

# GBV AoR HELPDESK

## Gender Based Violence in Emergencies

### Preventing and Responding to Gender-based Violence in Faith-based Communities: An Annotated Bibliography of Recommended Resources



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#### Introduction

Faith-based actors, including formal and informal faith-based leaders and organizations, are increasingly recognized as key to preventing gender-based violence (GBV) and crucial to realizing the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls by 2030. An increasing number of organizations have specifically worked with faith-based communities to prevent and respond to GBV, utilizing the experience of faith-based actors in pastoral care and other forms of service provision, as well as drawing on and promoting religious leaders' varied roles as community gatekeepers, advocates, peacemakers, influencers, and social mobilizers.

This resource provides an annotated bibliography of recommended resources on preventing and responding to GBV in faith communities. Two main approaches have been identified that are particularly important and effective in addressing GBV with faith leaders and communities:

1. a public health approach, where basic public health information related to GBV is shared and discussed with religious leaders and religious communities.
2. a scriptural/theological approach, where religious texts are drawn on to justify support for gender justice and oppose GBV.

The annotated bibliography explores these and other approaches. However, only a small number of evaluated GBV programs are available. In addition, there is limited information available about how religious leaders and communities work with perpetrators of GBV, or about addressing GBV against marginalized women and girls, including violence against women and girls based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIE). Moreover, while many resources take an interfaith perspective, specific examples or details often focus on Christianity and Islam. Less information was found on other religions. This bibliography does not include resources exploring the role of faith in perpetrating and perpetuating GBV, although some of the resources do address this *as well as* describing prevention and response.

The bibliography is organized in terms of key overview papers; information about global and national approaches and accompanying resources; and toolkits, guides and curricula:

- **Overview papers:** key exploratory texts that provide a critical examination of strategies, including faith-based communities' activities and potential to prevent and respond to GBV in faith communities.
- **Approaches:** information about specific approaches developed and implemented to prevent and

respond to GBV in faith communities. Only examples that offer supporting resources (e.g. evaluations, tools, guides, curricula, reports) online are included. This subsection is divided into approaches that are multi-country and approaches that have been implemented in one country. Examples are not included where a small case study is featured in an overview text unless further descriptive resources were found about the approach online.

- **Tools, guides, and curriculum:** the tools, guides and curricula to enable users to explore the religious basis for ideas related to GBV and gender justice and personal and community responses to these topics. This section also includes examples of tools to help organizations work in meaningful ways with faith-based communities.

The bibliography draws on English language documents published primarily after 2015. For a more detailed description of the methodology for collecting resources for the bibliography, please see the annex at the end of this document.

## ***Overview Papers***

### **[Binte Abdur R.A. and Thompson, S. \(2021\) \*A Crisis of Rape in Bangladesh: Opportunities for faith engagement\*](#)**

Widespread sexual violence is a persistent problem in Bangladesh, and has been aggravated during the COVID-19 pandemic. This brief aims to inform government entities, faith-based organizations, and secular organizations about the context and nature of the ongoing sexual violence crisis in Bangladesh and outline pathways for policy reform. It highlights ways in which faith actors can be powerful allies of women and girls by speaking out against sexual violence and working to bolster meaningful and impactful policy change. Achieving a clear understanding of common ground can help advance sustainable reform around ending systemic sexual violence based on an appreciation that such violence is detrimental to individual and collective human potential and represents a significant impediment to Bangladesh's development. Dialogue with religious communities can be advanced by identifying and propagating religious norms that support gender equality and counter sexual violence. Further, education, a key social institution for collaborative engagement with religious bodies, can produce fundamental normative and structural changes.

### **[Girls Not Brides \(2019\) \*Working with Religious Leaders to Address Child Marriage\*](#)**

It can be hard for practitioners to know where to start when considering if and how to engage with religious leaders around GBV. To support its members with this challenge, Girls Not Brides commissioned the Unit for Religion and Development Research (URDR) at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, to conduct research which focused on the three majority religions from the 20 countries with the highest prevalence rates of child marriage: Christianity, Hinduism<sup>1</sup> and Islam. Based on a literature review and fifteen interviews in different regions and across different faiths, the research explored why some religious leaders might oppose efforts to end child marriage and what can be learned from those with experience in this area. Le Roux and Palm identified several types of resistance that practitioners commonly face from some religious leaders in their work to end child marriage including vocal resistance, resistance through actions, scapegoating, spiritual resistance, and silent resistance. The authors conclude that it is important to understand why religious might be resistant; for example, marriage can be an important part of their role and religious leaders might want to ensure men keep control. Lessons learned from the research include: decide whether to work with religious leaders, and prioritize your engagement; don't try to convince all, try to convince enough; once you know who to work with, treat them as partners and respect their agency; decide on the best way to start talking about child marriage; and include sacred scripture as part of your engagement, but not in isolation.

### **[Karam, A. \(2015\) \*Faith-inspired Initiatives to Tackle the Social Determinants of Child Marriage\*](#)**

Religious arguments are part of the problems that perpetuate harmful practices such as early and child marriage. Working with religious actors and organizations offers multiple entry points for addressing child marriage, including through prevention as well as support to young married girls. Yet, such 'faith-centric' efforts can still operate in relative isolation from development efforts and remain less funded by mainstream secular development actors focused on social norm and behavioral change programs. This is reflective of a dominant

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<sup>1</sup> Very little information was found on Hinduism

policy reality in international development, which tends to see religion in general, and faith-based actors in particular, as marginal to other social determinants and stakeholders. Given ongoing geo-political realities, faith-related endeavors are becoming more prominent in today's developmental landscape. This highlights a need for better communication to share lessons learned, and to improve the efficiency of interventions for addressing child marriage. In addition, few programs are evaluating the impact of their interventions.

**[Kaybryn, J. and Nidadavolu, V. \(2012\) A Mapping of Faith-based Responses to Violence against Women and Girls in the Asia-Pacific Region](#)**

This report details the activities of 58 faith-based organizations (FBOs), based on an online survey and in-depth interviews undertaken by UNFPA and the Asia-Pacific Women Faith and Development Alliance (AP-WFDA). While acknowledging that these organizations are only a small proportion of all the FBOs addressing VAWG in the region, the research identified a broad range of strategies have been adopted to address violence against women and girls. Nearly all participating organizations worked with women and girls 'in general'. Some also targeted specific groups. The Sarvodaya Sharamadana Movement in Sri Lanka, for example, supports teenagers who become pregnant as a result of rape. Other organizations indicated that they work with women and girls affected by HIV, trafficking and disabilities. Over a third reported working with sex workers (the authors raise the possibility that sex work and trafficking have been conflated). A number of the organizations used both faith and rights-based messages in their engagement with public campaigns. Faith leaders and faith-based organizations used their existing networks for outreach within faith communities, to provide information and to mobilize congregations. Increasing dialogue and collaboration with UN agencies, other secular organizations, and organizations of the same and other faiths, they believe, would increase their effectiveness to respond to violence against women and girls. Organizations need training and skills-building for staff, additional resources and more faith-oriented, or faith-sensitive materials.

**[Le Roux, E \(2019\) Religion, Development, and GBV: Suggestions for a strategic research agenda](#)**

The author contends that two key approaches are particularly important and effective in addressing GBV with religious leaders and religious communities. The first is a public health approach, where basic public health information pertinent to the issue is shared with religious leaders and/or religious communities. The second approach, a scriptural/theological approach, has been shown to be particularly effective in working with religious leaders and communities. However, empirical work on religion often fails to properly define religion. According to the author, much of the research on religion and development is not textured and contextualized enough to adequately deal with the complex multi-dimensionality of religion and how people live their religious beliefs and practices. Further, much of the existing research on religion and development makes assumptions around causality between religious dimensions and developmental dimensions. There is also a general lack of robust monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) of intervention programming, and in existing evidence and there is an emphasis on certain regions, and religions. The author recommends that MEL activities could include developing a recommended MEL framework and guide for religion and GBV; training local faith community partners on conducting MEL; and funding and organizing dissemination events for MEL.

