshop the men returned to their own households and drew up plans for their land with their families.

‘...the men drew up a plan together with their wives and families.’ (Interview with male facilitator 2, 01/09/2006).

‘My wife suggested that I should keep a record of the work that the group does and so I bought this book in which I record what we do at the workshops and our meetings. A further example is the mapping and planning of land use that we did with our families.’ (Focus group with men, man 5, 12/12/2006).

The men's wives report that the men are more communicative and negotiate more since they joined the group. Negotiation prior to decision making is an important step towards improving levels of gender equality and may help to show men the value of women's ideas and the potential benefits of gender equality. Ringheim (2002:173)

argues that for men to change their ways of being and behaving it is necessary for them to perceive the benefits of gender equality. The fact that the group member in the excerpt above states that it was his wife's idea for him to keep a record of the group's activities is a positive example of a man in a very traditional context acknowledging the value of his wife's ideas and opinions. The men's wives also noted significant changes in their husbands behaviour since the men joined the group.

'...there have been changes in him since he joined the group. He used to like to do things by himself, but since being in the group he interacts with me before he does things, especially on the land, and now we do things together as husband and wife, that has improved a lot.' (Interview with woman 6, 04/05/2007).

'...there has been a change in him, he negotiates things more and understands better.' (Interview with woman 5, 19/10/2006).

'...he has enhanced his ways of communicating since he joined the group. He communicates with everyone now and he is available to talk to. He also engages with his family more than he did before.' (Interview with woman 3, 19/10/2006).

The men themselves also note the change in their households decision making processes.

'...I present problems to my wife and then we decide together what our best options are.' (Interview with man 1, 05/10/2006).

'There is a lot more negotiation than there was before. I used to be very quiet and I didn't participate in discussions, even when decisions were taken that were against me. Now we are all very friendly to each other in the household. My attitude has improved a lot.' (Interview with man 2, 19/10/2006).

The process of encouraging men to negotiate and communicate with their wives and families around decisions made with regard to land use seems to be having a positive effect on gender relations in the individual households. A point that was raised by one of the men's wives is relevant in this context. She noted that although the men were more communicative and negotiated more since joining the group, it remains difficult for their wives to make input into the group's work.

‘...it’s difficult for us [women] to contribute to the group’s work because we are not included in the meetings. We could contribute in terms of helping to solve problems or discussing issues if we were included’ (Interview with woman 6, 04/05/2007).

Whilst the group has made progress in terms of changing gender relations it is necessary that this focus continues to be a priority and that explicit attention continues to be paid to involving women in the groups work in ways that allow women to significantly influence decisions that are made by the group.

Encouraging the men to communicate and negotiate around less sensitive issues such as land use may help the Valley Trust to facilitate greater openness around more sensitive issues such as sexuality and HIV/AIDS. The men have had several workshops on issues around sexuality, health care and HIV/AIDS, and have shared what they have learnt with their families.

‘When he returns from the workshops he shares what he has learnt, for example, he went to a workshop about voluntary counselling and testing and when he came home he talked about how important it is that people check themselves regularly.’ (Interview with woman 3, 19/10/2006).

‘...he learns a lot and comes back and talks about what he has learnt, I think it is very important for him to be a member of the group.’ (Interview with woman 1, 05/10/2006).

‘...he comes and talks a lot about what he has learnt at the group’ (Interview with woman 4, 05/10/2006).

If a transformation of gender relations is to occur it is necessary that transformation occurs at all levels of society. Facilitating communication within families is a practical means of encouraging change from a grassroots level. Although gender equality is constitutionally recognised, legislation will have a limited effect without such grassroots action and change. Meer (2005:43) argues that the South African government has, since 1994, used a technical approach to gender equality which has not led to significant change at grassroots level. This men’s group represents an alternative approach to the technocratic one taken by government.

The men's group provides a positive example of a process that is beginning to affect men's ideas about gender equality and whilst clearly still in its early stages it may have a very positive effect. A particularly positive aspect of the group is that it encourages men to spend time at their households.

‘...there's been a huge change in him personally. Before he used spend most of the time going all over the place trying to find a source of income. Since he joined the group he has realised that he can use the land as a source of income which has led to him working at home more. So he now spends most of his time at home and concentrates on working out how we are going to survive.’ (Interview with woman 3, 19/10/2006).

