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Empowerment of Women and Girls

Therapeutic Activism: Men of Hope Refugee Association Uganda Breaking the Silence over Male Rape in Conflict-related Sexual Violence

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THERAPEUTIC ACTIVISM: MEN OF HOPE REFUGEE ASSOCIATION UGANDA BREAKING THE SILENCE OVER MALE RAPE IN CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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Abbreviations

AIDS	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
CBO	community-based organisation
CERAH	Geneva Centre for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action
CSO	civil society organisation
DFID	Department for International Development
GBV	gender-based violence
GIPA	Greater Involvement of Persons Living with HIV/AIDS
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDP	internally displaced person
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
MOHRAU	Men of Hope Refugee Association Uganda
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	non-governmental organisation
PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
RLP	Refugee Law Project
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution

Executive summary

Men's experiences as victims of sexual and gender-based violence remain little recognised in research, policy or practice. Mainstream narratives generally continue to depict men as perpetrators of violence and women as victims. Yet, having been linked to forced migration in contexts of armed conflict, sexual violence against men is slowly becoming recognised as far more widespread than was previously thought. Responding to this, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) approached the Refugee Law Project (RLP) and Men of Hope Refugee Association Uganda (MOHRAU) in order to jointly design and carry out a study on collective action among male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

This report explores one central question addressed by the study: 'despite the odds stacked against them, what makes it possible for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to organise and become activists, challenging discriminatory social and gender norms?' The study finds that, despite pervasive discrimination, groups of male survivors have been able to develop resilience and mutual support through collective action. Further, the study finds that third-party service providers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can play an important support role in reinforcing the resilience and capacity of male survivors to organise collectively.

The report addresses the overarching question through three main sub-questions:

1. How can looking at male survivors of sexual violence help us understand the complexity of men's relationship to sexual and gender-based violence?
2. How and why do groups of male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence respond to their experiences of violence, oppression, stigmatisation and marginalisation, including as refugees?
3. How does the individual agency of male survivors of sexual violence living as refugees interact with collective action to respond to the experience of violence and marginalisation?

Approach and methodology

This study adopts key elements of a feminist framework of empowerment through critical consciousness and collective action (applied to male rather than female victims), but also relevant critical theory and concepts on masculinities, trauma recovery, agency, migration and refugee status in relation to activism and citizenship. This combination of perspectives was chosen to help us move away from common limiting assumptions about sexual and gender-based violence, and gender. It also allows for a substantive recognition of the unique set of issues driving these men's experiences of marginalisation, and their responses.

The research employed a collaborative and grounded approach. Research framing and questions were co-constructed between Men of Hope members and staff from RLP and IDS. Furthermore, the research was designed to allow insights and understanding to emerge directly from the data, as opposed to searching for a predetermined hypothesis. We aimed to ensure that context and history were taken into account in the way that meaning was constructed in the analysis. Research subjects comprised 36 MOHRAU members and four of their female partners, all living as refugees in Uganda (predominantly as a result of having moved away from conflict within the Great Lakes Region). Focusing on understanding both individual journeys and the dynamics of the group, participants were purposefully sampled.

Through a dialogue facilitated by IDS and RLP, a context-specific framing was developed collectively between the Men of Hope leadership group, RLP and IDS, alongside the wording of research and interview questions. The IDS and RLP research team conducted 13 interviews with members of MOHRAU and four with female partners of group members.

One focus group discussion was also conducted with members on the issues posed by the emerging analysis.

Alongside these interviews and discussions, Men of Hope members also led their own process of telling and visually capturing individual and collective narratives. This involved five MOHRAU members in leadership roles developing video recordings of their individual testimonies of their journeys to activism, and a broader group of members creating a dramatised film with the title *Men Can Be Raped Too.* RLP and IDS provided technical support, including in participatory film-making.

Summary highlights of findings

How can looking at male survivors help us understand the complexity of men's relationship to sexual violence?

The existence of male survivors challenges attempts to reduce the narrative on sexual violence to men's perpetration and women's victimisation. The experiences of the men in this study – as victims, as survivors and/or as activists – demonstrate that their relationships to sex, violence and gender identity are deeply complex, and cannot be explained with reference to a simplistic gender binary. Our findings vividly demonstrate the impact of sexual violence on male victims' subjective displacement from personhood.

At its core, sexual violence ruptures the victims' understanding of their own gender identity, and of what it means to be 'men' – notions previously predicated on traditional models of masculinity expressed in relation to (and counterposed to) female identity. This rupture results in stigmatisation from the community, silencing and isolating men who have been raped. Sexual violence against men by men illustrates the socially constructed nature of gender relations enacted within broader relations of power and conflict. We see that inhabiting a man's body holds no guarantees of masculinity, and we can thus recognise the plurality of men, masculinities and their relationships to gender inequality and violence.