**[Le Roux \(2015\) A scoping Study on the Role of Faith Communities and Organizations in Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence: Implications for policy and practice](#)**

The scoping study concludes that the literature on faith-based involvement in SGBV prevention and response is not extensive and focuses on Christianity and activities in high-income countries such as the United States. Those active within the field of faith and SGBV say that much more is being done than what is being documented. The author calls for further research and documentation within two specific areas; firstly, context-specific research and secondly, spirituality and how it can assist in supporting and healing survivors.

The scoping study further found literature suggesting that the faith sector prefers using a pedagogical model – for example trainings, workshops, seminars and classes – to address SGBV and mainly with survivors and faith leaders. There is a lack of documentation of work with perpetrators. The literature also tends to ignore marginalized groups, for example, there is only one text that refers to interventions with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI+) survivors and sex workers. To ensure that evidence is collected, disseminated and used; that faith-based SGBV involvement increases and is impactful; and that multi-sectoral SGBV collaboration is achieved, the author recommends the following action from local faith communities and FBOs,

donors and policy makers, academics and researchers:

- Documenting, evaluating and disseminating information on faith groups' activities to strengthen evidence.
- Prioritizing rigorous program development that is longer-term and context-appropriate.
- Targeting faith leaders as important community gatekeepers, but also authoritative and influential opinion leaders.
- Using multiple modalities, and engaging multiple stakeholders, in interventions.
- Actively seeking out and developing networking and collaboration opportunities with both faith and secular actors.
- Ensuring donors and policy makers include various faith actors in the development of policies and strategies on SGBV.

**[Le Roux, E. and Bartelink, B.E \(2017\) Working Effectively with Faith Leaders to Challenge Harmful Traditional Practices](#)**

This study included a literature review, online survey, and five case studies focusing on five organizations' work on harmful traditional practices with faith leaders. The four harmful traditional practices are female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), child marriage, honor-related violence, and son preference. The five organizations use the term harmful traditional practices little or not at all at community level, primarily because it creates resistance and hinders the process of engaging people in local communities to challenge injustice and violence, in particular towards women and girls. Rather, an integrated approach is preferred, which addresses the varied factors, such as gender constructs, poverty, and patriarchy, that lead to harmful traditional practices.

Religion is used in various ways to justify cultural beliefs and practices. The authors conclude that a public health approach should form part of engaging faith leaders on harmful traditional practices. Many lack even basic sexual and reproductive health knowledge which is integral to addressing harmful traditional practices such as FGM/C. Engaging with faith leaders should also include a theological, scriptural component, as it enables faith leaders to address sensitive and complex issues while using a discourse and framework they know and respect.

The case study organizations are<sup>2</sup>:

- [Tearfund](#) – a Christian charity responding to poverty and disaster, working in 51 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the UK.
- [Islamic Relief Worldwide \(IRW\)](#) – an international relief and development agency inspired by the Islamic faith working in over 40 countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.
- [World Vision International \(WVI\)](#) – a global Christian relief, development and advocacy organization improving the well-being of children, working with local communities regardless of their faith in more than 100 countries in Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East and Africa.
- [ABAAD](#) – a non-profit, non-politically affiliated, non-religious civil association with the aim of promoting sustainable social and economic development in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, through promoting gender equality, protection and the empowerment of marginalized groups, especially women.
- [Christian Aid \(CA\)](#) – a Christian organization addressing poverty and related issues in 39 countries across Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Middle.

Also featured in Le Roux, E., Bartelink, B., Palm, S. (2017) [Sleeping Giants: Mobilising faith leaders as agents of change](#) and Palm, S., le Roux, E., Bartelink, B. (2017) [Amplifying Development Partnering with Faith](#)

**[Stawski, H., O'Sullivan, V., Dartnall, E., el Feki, S., Arango, D., Karam, A. \(2016\) Faith Communities are Key Actors in Empowering and Protecting Girls and Addressing Gender-based Violence](#)**

The Joint Learning Initiative (JLI) on Faith and Local Communities, in support of the World Humanitarian Summit Special Event on Humanitarianism and Religious Engagement (2015) has prepared evidence briefs linked to the [5 core responsibilities](#) of the international community that were discussed at the Summit. Core responsibility 3, Leave No One Behind, includes the commitment: *Implement a coordinated global approach to prevent and*

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<sup>2</sup> The links are to individual case studies of the five organizations.

respond to gender-based violence in crisis contexts, including through the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies. Therefore, the JLI's evidence brief on Core Responsibility 3 focuses on violence against women and girls and the role that faith-based communities and organizations play in addressing it.

JLI's five suggested actions below build on the 2015 We Will Speak Out (WWSO), the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Interfaith Summit on ending sexual violence that included a Declaration by religious leaders committing to zero tolerance of GBV and creating safe spaces for survivors.

1. Improve the quality of cooperation between faith-based organizations and secular agencies and actors, making concerted efforts to find commonalities in language, aspirations and ways of working.
2. Develop strategic partnerships to support female and male faith leaders and their communities in addressing harmful cultures, beliefs, attitudes and practices and support the development of non-violent masculinities based on faith traditions.
3. Partner with and equip religious leaders to raise awareness and respond practically in the implementation of the '[International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict](#)' (2017) and the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies.
4. Involve faith groups in community-based referral pathways, document and disseminate examples of good practice and promote linkages between service providers and faith groups including those concerned with HIV.
5. Build evidence for faith-based responses and prevention of GBV through rigorous evaluation of program interventions and commissioning of research studies on program impact.

Other papers from the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities can be found [here](#).

#### **[Tearfund and Mpanzi \(2014\) The Potential of Faith In Ending Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Case study with the Kisii and Maasai communities of Kenya](#)**

This baseline study examined trends, barriers and opportunities to eliminating FGM/C among the Kisii and Maasai peoples of South-western Kenya, in villages within the Nyamagwa, Igare, Kilgoris and Poroko areas. It was conducted by Mpanzi, a Kenyan NGO, in collaboration with the University of Nairobi and Tearfund, a UK-based Christian international NGO. Data was collected from women, men and girls using interview guides, questionnaires, focus group discussions and storytelling. The goal of the study was to identify practical actions to engage survivors, men and children, as well as identify and deploy religious resources in efforts to eliminate FGM/C. The study concluded that because faith was such an integral part of village life, any efforts to eliminate FGM/C that involved all congregations would effectively reach many people. The following resources could be used:

- Spiritual texts - Over 58% respondents noted there was no religious mandate to continue FGM/C. Respondents who were against the practice suggested that the Church and Mosques were institutions that could play a significant part in eliminating the practice.
- Religious explanations - Respondents suggested that religious leaders such as pastors, priests and Imams could make religious arguments about preventing FGM/C and linked these to the Kenyan law (while criminalizes FGM/C), through the use of homilies, fatwas, preaching, teaching and prayer.
- Religious groups - religious groups including youth groups, Catholic Women Associations (Mama Mkatoliki), Dorcas (Seventh Day Adventist women's groups), Quakers, and the Anglican Mothers Union, could help provide structures and networking for campaigning messaging to eliminate FGM/C.
- Health Centers - village health centers run by religious groups were well trusted, even by the government. They could be used to provide education, training and knowledge particularly on the health implications of FGM/C. They are also able to respond in the event of an emergency following FGM/C.