An unintended consequence of engaging with the men's group may be that they are at home more and for longer periods. This in turn raises the possibility of these men modelling more positive male roles for children in their households. Groups that operate along the lines of the men's group may provide one part of a practical approach to Wood and Jewkes (1997:45-46) identification of the need to work with adults, adolescents and children to develop alternative patterns of interpersonal interaction. Given the very traditional ideals of masculinity that prevail in the study area, these men may effect positive changes by modelling alternative masculine behaviours and beliefs to their children and families. In undertaking work of this sort, it is important to be aware of how closely masculinity is tied to personal identity and care needs to be taken not to alienate men and to reinforce the positive attributes of individual's masculinity (Waetjen 2004; Plantenga 2004:40-41).

5.12. Conclusion

The men's group has had a positive effect on the lives of it's member's. The process undertaken in facilitating the group has been a crucial aspect of its success. A particularly important aspect of the facilitation process was the joint decision to focus on land use as the basis for the relationship between the group and the Valley Trust. In working around land use issues, the group are 'being active' which they feel is an important distinction between them and many other men in their area. This should be

viewed in light of the importance of employment as a masculine ideal in the area. The work around land use has also allowed the facilitators to encourage communication and negotiation between the men and their wives and families in deciding how to use their land. This practical demonstration of more gender equal behaviour is important because it allows gender to be worked on as a real concern rather than an abstract idea. The relationship that has been established with the group has enabled the Valley Trust to work with the men around other issues of key importance in the lives of these men and their families. These issues include health care, nutrition, HIV/AIDS and domestic violence. In belonging to the group the men have created a space in which they can begin to shape more positive roles for themselves in their families and community. This is evident in their commitment to sharing the information that they learn in their workshops. The process of shaping more positive roles for themselves may also have important effects in terms of modelling alternative patterns of male behaviour for their children and families.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

The innovative approach used by the Valley Trust in facilitating a men's group with a broad focus has paid off in terms of the changes that have occurred in the men's lives and those of their families. This begins by arguing that the more open decision making processes reported by the men and their wives are of particular importance given the constraints faced by women in the study area in terms of the ownership and control of assets and resources. The potential for the men to effect changes in their children's gender beliefs and practices through the modelling of alternative male behaviour is then noted. The chapter goes on to discuss the importance of the group as a means of social support for the men, providing both physical support in terms of labour and also as a 'culturally safe space' in which men can examine and change their ideologies and behaviour (Tsey et al 2002). I argue that in using land use as the basis for a relationship with the group the Valley Trust has improved the men's sense of self worth through helping them to find a productive way of 'being active' without relying on formal employment. The chapter continues with recommendations for the Valley Trust in terms of scaling up the men's group and the effects of gender on small scale sustainable agriculture. In conclusion I note potential implications for government and NGO policy arising from the research. Finally I suggest that more research is necessary into the constraints that prevent the youth from engaging in land use initiatives and into developing a general model based on this work for introducing explicit attention to gender in other development projects.

6.1. Effects on patriarchal relationships and women's empowerment

The men's group appears to be having a positive effect on the relationships between the men and their wives. Specifically, there has been a significant increase in levels of communication between the men and their wives and families, and further, decision making processes within the households appear to have become more open. Communication and negotiation in household decision making is a key area in which patriarchal beliefs are expressed (Baylies 2001:42). Intra-household dynamics are

therefore profoundly affected by the personal gender ideologies of household members (cf. Connell 1987:106-107). The facilitation of a process of sharing decision making over household land, a key resource in poor areas, thus has the potential to translate into changes in personal gender ideologies. Women in the study area are more constrained in terms of ownership and control of resources than women in urban areas as is noted by Rangan and Gilmartin (2002:637). In the former homeland areas, there exist very few formal means through which women's independent claims to land and other household assets can be addressed (Rangan and Gilmartin 2002:638). The strong influence of traditional Zulu culture with its associated cultural beliefs about women's roles further constrains women's independent decision making power (Waetjen 2004). In this context, land use has provided a practical means of facilitating more gender equal behaviour in a way that makes gender a real life concern, rather than a foreign, abstract concept (cf. Wendoh and Wallace 2005:71 and Porter and Smyth 1998:62).

In facilitating change in men's behaviour, the Valley Trust has maintained respect for the men's traditional values and beliefs. Employment, in particular, is an important aspect of masculinity, especially in the former homelands (Waetjen 2004:80; Morrell 1998:626). The decision to base the relationship with the group on land use and hence to provide the men with a means of 'being active' is important because the men have not been alienated, but have rather been helped to find ways in which they can change their behaviour whilst still feeling respected as men.