See also: [Tearfund \(2014\) Faith: Religious tools that can help eliminate female genital cutting among the Gusii and Maasai of Kenya: Summary report](#)

#### **[Thompson, S. and Binte Abdur R., A. \(2021\) Educating Girls and Countering Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Opportunities for Faith Engagement](#)**

Girls in Bangladesh are facing distinctive, detrimental effects linked to the COVID-19 emergency. Among them are

disruptions to education, which are accelerating child marriage and different forms of violence. This brief focuses on specific ways in which faith communities, governments, and NGOs have engaged to prevent girls from being left behind in and beyond Bangladesh. It also explores paths toward a more equitable education system when the COVID-19 pandemic is over. It draws on BRAC University's Centre for Peace and Justice (CPJ) and World Faiths Development Dialogue's (WFDD) ongoing research on the rise of GBV in Bangladesh linked to COVID-19. Key takeaways include:

- When religious bodies are meaningfully engaged in education strategy and delivery, they can help produce fundamental normative and structural changes, with particularly positive outcomes for girls. This is critically important during COVID-19.
- Dialogue with religious communities needs to focus on identifying and integrating positive religious norms that support gender equality and counter harmful teachings and practices such as child marriage.
- Female madrasas offer educational opportunities for girls and can either counter or reinforce gender inequality. Understanding these factors is key for bolstering female madrasa education.

#### **United Society Partners in the Gospel (USPG) (2019) *Keeping Faith in Faith Leaders***

There is a commonly held assumption that faith leaders, with the influence and respect that they command, can translate and promote human rights principles about gender equality within their communities. USPG explore these assumptions through focus groups and interviews with members of the Anglican Students Federation (ASF) at the Universities of the Western Cape and Cape Town. They identify the role of the church in supporting and contesting hegemonic gender understandings and the reactions of a number of local churches of differing denominations to GBV. The findings highlight the challenges faith leaders face translating rights-based values into local contexts, including the influence of history and culture on religion; the impact of local power hierarchies on the agency of church leaders; and a reluctance of congregations to engage theologically with 'texts of terror' (stories of abuse, exploitation and violence against women and girls). Members of ASF felt that female leadership was of critical importance in struggles for gender equity in the church because female leadership challenged thinking about power by modelling female authority. Female congregants are also more likely to report GBV to female clergy. How and whether women in leadership in the church can use their power to challenge the patriarchal structures of the church remains a contested area.

## Approaches<sup>3</sup>

### *Multi-country/global*

#### **Transforming Masculinities and Community Dialogues, Tearfund**

Transforming Masculinities works towards gender justice through a gender-transformative model, founded in the principles and sacred texts of faiths that value the wellbeing and equality of all human beings. The goal is not to challenge existing gender roles directly, but rather to question the values assigned to those gender roles, including gender norms based on unequal power, and the values and status assigned to gender identities. The aim is to promote positive models for being men and women, for leadership, and for restoring relationships at every sphere of society through engagement with faith leaders, and training of 'Gender Champions' who then facilitate community dialogues, promote change in individual behavior and social norms on gender and masculinities. The community dialogues are a tool that 'Gender Champions' can use to facilitate a series of reflections and dialogues, most effective if used in the context of the Transforming Masculinities approach. The discussion themes are tailored for both women's and men's groups, with the expectation they will come together for a joint reflection in week six. The themes are intended to prompt personal reflection and deepen understanding of the topics. This initiative was implemented and evaluated in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Source: Tearfund [website](#) on addressing sexual and gender based violence; Tearfund (2021) [Project Results from Masculinities, Faith, and Peace in Nigeria](#) (see section 3.2.2 for annotation); Tearfund (2017) [A Quick Guide on Transforming Masculinities by Tearfund](#) (see section 3.3 for annotation).

#### **Channels of Hope (CoH), World Vision**

Channels of Hope (CoH) is an interactive process to create a safe space for faith leaders, their spouses and faith communities to become active participants in the well-being of community members, particularly children, through evidence-based information and insight from religious texts. It reaches to the root causes and deepest convictions that impact attitudes, norms, values and practices toward the most vulnerable. CoH have curricula<sup>4</sup> on gender, HIV, maternal and child health and child protection. The aim of the gender curriculum is to empower both women and men to celebrate who they are, moves people towards healthier relationships with those of different genders, and reduce gender-based violence. The Child Protection curriculum has a strong focus on gender and addresses harmful traditional practices that affect girls. The CoH approach has been implemented in countries such as the Solomon Islands, Uganda and Ethiopia. An evaluation of CoH Gender in the Solomon Islands conducted by the University of Queensland, found that, over the three-year project, attitudes of community members and church leaders changed regarding women's rights, including their right to live free of violence. World Vision have also worked with Islamic Relief Worldwide using the CoH approach to address child protection in Mali, Pakistan, Lebanon.

Sources: The Channels of Hope webpage on the World Vision [website](#); World Vision (2013) [Igniting a Movement to Transform Communities](#); World Vision (2019) [Channels of Hope for Gender Overview](#); World Vision (2019) [Channels of Hope for Child Protection Overview](#); World Vision (2015) [World Vision Solomon Islands Community Channels of Hope](#).

#### **Integrating Protection: An Integrated Approach to Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection, Islamic Relief Worldwide and World Vision** [This project drew on the Channels of Hope methodology.]

This collaboration engaged faith leaders in Mali, Niger, and Pakistan (2016-17) employing faith mechanisms to transform care for children. The program aimed to promote gender justice and child protection by ensuring safe and accessible services and case management for survivors of GBV and child abuse and exploitation. By using pre-existing social networks, the project provided interactive awareness-raising workshops to both men and women, focusing on communities' elders, and religious leaders. Since all three countries have a Muslim majority, association with religious leaders enhanced the credibility of the organization in the community and supported the project goals. The project reached over 11,000 male and female beneficiaries through awareness-raising

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<sup>3</sup> As there tends to be a number of resources relevant to each approach these are cited at the end of each annotation rather than a single resource being drawn on for each annotation.

<sup>4</sup> Not available online.

sessions. By the end of the project, religious leaders committed to discuss women and child rights in their sermons and raise awareness in cultural gatherings. Additionally, the project equipped community-based organizations and leaders with the tools and knowledge to undertake advocacy and community empowerment activities on behalf of women and children.

Source: Almuḡahed, N., Iman S. Pertek, I.S., Fida, N. (2017) [Integrating Protection: An integrated approach to gender-based violence and child protection](#)

Other relevant resources: Integrated Protection' is one of 6 case studies submitted for the JLI EVAC Hub scoping study: Palm, S. and Colombo, F. (eds.) (2019). [Scoping Study on Faith Actors' Involvement in the Prevention, Elimination and Perpetuation of Violence against Children. Case studies](#). Islamic Relief Worldwide [statement](#) on Ending Sexual and Gender-based Violence.

### **CEDAW and Muslim Family Laws: In search of common ground, MUSAWAH**

The MUSAWAH CEDAW project was designed to provide an understanding of how Muslim countries and countries with significant Muslim minorities engage with the CEDAW process and how the CEDAW Committee addresses issues of Muslim family laws and practices. The research project reviewed documents for 44 countries that reported to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women from 2005 to 2010. The research revealed a number of trends in how State parties justify their non-implementation of CEDAW provisions with regard to family issues and how the Committee approaches the topic. Many of the State party justifications rely on the simplistic explanation that the laws and practices are based on 'Shari'ah' and are therefore immutable, or that customs, traditions, and culture prevent any immediate change. [MUSAWAH's Framework for Action](#) (2018) provides a more holistic way of viewing equality within the family by integrating Islamic teachings, universal human rights, national constitutional guarantees of equality and non-discrimination, and the lived realities of women and men in a dynamic and evolving process.