'....one way to be a good example and role model is to be active as a man and to work the land. By doing this you can show others how to behave as men.'
(Focus group discussion, 12/12/2006, man 2)

In the struggle for gender equality, it is vital to remember that it is not masculinity *per se* that is problematic, rather, it is when masculinity is defined by behaviours and attitudes that deprive women of their human rights that masculinity becomes a problem (Cornwall 1997:12). Connell (1995:141-142) argues that men may be more likely to change in ways that benefit women when gender relations are questioned in the context of other shared struggles. The shared struggle to use their land as a productive asset

may provide the necessary basis from which these men can change their beliefs and behaviours.

6.2. Strengthening community and building social support

The men's group appears to function as a significant means of social support for its members. In physical terms, the men feel confident in the fact that they can rely on the assistance of the group members to work their land and to achieve the groups income generating goals. The continuing support of the group for the widow of the deceased group member also demonstrates the potential of groups such as this one to act as means of social support for the wider community. In terms of the World Bank's (2000:117) arguments in favour of building social capital, the group has: Improved the productivity of economic assets by increasing the potential income generating capacity of the men's land through their ability to work each others land jointly, provided potential for strategies for coping with risk and created the capacity to pursue new opportunities. This was aptly demonstrated by the men's fencing scheme.

Cleaver's (2005:895) critique of the adverse effects of participation in social networks for the chronically poor does not seem to apply to this group of men. This may be due to the fact that the group consists of men who have some income, either by way of pensions or part time employment and who are thus not the poorest members of their community. Secondly, the men are on reasonably equal terms with each other in terms of their levels of income and their living conditions. This situation therefore differs from the ones that Cleaver (2005:895) documents, where poor members of the communities studied were participating in networks that included people with a wide range of income levels and living conditions. It is, however, important to note that the group has dwindled in size from an original twelve members to its current size at five members. The reasons given by the men for the loss of members generally relate to their inability to meet the commitments required to be members of the group. It is therefore possible that for the men who left the group, participation in the group was on adverse terms or was detrimental to their overall well being.

The group also provides support in terms of creating a space in which the men can discuss personal issues that they may feel uncomfortable talking about under other circumstances. The group has enabled the men to discuss issues that they had previously kept to themselves, notable examples include impotence and HIV/AIDS. These are areas of life that are strongly affected by men's gender ideologies (Ringheim 2002:170; Santow 1995:147). The group may act as a 'safe' space in which the men provide emotional support for one another in discussing these issues, whilst supporting each other in their attempts to change their behaviour (cf. Tsey *et al* 2002:282). The group is also important in that the group's activities, decisions and discussions provide checks and balances for individual men's behaviour. This may be an important factor in reinforcing the men's commitment to changing their beliefs and behaviours. Failure to live up to the group's standards could lead to expulsion from the group with an associated loss of the benefits of group membership. The expulsion of the group member who was accused of rape, and the removal of his fence, is testament to this.

6.3. Recommendations for the Valley Trust

6.3.1. Scaling up

Given the fact that the Valley Trust's approach to working around gender issues with this group appears to be having a positive effect on the lives of the men and their families, it is worthwhile to consider the potential for scaling up this work. When considering scaling up this project, it is critical to remember that the strength of the men's group is in large part due to the people centred facilitation process used by the Valley Trust and the emphasis that is placed on local decision making. What is also problematic, is how to make group membership appealing to younger men. It is possible that young men simply don't have access to land to work on or that land use is perceived as an undesirable source of income.

6.3.3. Gender and small scale agriculture

In the study area, small scale agriculture is primarily undertaken by women. This is a common feature of the former homeland areas in South Africa and appears in part to be

a consequence of the migrant labour system (Cousins 2006:230; Bezuidenhout and Fakier 2006:465-466; Terreblanche 2002:386). The gendered implications of divisions of land use are important in this light because if men were simply to begin taking a more active interest in agriculture, there is no guarantee that income generated by their activities would necessarily be equitably distributed within their families. Further, given the existence of successful women's farmer groups facilitated by the Valley Trust progress towards gender transformation could be further facilitated by collaboration and knowledge sharing between the men's group and the women's groups

6.4. Implications for policy

This study has implications for three areas of policy, namely, gender, agriculture and healthcare. In terms of gender policy, the men's group demonstrates the importance of involving both men and women around gender issues. The Valley Trust has, in facilitating gender consciousness in the men's group, made gender a practically accessible idea, rather than an alien construct of western origin (Porter and Smyth 1998:62). However, as Bydowell (1997:44) notes, it is equally important that gender is addressed among the staff members of any NGO that aims to include gender in their work. The work with the men's group emphasizes the need for 'real' mainstreaming of gender to occur, i.e. mainstreaming at all levels of organisation from grassroots to management (cf. Hemson 2002).

In terms of agricultural policy, this research has implications for the development of a comprehensive programme of agrarian reform argued for by Cousins (2006:225). Within the context of such a programme, agricultural support needs to be provided within the former homeland areas. Households in these areas often have access to land, but are not necessarily equipped with the knowledge, resources and support to effectively utilise it as the basis of their livelihoods (Cousins 2006:230). The Valley Trust has very effectively provided support in terms of knowledge and facilitating access to resources for many households in the study area. In doing so, they have effectively demonstrated the potential for households to base their livelihoods on sustainable land use. Gender must be explicitly addressed in such policies to ensure that

the potential benefits of government support for small scale agriculture do not reinforce gender bias.

In terms of healthcare policy, the ideals around which masculinity is constructed in the study area seems to prevent men from seeking health care when they need it. This issue was raised both by staff members of the Valley Trust and the men themselves. Further, in contrast to studies in Asia (e.g. Fikree and Pasha 1997) and other parts of Africa (e.g. Klasen and Wink 2002) it appears that women in the study area are more likely to seek medical attention than men. The men's clinic appears to be having a very positive effect in helping men to access health care and be more open about health issues. This points to the need for policy to be developed that addresses the need for men's access to healthcare.

6.5. Areas requiring further research

Given the low levels of employment and the high incidence of poverty in the area in which the men's group works, it is important to explore the constraints that prevent other unemployed people and younger people from becoming involved in projects such as these. It is, further, important to investigate the beliefs that prevent the youth from viewing land use as a potential source of livelihood especially in light of the innovative approach to addressing gender behaviour and beliefs facilitated by the Valley Trust. Wood and Jewkes (1997:45) note in this vein that it is necessary to work with youth around communication skills and the provision of alternative ways of interacting with each other.

If this research project were to be extended it would be important examine how the Valley Trust's approach to working with gender issues could be adapted to projects in other developmental areas. For example, whether such an approach could be applied to the water committees studied by Hemson (2002), or to projects involving conservation partnerships and eco-tourism initiatives. In doing so it may be possible to build a general model that could be applied in a wide range of development initiatives with the

end goal of creating gender equitable outcomes and promoting a process of gender transformation through development projects.

6.6. Conclusion

The men's group is having a positive effect on the lives of the group members and their families. I have argued that the combined approach of using land use as the basis for engaging with the men whilst facilitating workshops on other issues has been particularly effective. The importance of work, and 'being active' in the construction of masculinity in the study area has been emphasized because by engaging in land use the Valley Trust has affirmed the men's self worth. The practical example of negotiating the planning of land use has translated gender into an accessible idea. The support provided by the men's group is important both in physical and emotional terms. Crucially, the group provides space in which the men can shape their personal ideologies and behaviours towards creating positive roles for themselves. The group also effectively provides a system of checks and balances whereby the group can monitor each others behaviour. The effectiveness of the group is however limited to some extent by its small size and scaling up remains a key challenge.

On a broader scale, there are several implications for policy arising from this work. I have argued that the men's group represents a potential means of mainstreaming gender using a bottom up participatory approach that has the potential to be applied to government initiatives. Additionally, the agricultural potential of working in groups focusing on small scale sustainable agriculture should be considered in light of the very high levels of rural poverty and unemployment in South Africa. More research is required into the constraints and beliefs that prevent young people from engaging in land use projects of this sort. Finally, research could also focus on developing a general model based on this work for introducing explicit attention to gender in other development projects. This work has the potential to be effectively used as the basis for expanding the constitutionally entrenched commitment to gender equality to a grassroots level.

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Appendix 1:

Questionnaire for Valley Trust staff interviews

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed, if at any point you want to stop, please feel free to do so. I also want to make it clear that you don't have to answer any questions if you don't want to.

1. How long have you worked at TVT?
2. How long with the men's group?

Background

3. Could you tell me about how the men's group started?
4. How was it initiated (who initiated it)?
5. How is it funded?
6. Why a men's group?
7. And why it was started?
8. Who funds it?
9. How does the funding work?
10. What is TVT's policy regarding funding and financial inputs?
11. Do the men own their land? If what type of title? How secure is their tenure?

Work with men

12. How do you approach work with the men?
13. I am aware that you take a people centred approach to your work, please could you explain what this entails at a practical level?
14. What sorts of things do you do with the group?
15. What is the main focus, or how is the focus determined?
16. What has been done so far?
17. What else is planned?
18. Do the men only meet with ITD or do they meet amongst themselves? How autonomous are they from ITD?

Perceptions of change

19. Have you noticed any changes in the men in the group since they've worked with the group?
20. Any changes with regard to women that you have noticed?
21. Changes with regard to land use, perceptions of land?
22. Perceptions of biodiversity and ecosystems?
23. Changes in division of labour? Power relations?