Source: [MUSAWAH website](#); MUSAWAH (2012) [CEDAW and Muslim Family Laws: In search of common ground](#); MUSAWAH (2018) [MUSAWAH's Framework for Action](#)

### **The Tamar Communication Strategy on Sexual Gender-Based Violence in Eastern Africa**

In 2005, a communication strategy known as the "Tamar Campaign" was launched in Nairobi with the overall objective to address GBV within religious contexts. This Campaign was rolled out to four countries in Eastern Africa and the Great Lakes Region. Sponsored by The Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA) in partnership with St. Paul's University and the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Tamar Campaign empowers the Church to break the silence surrounding GBV. FECCLAHA use the Contextual Bible Study method to transmit messages of healing, restoration and hope to survivors of GBV at the local level. The practice of Contextual Bible Study is one of active and equal participation where all group members are engaged in bringing the scripture to life through their own story. An assessment of the Campaign in the DRC by Claremont Graduate University's departments of Psychology and Evaluation, and Religion and Kenyatta University's Gender and Development Studies found that the year-long process of learning, reflection, and discussion, fueled by encouragement from influential religious leaders and led by well-trained facilitators, produced real shifts in social norms and behavior related to GBV. (Torjesen et al, 2019)

Source: Torjesen et al (2019) [Assessing the Tamar Campaign in the DRC](#); L.K. Kaviti (2015) [Impact of the Tamar Communication Strategy on Sexual Gender-Based Violence in Eastern Africa](#)

Other sources of information: Nyabera, F. and Montgomery, T. (2007) [Tamar Campaign: Contextual Bible Study Manual on Gender-Based Violence](#)

### **Project dldl/ድልድል: Building Bridges of Faith against Domestic Violence in Ethiopia**

Project dldl/ድልድል is a research and innovation project dedicated to the development and strengthening of religious and cultural systems to address domestic violence in Ethiopia, Eritrea and the UK. The word dldl means 'bridge' in Tigrigna, a term that reflects the project's aim of bridging different disciplines, sectors and stakeholders in order to achieve a more reflexive, decolonial and integrated approach to address domestic violence in faith communities. The project is dedicated to generating new research and evidence on the ways in

which religious beliefs, theology and the clergy can contribute to the deterrence of domestic violence, and to raising awareness about the religious and cultural parameters of domestic violence among practitioners within government and non-governmental sectors, with the overall objective of building better-integrated domestic violence support systems. War in Ethiopia and the COVID-19 pandemic have hampered implementation to date. The project is hosted at the School of History, Religions and Philosophies at SOAS University of London and involves numerous collaborators, partners and team members in the project countries.

Source: Project dldl/ድልድል [website](#); Istratii, R. (2021) [Starting a Research Project During a Pandemic and a War: lessons from project dldl/ድልድል](#)

Other sources of information: Istratii, R. (2021) [Adapting Gender and Development to Local Religious Contexts: A decolonial approach to domestic violence in Ethiopia.](#)

### **[Christian Aid \(2020\) Equality at All Levels: Strengthening the role of faith-based actors in promoting the Beijing +25 agenda](#)**

Christian Aid presents accounts of how their work with faith-based organizations has positively contributed to equality, the fight for gender justice and the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). Mapping the BPfA areas onto the Sustainable Development Goal clusters highlights the importance of 'holistic and joined-up development solutions' that address GBV and gender equality across all the SDG clusters:

- Cluster 1: Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work
- Cluster 2: Poverty eradication, social protection and social services
- Cluster 3: Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes
- Cluster 4: Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions
- Cluster 5: Peaceful and inclusive societies
- Cluster 6: Environmental conservation, protection and resilience building.

Christian Aid supports their partners to create space for faith leaders to discuss and interpret religious scriptures with a gender justice lens. They also work with faith-based female leaders and feminist theologians who connect with the lived experience of women and provide a more nuanced analysis of the role of religion on promoting gender equality. Christian Aid also support partners to help survivors of GBV. In Somalia, Christian Aid supports their partner, Muslim Aid, to provide a 'one stop shop' referral center where women experiencing GBV can come and learn about their rights, both about human rights and applying a faith-based lens.

### **[Norwegian Church Aid \(NCA\) \(2019\) Engaging Faith Actors on GBV: Best practices from the NCA global GBV program 2016-2019](#)**

A range of methods were used in the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) Global GBV Program to engage faith actors and religious leaders on GBV, such as:

- Encouraging and supporting development of theological reflections on gender justice and GBV in Ethiopia;
- Supporting women in faith-based organizations and faith institutions' leadership in Myanmar and Zambia;
- Engaging with faith actors on harmful practices at the community level through community dialogue in Somalia and Mali;
- Engaging with religious leaders to provide services for survivors of GBV in North Iraq and South Sudan;
- Engaging faith actors in advocacy from local to national level in Pakistan and Malawi;
- Sensitizing and building the capacity on GBV of male religious actors in Mali and Pakistan;
- Creating support among top religious leadership in Ethiopia to address GBV;
- Facilitating interfaith platforms and material in the DRC.

Various forms of GBV were addressed in the program: sexual violence and exploitation; sexual slavery and trafficking; domestic violence/partner violence; child marriage; forced marriage; and harmful practices such as FGM/C. NCA's engagement through awareness raising, reflection and dialogues with communities and religious leaders has shown that encouraging and seeking 'progressive transformation of discourse' bears fruit and ensures sustainability. In South Sudan, for example, engagement by NCA and their partner (Daughters of Mary

Immaculate-Komboni Sisters) with faith actors through mobilization and training is gradually creating an understanding and acceptance that work related to GBV, including supporting GBV survivors, is part of a faith leaders' responsibilities. In Zambia, NCA partners have engendered the training curriculum for seminarians, infused teachings with insights on gender-sensitive leadership and interrogated religious doctrines and practices. Women have also received literacy training and been trained to take up leadership positions in the church.

### **UNICEF (2020) *Engagement with Religious Leaders in South Asia***

Many religious leaders are skilled communicators who can reach out to their communities and promote child rights and the protection of children. UNICEF recognizes their importance and supports a range of faith-based organizations and actors in different countries in the region. For example, UNICEF and the Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh in the Ministry of Religious Affairs have identified 15 priority areas for religious leaders to promote positive social and behavior change, including a focus on adolescents to end child marriage and improve school enrolment and retention; social and behavior change to promote gender equity; child protection and prevention of violence; birth registration; and a focus on children with disabilities to address related stigma and discrimination. UNICEF supported religious groups and actors in the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; who made important contributions to the core principles and subsequently promoted its ratification and implementation. In September 2017, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia convened the first ever South Asia Religious Leaders Platform for Children and in 2018 UNICEF, working in partnership with the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities and Religions for Peace, formed an advisory group of international faith-based NGOs and launched a global initiative on Faith and Positive Change for Children (FPCC).

### **UN Trust Fund (2021) *Learning from Practice: Engaging faith-based and traditional actors in preventing violence against women and girls***

The 10 UN Trust Fund-funded projects show that CSOs are uniquely placed to engage faith-based and traditional actors and offer them opportunities to become potential allies in the prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG). The projects focused on several forms of VAWG, including menstrual stigma (chhaupadi, in Nepal), female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C, in Tanzania), harmful practices related to widowhood inheritance issues (in Togo) and violence against specific groups of women, such as indigenous women and women of African descent (in Colombia) and women and girls with disabilities (in the State of Palestine). Project grant sizes ranged from \$54,000 to \$1 million. The CSOs have developed tailored, coordinated and flexible responses that can be adaptive and put women and girls – including those most at risk in society – at the center of interventions. In Kenya, for example, faith-based organization Trócaire found when adapting the *SASA!* Faith methodology that some male faith leaders in Kenya were willing to speak out against violence in general, but not specifically on VAWG. They therefore provided these faith leaders with further in-depth training and long-term mentoring and designed a system of accompaniment in which a team member from the project would accompany a faith leader when they spoke publicly on violence to provide additional information on referrals or help answer questions from the community. The lessons from the 10 projects emphasize the need for diverse approaches and organizations in this work, the importance of understanding how faith-based systems work in practice and their core values in relation to VAWG as a prerequisite for effective engagement.