24. Mens Contributions to households, food, income? Any changes
25. Men's contribution to community?
26. Changes in self esteem?

Learning by ITD

27. What do you think is working or not working?
28. Why do you think it is working or not working?
29. Has your approach to working with the men changed over time?
30. Do you feel that your own perceptions of land use have changed?
31. Do you feel that your perceptions of gender issues have changed? Or your ideas of how to address gender issues?
32. What issues do you think are important for the men's group to address that have come up since the work began?

Appendix 2:

Interview guide for men

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my research, I just want to make clear that you don't have to answer any questions that you don't feel like answering and if you want to stop at any point please feel free to do so.

Background

1. How old are you?
2. Have you been involved in the group from the beginning?
3. What work do you currently do? What did you do before joining the group?

Reasons for joining group

4. Why did you decide to join the men's group?
5. How did you get involved?
6. What were you doing before you joined the group?

Feelings about the group

7. How do you feel about working with the group?
8. Has working with the group changed the way you feel about men's roles in the community?
9. What do you want to achieve by working with the group?
10. Do you think that the group supports each other in achieving the vision of the group?
11. Can you give any examples?
12. Do you have any problems with the way the group works?

13. What do you think is the most important thing about the group?

Changes because of the group

14. What is the most important thing you think involvement with the group has made you do differently

15. What do you think about the workshops with the Valley Trust?

16. Has working with the group changed the way you approach:

1) health care issues

2) nutrition in your household

3) the way you use your land

17. What were you doing with your land before working with the group?

18. Have visitors said anything about what changes they see at your household?

19. Have other men expressed interest in the group?

20. What does your wife think about the group?

21. What does the rest of your family think?

22. Is there anything that you think the group should be doing differently, and if so, what?

23. Is there anything else that you would like to share about the group and your experiences with the group?

Appendix 3:

Interview guide for women

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my research, I just want to make clear that you don't have to answer any questions that you don't feel like answering and if you want to stop at any point please feel free to do so.

Background

1. How old are you?

2. What work do you currently do?

Feelings about men's group

3. What do you think about your husbands work with the men's group?

4. What was your husband doing before he joined the group?

5. What do you think will come from your husbands work with the group?

6. What do you think is the most important thing about the men's group?

Changes since group formed

7. Have you noticed any changes in your husband since he has been in the group?

8. Can you give any examples?
9. Have there been changes in your household since your husband joined the group?
10. Can you give any examples?
11. Has your husband ever shared the things that he's learnt with the group with you?
Can you give any examples?
12. Is there anything you think the group should be doing differently, and if so, what?
13. Do you think that the group supports each other?
14. How do you feel women in general gain from men working together in the way that this group does?

Appendix 4

Focus group outline

Land use

- In working the land Zizamele is showing something that people can do that can be very productive and is setting an example for other men.
- Why do you think other men don't work the land?

Social support

- The group is a strong network and the men rely on each other. The men all said that they felt they could ask the others for help if it was required. Also, there is value in being able to discuss issues with other men and to ask for advice.
- There may also be positive effects on family life as working the land means that men stay at the household and interact more with their families.
- By working strongly together as a group, Zizamele sets a good example to other men, especially in light of the group's achievements such as getting fencing.
- The men's wives say that their husbands are more communicative since working with the group. Are there examples of this that you can think of?

Potential issues:

- If the group wants new members, trusting them is an issue that most of the men raised.
- Is the strong spirit of the group intimidating to new members? Or are there just very few men who want to work like this?
- Does the group, by being strong, also build the strength of the community?
- What barriers or challenges do you think that other households face in achieving what you have achieved?

Masculinity

- From what I have read, and also from my own life, I have found that the way we behave as men sometimes is influenced by what other men think and how they behave. So there are lots of different ways of being men. I think that

Zizamele shows a way of being a man that can set an example for other men.
How would you describe this example?

- The thinking of possibilities of what you can do as men is a very important part of what the group does.
- The fact that you as a group can share your problems with each other and advise each other is also important. Examples?
- I think that the sharing of the work that you have done with Valley Trust around health issues with other men, is something that is also important and can have a positive effect on men and women in your households and in your community.
- What do you think about the men's clinic? Have you referred other men to it?

Issues arising:

- Do you think that younger men are interested in working like Zizamele? If not, then why?
- What barriers or challenges do you think stop men from working like Zizamele? How do you think these can be overcome?

Long term vision

- From the interviews, it seems that there is a need now to think ahead to see what will happen next. Where do you see the group in one years time? Where do you see them in five years time?