### ***Single country***

#### **Collective Action for Adolescent Girls (CAAGI) in Nigeria, Christian Aid**

Collective Action for Adolescent Girls Initiative (CAAGI) is a Christian Aid funded programme that aims to improve significantly the choices and opportunities available for adolescent girls in Northern Nigeria to live productive and meaningful lives. It targets individual and societal behaviours, attitudes and perceptions that hamper opportunities for girls, using religious leaders as enablers to facilitate change. Specifically, the issues the project seeks to address are economic empowerment; education; and early marriage.

Some of the strategies adopted during the project have been working closely with faith leaders and traditional leaders to train and empower them to raise awareness on issues affecting adolescent girls and influence and reinforce positive behaviors and attitudes; strategically using mass media and other communication technologies to influence change; and creating safe spaces for adolescent girls and other community members, which serves as motivation for social dialogue around issues that affect them. Key achievements include:

- Development of a toolkit used by the faith leaders for advocacy during the project. This toolkit was developed in a participatory manner by faith actors.
- Faith leaders at community level have actively intervened to support cancellation of planned weddings for underage girls in their communities. Now, these girls are either back in school or learning a skill/trade to improve their choices and opportunities.
- Male champions are now supporting adolescent girls to achieve their dreams, either to continue education or learn a trade.
- The project bought and distributed economic empowerment/income-generating materials for 147 adolescent girls across project communities. These girls have started using these materials and are now making money to support themselves and their families.
- Adolescent girls have been trained on self-awareness and leadership and they are beginning to speak up for themselves on issues that bother them.

Source: Christian Aid (2017) [Raising Male Champions for Adolescent Girls: A CAAGI story of change](#) and Christian Aid (2016) [Religion and the Adolescent Girl: A formative study in Kaduna state. Research Report](#) This formative study aimed to understand and document how religious and traditional leaders and institutions are influencing and reinforcing both positive and negative attitudes and behaviors towards adolescent girls' issues in Nigeria's Kaduna state.

### **Tackling Gender-Based Violence in Brazil, Christian Aid**

Christian Aid have supported experiences of service delivery, advocacy, and pastoral care to address GBV in the context of growing religious conservatism in Brazil. Two examples include:

- In 2013, Koinonia established the Faith Network Supporting Women Victims of Violence in the city of São Paulo. Its role is to challenge and engage faith communities, aiming to enable them to prevent and overcome VAWG within particular communities and more widely across society. The Faith Network has engaged with 20 different faith communities of Christian denominations and a gypsy community in the metropolitan area. Its work is based on discussion groups with an average of 30 participants. The meetings include both lay people and clergy/religious leaders. Each meeting tackles a specific issue related to GBV, such as explaining what it is and its consequences, religious perspectives on the issue, existing legislation and how it works, and public health services available to survivors. Other activities of the Faith Network include building the capacity of faith leaders to advise women experiencing domestic violence, from a rights-based perspective and promoting inter-faith-rooted advocacy towards the municipality to push for improved implementation of existing laws and programs.
- SADD's work focuses on strengthening the diaconal work of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil to prevent GBV across nine dioceses. It runs a project, 'Church Preventing Gender-based Violence', which was planned with three main goals: firstly, to improve communities' pastoral care for women experiencing violence; secondly, to provide biblical, theological, and advocacy resources for faith communities to tackle GBV; and, finally, to manage a refuge in the city of Ariquemes, in the Amazon state of Rondonia. This offers social, pastoral, and psychological support to women fleeing domestic violence.

Source: De Roure S. and Capraro C. (2016) [Faith Paths to Overcome Violence Against Women and Girls in Brazil](#)

### **The Butterfly Longitudinal Research Project in Cambodia by Chab Dai (translated "Hands Together")**

The Butterfly Longitudinal Research Project was started in Cambodia in 2010 by Chab Dai (translated "Hands Together"), a coalition of NGOs focused on human trafficking. The Project was founded with the purpose of listening to sex trafficking survivors' voices over a period of ten years and recording their experiences in order to better understand their physical, emotional and spiritual needs in their initial recovery in shelters and during reintegration back into their communities. The research results indicate that the participants benefitted from their spiritual journeys whether Christian or Buddhist. Although there are some distortions of belief, most of the beliefs are consistent with cultural understandings of Buddhism and Biblical understandings of Christianity. Positive aspects of spirituality appeared to aid in their healing and rehabilitation and build their resilience. For example, several participants described praying to Jesus or the Buddha about fears and anxieties in a relationship. For Buddhists, their prayer led to giving alms. For Christians, their prayer led to loving and respecting others and not

discriminating against them.

Source: Miles, G., Lim, V., and Nhanh, C. (2020) [Children of the Wood, Children of the Stone: The journey of faith for the survivors of trafficking.](#)

Other relevant resources: [Chabdai website.](#)

### **Claves Christian Organization, Uruguay**

Claves is a Christian organization based in Uruguay. It partners with local organizations, such as religious communities, educative centers, and civil society organizations that work directly with children and adolescents. Their child-centered methodology, "we strengthen ourselves through play to face adverse situations," seeks to prevent the mistreatment, sexual abuse, trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents through empowerment and education of children. The educators participate in a total of 24 hours of theoretical, methodological, and experiential training. After the training, the educators carry out a series of 8-to-10 play-based weekly workshops in their home institution, with the group of children and adolescents. They are supported with a toolkit of didactic materials that includes the manual "Hands at Work," comprising theoretical and methodological aspects, posters and puzzles, story, pictures, dominoes, board games, and CDs of songs and stories. Adult educators reported that the training allowed them to increase their knowledge about maltreatment, sexual abuse, trafficking and sexual exploitation, the dynamics and consequences of violence, and intervention modalities. The children and adolescents who participated in the workshops showed increased awareness of their rights and the ability to defend them, such as identifying situations of abuse and telling a trusted adult.

Source: Palm, S. and Colombo, F. (eds.) (2019) [Scoping Study on Faith Actors' Involvement in the Prevention, Elimination and Perpetuation of Violence against Children. Case studies.](#) Note: Claves Christian Organization is one of 6 case studies submitted for the JLI EVAC Hub scoping study noted in the **Overview Papers** section above.

### **Engaging Faith Leaders to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Women and Girls in Liberia, Episcopal Relief & Development (2015-2017)**

The project addressed violence within the family and community by working with FBOs in six districts in the Cape Mount and Rivercess counties of Liberia. The main aim was to reduce physical and sexual violence experienced by women and girls and improve their access to services. The project was designed, contextualized and piloted with leadership and theological guidance from senior faith leaders. An evaluation of the program included baseline and endline quantitative surveys with Christian and Muslim clergy and lay leaders; male and female members of churches and mosques; and women and girl survivors of violence. Main findings of an evaluation of the project were:

- significantly fewer women and girls reported violence by intimate partners (down from 14.8% to 5%) and by non-partners (down from 16.1% to 2.6%);
- participants in the activities adopted more gender-equitable attitudes;
- virtually all the faith leaders (98%) and youth faith leaders (97%) spoke out against GBV at various events; and 81% took some form of action to support members of their congregation in this regard; and
- the majority of female members of the congregations said they had learned about GBV support services from their faith leaders.

Source: Episcopal Relief & Development (2018) [Engaging Faith Leaders to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Women and Girls in Liberia](#) and Vyas, S., Zingel, M. and Nyan, J. (2018) [Final Evaluation: Engaging faith-based organizations to prevent violence against women & girls and increase survivors' access to services \(Liberia\). A summary](#) of the evaluation is also available.

### **Combating Gender-based Violence against Women and Girls in Dekasuftu Woreda, Ethiopia, Islamic Relief Worldwide**

The Islamic Relief Netherlands-funded project, "Combating Gender-Based Violence of Women and Girls" was carried out in the Dekasuftu Woreda of Liben Zone within the Somali regional state of Ethiopia from February 2016 to March 2017. Over that time, the project reached more than the planned 3,000 direct beneficiaries. The project was informed by a 2015 gender study conducted in Dekasuftu and focused on deep-rooted practices, such as FGM/C and child marriage, as well as negative attitudes and beliefs towards women and women's issues. The

interventions used two approaches: raising community awareness on key gender justice issues and capacity building of partners, health institutions and schools in addressing GBV. Capacity of local and government institutions and faith leaders was also built in order to prevent and respond to GBV. The main outcome of project was to improve the safety and care of vulnerable groups of women and girls, as well as enhance their knowledge of their rights. A key learning from the project was that while engaging religious leaders is important for addressing harmful traditional practices, especially FGM/C and child marriage, these leaders must have a good reputation and acceptance within the community. As such, engagement of faith leaders should be facilitated with vetting from the community.

Source: Islamic Relief Worldwide (2018) [\*Lessons Learnt from Somali Regional State of Ethiopia: Combating gender-based violence against women and girls in Dekasuftu Woreda: Faith inspired action to end GBV\*](#)

### **Domestic Violence Pastoral/Spiritual Care Training and Capacity Strengthening Model, The South African Faith and Family Institute's (SAFFI)**

The main objectives of the SAFFI Domestic Violence Pastoral/Spiritual Care Training and Capacity Strengthening Model is to strengthen the capacity of religious leaders and faith communities to address issues of GBV and become positive catalysts for change. Such intervention requires open critique of theological teachings and interrogation of sacred texts. In South Africa, SAFFI has done this through workshops, seminars, dialogues and conversation. SAFFI offers technical support to faith communities in developing denominational or faith-specific material on prevention and intervention which includes policies and procedural guidelines for working with survivors and perpetrators of domestic violence. Through its work, SAFFI encourages the faith sector to work closely with existing domestic violence service providers and the justice system in collaborative community-based initiatives. Faith leaders are encouraged to dispel any misinterpretation of scriptures and promote sound contextualized faith resources.

Source: Robertson, M. (2017) [\*SAFFI's Gender-based Violence Intervention Programmes: Documenting the Experiences of Religious Leaders and Faith Communities in a South African Context\*](#); Peterson, E. (2017) [\*Getting dirty: Working with Faith Leaders to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence\*](#); SAFFI [website](#).

### **Supporting survivors of sexual violence through faith and community advocacy in South Sudan, World Vision**

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office funded World Vision to work with communities in Yambio over two years to change attitudes, promote community acceptance of survivors and children born of rape, and improve locally managed systems to prevent and respond to sexual violence. The project focused on working with multiple stakeholders, including faith leaders, youth leaders and women's groups. Faith leaders were seen as good entry points given their influence and moral authority, as long as both men and women across different denominations were engaged and were enabled to lead awareness-raising efforts themselves. The challenge of working with this group was that it did not always hold the moral authority of all groups in the community, reinforcing the need for a diversified approach. After the project concluded, a study<sup>5</sup> in July 2018 found that there had been changes to attitudes and practices related to sexual violence at individual and community level (including among faith leaders), specifically for survivors and children born of rape. This included increased awareness and openness, increased reporting of GBV incidents and survivors increasingly seeking health services. There were still ongoing challenges (mostly beyond the project scope), including limitations to the material support available, a lack of comprehensive response services for survivors and the fact that some survivors were still experiencing verbal abuse or isolation for various reasons.

Source: World Vision (2019) [\*A Case Study from World Vision in South Sudan: Supporting survivors of sexual violence through faith and community advocacy\*](#)

### **Engaging with faith groups to prevent VAWG in conflict-affected communities: results from two community surveys in the DRC, Tearfund**

In this project, Tearfund worked with local partner HEAL Africa in remote and conflict-affected communities. The aim of the intervention was to mobilize, train and equip faith leaders to become catalysts within their own

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<sup>5</sup> A reference is not provided in this report for this study.

communities to address the root causes of GBV from a faith perspective. The intervention was implemented across 15 villages with a total population (at baseline) of approximately 13,000 people in 2600 households. Seventy-five faith leaders (five per community) formed part of the intervention, and 30 gender champions (two per community). Faith leaders were from any faith or denomination (Christian or Muslim); gender champions were community leaders, such as midwives or teachers, who showed a willingness to address gender-related matters. Both faith leaders and gender champions were community members (male and female). They were trained by Tearfund in the DRC to address harmful attitudes, behaviors and social norms which support gender inequality and enable VAWG and received ongoing mentoring from project staff. They were also encouraged to incorporate what they had learned into their existing activities such as sermons, prayer groups, youth groups, and counselling. An evaluation of the initiative found that rates of GBV reported as experienced or perpetrated in the past 12 months reduced by more than half between baseline and end-line.

Source: Le Roux et al (2020) [Engaging with Faith Groups to Prevent VAWG in Conflict-affected Communities: Results from Two Community Surveys in the DRC.](#)

Other relevant resources: Sandilands M., Jewkes R., Baguma Lele U. and Scott N. (2017) [Does Faith Matter? Faith engagement, gender norms and violence against women and girls in conflict-affected communities: baseline research in Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of Congo.](#) This report explores the key findings of a baseline quantitative household survey undertaken across 15 communities in Ituri Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in July 2015. The survey informed the program described above. This program was developed under the DFID-funded *What Works to Prevent VAWG* program. Information about all the programs evaluated by *What Works to Prevent VAWG* can be found on the [website](#).

### **Gender Equality and Ending GBV program in Lebanon, ABAAD**

Without being religiously affiliated, nor naming harmful practices as such, ABAAD actively engages faith leaders in challenging harmful practices. This is done especially in their projects within their Masculinities Program, which applies a multi-level strategic approach. One of the projects under the Masculinities Program was a series of roundtable dialogues with Religious leaders to end GBV in the MENA Region' organized between 2012 and 2015. During the roundtable discussions with and amongst faith leaders, different forms of gender-based violence and violence against women and girls were highlighted and assessed by faith leaders, with specific reference to their communities. Other activities include:

- research and dissemination of information relevant to GBV. For example, in partnership with Notre Dame university ABAAD is conducting research to better understand the relationship between experiences of GBV and mental health among women GBV survivors in North Lebanon and the Bekaa.
- policy development and advocacy, usually focused on policy and legal change at a national level, for example, through roundtables with faith leaders.
- community-based interventions that collaborate with community and faith leaders, such as setting up shelters for GBV survivors.

ABAAD has also been able to strengthen networks and engagement between faith leaders and civil society in Lebanon.

Source: [ABAAD website on Gender Equality and Ending GBV program](#); Bartelink, B., le Roux, E. and Levinga, W. (2017) [Case Study with ABAAD as Part of the UK-Aid Funded 'Working effectively with faith leaders to challenge harmful traditional practices'.](#)

### **Engaging religious and traditional leaders for gender equality in Nigeria, Voices4Change**

Voices for Change (V4C) sought to improve the lives and life chances of adolescent girls and women in Nigeria by strengthening the enabling environment to overcome gender inequality. As part of this work, V4C has engaged with religious and traditional leaders, with the aim of influencing their attitudes towards men's power over women, gender equality and women's empowerment, and harnessing this influence to challenge and change social norms and behaviors within their own networks and communities. Most of the religious and traditional leaders engaged have been men, but midway through the program V4C also began to engage women influential leaders

that included religious leaders (for example Catholic nuns, Protestant pastors, lay leaders, Amira<sup>6</sup>) and key women community and political leaders. Engagement with religious and traditional leaders has been informed by the following three key principles:

- *Transforming the self:* Engaging religious and traditional leaders requires enabling them to focus, initially, on the self to critically reflect on and analyze ingrained patriarchal attitudes and behaviors and make changes in their own lives that mirror their commitment to gender justice.
- *Building alliances to trigger change:* Many citizen-based organizations in Nigeria already have experience engaging religious and traditional leaders on social issues, and V4C built collaborative and learning relationships with some of these stakeholders to develop strategies for engaging religious and traditional leaders on issues of gender justice.
- *Taking a long-term view:* The integration of gender justice issues by religious and traditional leaders into their outreach practices (sermons, etc.) enables them to inspire change that, within their congregations and beyond, takes on a life of its own, with long-lasting, far-reaching potential that is not dependent on external support. To strengthen that, however, V4C provided platforms for religious and traditional leaders to come together periodically to share their own journeys of change and develop individual and collective action plans for promoting gender justice from a religious perspective, as part of a wider social movement for gender justice.

By using a gender transformative approach and participatory methodologies that promote shared reflection, critical analysis and in-depth questioning, religious and traditional leaders have deepened their knowledge, revised their attitudes, values and behaviors, and arrived at a better understanding of gender issues.

Source: Voices4Change (2018) [Engaging Religious and Traditional Leaders for Gender Equality: V4C Stories of Learning](#).

## Tools, Guides and Curricula

### [ACT Alliance, Caritas and Islamic Relief \(2020\) Engaging with Religious Leaders and Faith Communities](#)

The Faith Leader GBV Toolkit uses the Experiential Learning Model (ELM) to help participants begin deconstructing their own conceptions of gender and power. ELM's 4-step learning process – self-identification, reflection, analysis and action – is incorporated into each activity in the Toolkit and gradually guides trainees through the self-examination needed to begin shifting long-held views about men, women, power dynamics, fairness, justice, etc. This process of introspection deepens as the Toolkit moves from broader concepts to more specific, complex topics, allowing participants to revise foundational beliefs and norms around gender and equality before tackling challenging topics such as justification of violence within marriage. Faith leaders trained using the ELM attest to the evolution of their thinking and actions as they progressed through the Toolkit, and that the opportunity and time to delve deeply into and reevaluate their beliefs has changed their pastoral work permanently.

### [Al-azhar University, UNICEF, Coptic Orthodox Church the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt, Bishopric of Public, Ecumenical, and Social Services \(COC-BLESS\) \(2016\) Peace, Love, Tolerance: Key messages from Islam & Christianity on protecting children from violence and harmful practices](#)

This guidance explores the approaches to preventing all forms of violence against children from the perspectives of Islam and Christianity. It is intended as a guide for all those who work in the field of caring for and protecting children including parents, servants, teachers, educators, imams, priests and others. The publication covers various forms of violence against children such as child labor, sexual abuse, children without parental care or who live on the street, domestic and school violence, armed conflicts and child trafficking, as well as violence through the media and the Internet. The guidance also discusses harmful customs and traditions such as gender discrimination, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and child marriages. The publication draws on the Holy Quran, Holy Bible and other sacred texts. The guidance is available in two separate documents:

- Islamic perspective on protecting children from violence and harmful practices in [English](#) and in [Arabic](#)
- Christian perspective on protecting children from violence and harmful practices in [English](#) and

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<sup>6</sup> Presidents of Muslim organizations

in [Arabic](#)

**[Christian Aid \(2017\) \*Improving the Choices and Opportunities for Adolescent Girls: A toolkit for faith leaders\*](#)**

This toolkit was designed as a guide for religious leaders of both Christian and Islamic faiths in Nigeria as they address the challenges faced by adolescent girls on the issues of child marriage, education, reproductive health services and economic empowerment. It is an initiative of Christian Aid Nigeria, working in partnership with Gender Awareness Trust (GAT) and Development and Peace Initiative (DPI) as part of the Collective Action for Adolescent Girls Initiative (CAAGI) (see single-country annotations, above). It guides faith leaders as they provide training and share messages/sermons on Christian and Islamic perspectives on issues of child marriage, education, reproductive health and economic empowerment of adolescent girls. For example, in Islam men are specifically commanded to treat their wives with kindness and respect. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: “The most perfect in faith amongst believers is he who is best in manners and kindest to his wife.” (Hadith reported by Abu Dawoud, a companion of the Prophet Muhammad). The toolkit also provides a guide to key concepts, rights and background information on issues, choices and opportunities for girls as well as well as a rationale for why promoting their choices and opportunities is important.

**[Christian Aid \(2016\) \*Loving One Another: A biblical discussion toolkit on gender-based violence\*](#)**

Ten years ago, Christian Aid decided to address two themes in an inter-related way: ‘What does God require of us?’ (Micah 6:6-8) and ‘Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls’ (57th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women). In partnership with Christian Aid, and with financial support from the Scottish Episcopal Church, SADD developed a course for use in Brazilian churches for preventing and tackling GBV (see annotation in single-country section above for more information on SADD’s work). The Brazil material has now been adapted for use in other countries, including El Salvador, Burundi, Angola, Liberia, Honduras, Colombia and Uruguay, and has been produced in four languages. For this Scottish edition, Christian Aid reduced the number of sessions, but addresses the same topics and uses the same Bible passages. The course emphasizes that intimate partner violence is the most common form of GBV, and it highlights the important role of faith communities in addressing the problem. The critical topics covered are:

- what we mean by GBV;
- who are the victims;
- where we find perpetrators;
- local secular supports;
- how individuals and/or the church might take this forward.

There is an optional sixth session on ‘texts of terror’ (GBV in the Old Testament). The toolkit cautions that these passages “describe shocking encounters in the Bible which may leave readers confused and angry. Emotions may run high in a discussion and so it will be important to create a safe space for honest expression for all involved.”(p.22). Facilitators may choose whether to offer it and participants may choose whether to attend that session.

**[Deepan, P./Tearfund \(2017\) \*Transforming Masculinities: A training manual for Gender Champions\*](#)**

‘Gender Champions’ are men and women who volunteer within communities to lead and facilitate change with respect to gender norms, gender equality and the role of faith. The aim is to support individual behavior change, and to change social norms around gender, masculinities and GBV. This manual introduces the training for Gender Champions, provides a detailed activity guide for use in training, and includes guidelines to support the community dialogues the Gender Champions will lead and facilitate. As well as a guide to key terms, there are tips for facilitation including dealing with difficult situations. Key themes covered by the training include: GBV, gender, creation and gender equality, gender, power and violence, alternative models, possibilities, positive masculinities and gender equality, dealing with common resistance reactions, community dialogues, and accountable practice. For example, promoting the concept of ‘accountable practice’, personally and in relationships, starts with the Champions, their homes and the peers they will lead through this work – to foster a culture that promotes personal and relational accountability on this theme.

**[Episcopal Relief & Development \(2020\) \*16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence: A faith and community based toolkit\*](#)**

Through this toolkit, Episcopal Relief and Development aims to encourage all its networks to join in the global effort to address GBV, to raise awareness of GBV and the work being done to address it; and to amplify the voices and prayers of all working together for gender equity and the empowerment of the most vulnerable women in their communities, such as women with disabilities, and incarcerated women. The toolkit is a set of resources to help guide people of faith through the 16 Days of Activism and beyond, to a 365-day commitment to “restoring dignity to individuals, families and communities everywhere.” The toolkit encourages participants to review different materials, Bible passages and facts related to gender justice, reflect on them and then engage their community in a dialogue in response to the questions and messages raised.

### **MUSAWAH (2016) *A Compilation of Resources Related to Women’s Rights in Muslim Family Laws***

To reveal the core egalitarian message of Islam, MUSAWAH builds on concepts that exist within Muslim legal theory, namely:

- The distinction between Shari’ah, the ‘divine message’, and fiqh, the science of Islamic jurisprudence, which represents human understanding of the divine will. MUSAWAH illustrates that what is commonly considered to be ‘Islamic law’ and Shari’ah is, in fact, fiqh – jurisprudence. Therefore it is not divine law but human-made, imperfect and changeable.
- The rulings under the ‘ibadat (devotional/spiritual acts) category regulate relations between God and believers and thus offer limited scope for change. By contrast, legal rulings related to marriage and family (mu’amalat) are considered to be social and contractual matters. Such rulings that regulate relations between humans are open to reform, given changing times, spaces and circumstances.
- Muslim legal tradition comprises multiple schools of Islamic law and the legal concept of ikhtilaf (diversity of opinion), as well as diverse laws and interpretations related to family matters. This fact contradicts the idea of a single, universal ‘Islamic law’ that is monolithic and immutable.

Drawing on these principles, MUSAWAH contends that laws introduced in the name of Shari’ah and Islam must reflect the values of equality, justice, love, compassion and mutual respect among all human beings. This position is also articulated in [the Musawah Framework for Action \(2009\)](#) and [CEDAW and Muslim Family Laws: In Search of Common Ground \(2012\)](#). The resources MUSAWAH has collated can help build arguments and explore possibilities and strategies for reform not only within the Islamic framework but also grounded in constitutional guarantees of equality and non-discrimination, human rights principles and lived realities of women and men. Such values exist in the Qur’an and Muslim legal tradition, and they correspond with contemporary human rights principles.

### **Positive Voices, the Norwegian Organization for Gender and Sexual Diversity (FRI) and The Global Interfaith Network (GIN) (2018) *Hearts Set on Pilgrimage: Preparing LGBTI people of faith to participate in dialogue with religious leaders***<sup>7</sup>

Collaboration between GIN-members, FRI and PV has resulted in the development of *Hearts Set on Pilgrimage*, a process guide to a 5-day experience to prepare LGBTI People of faith to participate in dialogue with religious leaders and to build the internal capabilities of LGBTI people of faith to claim their faith with confidence and resilience, as part of the community of believers. The workshop is not a training. It is a process of co-discovery, personalization, personal formation and preparation. There is a strong emphasis on developing mutual support between the participants and creating a safe, reflexive space. Participants are guided through activities using creative and visualization techniques, exploring such questions as: “We come into the room as ‘people of faith.’ What does that mean and how are we challenged in life to live our sexual orientation/gender identity and our faith?” (p.12).

### **Raising Voices (2016) *SASA! Faith: A Training manual to prepare everyone involved in SASA! Faith***

SASA! Faith is an initiative in which leaders, members and allies of a religion come together to prevent violence against women and HIV. It involves a process of community mobilization—an approach and corresponding activities that engage everyone in living faith-based values of justice, peace and dignity. SASA! Faith is an

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<sup>7</sup> This resource focuses on stigma and discrimination rather than GBV perse. However, it is included in this resource as most of the guides featured do not address issues of sexuality and gender expressions. The guides that seek to support gender justice through interpretations of religious text are generally heteronormative in their approach.

adaptation of *SASA! An Activist Kit for Preventing Violence against Women and HIV*, which has been proven to prevent violence against women. *SASA! Faith* takes the structure, process and content of the original *SASA!* and adapts it for use in Christian and Muslim communities. Its format is also intended to invite other faith-specific adaptations. Facilitators support community to explore different types of power, including how power shapes and influences our own lives; the basics of violence against women and the basics of HIV, including relevant faith-based teachings; and how power can be used for change. Participants explore how they (as *SASA!* faith activities) can reach out to all the different people and groups in their faith community to affect lasting change as well as support people who experience violence and live with HIV.

For more information: *SASA! Faith* [website](#); Davidson, R.G. (2019) [\*Baseline Assessment to Evaluate Attitudes, Norms, Knowledge, and Behaviors around Violence Against Women and Girls and Evidence-based Practices for the Curricula of a Faith-based Youth Organization\*](#)

**[Tearfund \(2020\) Community Dialogues: Promoting respectful relationships and equitable communities](#)**

Written in partnership with Georgetown University's Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH), this detailed guide is for Gender Champions who have been identified and trained using Tearfund's Transforming Masculinities toolkit (see above for annotation). The discussion themes are tailored for both women's and men's groups, with the expectation that couples will come together for joint reflection in Weeks 6–8 and for a joint celebration in Week 9. The themes are intended to prompt personal reflection and deepen understanding of the topics such as the root causes of GBV, gender roles and norms in daily life, power, status and GBV and faith. The sessions are practical and action-oriented. At the end of each one participants are given personal and relational reflections to take home and think through during the week, with a view to sharing their thoughts in the following session. The sessions are composed of both scriptural reflections and other tools to facilitate honest dialogue at the community level. The idea is that holy texts from the Bible are used to help address misinterpretations that support and perpetuate harmful masculine ideologies, gender inequality, and GBV. Scriptures are also used in reflections to support dialogue on child spacing and men's support of safe motherhood.

**[Zengele, B. \(2018\) Church Resource Manual on Sexual Gender Based Violence: Contextual bible studies to transform our response to sexual gender based violence](#)**

This book has different Bible studies, chosen by individuals who have worked on contextual Bible studies and are aware of the issues of sexual violence (including against people based on their sexual expression and identity) and gender justice that churches are grappling with in 21<sup>st</sup>-century South Africa. A self-discovery tool helps readers identify which areas (of ten in total) they may benefit from addressing first. If readers score low in a particular area during the self-discovery, they can use the relevant Bible study to look at this issue in more detail. The manual encourages people to examine biblical texts on a range of issues, for example, 'homosexuality in the bible', 'sexual violence in the bible', 'full inclusion of survivors of sexual violence', 'justice, advocating and restoration', 'reflecting on human trafficking and its impact on GBV.' Activities encourage users to reflect on the biblical sources, their own views related to the topics and response such as how to ensure that their religious communities are a safe space for people.

## Additional Resources

Three useful learning platforms for keeping up-to-date with relevant resources and initiatives include:

- **The Joint Learning Initiative (JLI) on Faith & Local Communities and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Faith and GBV Hub**, was the richest source of resources featured in this annotated bibliography and regular posts new relevant resources. The Hub is a platform for faith actors and others to engage with a wider range of research and perspectives, and to build new research collaborations and connections.
- **DV-GENDER-FAITH (Promoting Integrated Approaches to Domestic Violence in Faith Communities) Membership list** - The list is intended for domestic violence practitioners, researchers and religious stakeholders to share new research, training materials and experiences to build good practices together and to promote more integrated approaches to addressing domestic violence in religious communities.
- The **Global Interfaith Network (GIN)** aims to provide safe space to convene, document best practices, develop resources and together create local, regional, and international strategies for the decriminalization of LGBTI identities.

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## Annex: Methodology

**Research strategy:** Resources were identified through online desk-based research related to preventing and responding to GBV in faith-based communities. The search strategy used key words, phrases and acronyms associated with women and girls, GBV and different faiths including faith, religion, Christianity, Islam/Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Buddhism, and variations of search terms on violence (e.g. GBV and VAWG and specific forms of violence), and search terms related to response (e.g. response, prevention, services, support, program, research, guidance etc.). The author also mined the bibliography of key texts and searched relevant journals. However, the research did not look specifically at female genital mutilation because of the extensiveness of the literature.

**Limitations:** The resources in this annotated bibliography are limited to English documents, and only include publicly available online materials. It is likely that faith-based and other organizations and GBV actors have produced more resources, which are not available online. The research focused on resources published between the years 2016 to 2021, however, a few key resources published between 2011-2015 are also included.

### The GBV AoR Help Desk

*The GBV AoR Helpdesk is a unique research and technical advice service which aims to inspire and support humanitarian actors to help prevent, mitigate and respond to violence against women and girls in emergencies. Managed by Social Development Direct, the GBV AoR Helpdesk is staffed by a global roster of senior Gender and GBV Experts who are on standby to help guide frontline humanitarian actors on GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response measures in line with international standards, guidelines and best practice. Views or opinions expressed in GBV AoR Helpdesk Products do not necessarily reflect those of all members of the GBV AoR, nor of all the experts of SDDirect's Helpdesk roster.*

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