While many of the men in this study had not questioned their masculinity prior to being victimised, it is clear that reassessments begin to happen as individual healing and collective consciousness start to emerge. These in turn provide illustrations of concepts of intersectionality, transitions, transformations and liminality, as described in Section 3. These are useful not only in unveiling the men's complex of multiple interacting challenges, but also in understanding how *changes* in their relationships to sexual violence can come about. Being marginalised as refugees intersects with (and is compounded by) both the marginalisation experienced in relation to gender identity and position, and the question marks raised over their sexuality. However, when survivors begin to connect with other people who have had similar experiences, this opens up new possibilities – of healing, of building new identities, and of reassessing their relationships to others and to the world. It appears to be through gradual and non-linear processes and through liminal spaces of confusion and reconstitution that these transformations take place.

How and why do groups of refugee male survivors respond to their experiences of trauma?

Exposure to conflict-related sexual violence and displacement both damage the sense of self, identity and community of refugee men who have experienced this trauma. However, the emergence of peer support groups has provided a safe space for male survivors, which has been integral to enabling them to respond. Such groups can allow for interconnected individual and group healing, as well as for the building of new identities. Peer support not only mitigates the isolation but also directly challenges the reasons for marginalisation and ostracism experienced by male survivors. There is a collective rejection of assumptions that

men cannot be vulnerable or raped; and patriarchal norms of male dominance and invulnerability begin to be questioned. Related to this, the research found shifts in study participants' understanding of interpersonal relationships, resulting in closer and more egalitarian relationships between some of the women and men involved.

These findings suggest that approaches to working with groups of refugee men who are survivors of sexual violence can usefully draw on positive psychology perspectives on psychosocial support, peer support and self-help. They also indicate that such approaches need to go beyond the many approaches to trauma recovery that frame 'reintegration' as a return to established norms and communities. Approaches need to recognise changes in identities and build new communities of belonging. The findings highlight the importance of recognising the fluid spaces group members pass through or experience, and how mutual support (in these often difficult and non-linear journeys) is crucial for constructing group identity. This fluidity, and the multiple identities of individuals and collectives, can counter static prescriptive norms that limit creativity, agency and the formation of new communities.

Strategic engagement with identity narratives established within international communities – for example, 'survivors' – is an important tactic; it enables groups or individuals to make claims on an international humanitarian asylum system that has systematically excluded the rights of male victims, for reasons already discussed. This linkage to strategically accessing international support can usefully draw lessons from the experience and concept of 'therapeutic citizenship' among self-help groups of people living with HIV in Africa.

How does individual agency interact with collective action to respond to marginalisation?

The findings revealed a number of elements as to 'how' individual group members' actions interact with their collective action, some of which relate to the discussion of healing (above). Initially, new members may only be concerned about (or act on) their own needs; but we have seen how collective healing quickly repositions members' motivations towards helping others within (and outside) the group. Increasing engagement gradually raises members' political consciousness of their issue within a broader oppressive context and ignites their desire to be activists for the group, and for the cause of 'breaking the silence'. We found that healing is political through challenging dominant gender narratives, and that political engagement in advocacy is also healing, individually and collectively.

A critical aspect of the dynamics of the group's functioning relates to the role of outside actors. While the group was created coming out of support activities led by RLP, the latter continues to nurture and support MOHRAU, alongside a range of other groups of vulnerable refugees and minorities. Furthermore, key members have had their horizons expanded by taking part in international meetings or learning experiences such as the South-South Institute (discussed in Section 2). Other service organisations in Kampala provide different forms of support, such as medical treatment or counselling. The role of supporters and allies is crucial, both for the group's internal development and for their individual and collective action and 'representation' in advocacy work, locally as well as globally.

Men of Hope may provide a microcosmic space for exercise of 'citizenship', which is otherwise so restricted in the daily lives of group members. In framing the issue of citizenship, we appeal to critiques of simple formalistic state-centred (or organisationally centred) narratives, which can occlude the complex negotiations of the politics of everyday lives. To even begin to grapple with the situation of refugee male survivors of sexual violence – let alone their activism for international recognition and support – we need to see citizenship as more than simply a relationship between citizens and nation states. While there are important differences in context, limiting comparisons with the experiences surrounding the HIV epidemic, historic notions of citizenship need to be significantly extended. They need to go beyond a narrow definition of the individual rights-bearing

citizen's relation to a duty-bearing nation state, to the everyday politics of people's lives, and beyond, to engage with the global 'biopolitics' of gender, humanitarian aid and law.

Conclusion

The answer to the overarching question ('what makes it possible for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to organise and become activists, and to challenge discriminatory social and gender norms?') contains three key elements. First, we need to move away from gender-binary models for addressing the needs of individual women and households and work instead with diverse community formations and support groups. Second, the scope of models of recovery focused on individual trauma must be broadened to include collective healing as well, with a corresponding mix of therapeutic models. Supporting collective healing and the building (or rebuilding) of new identities and new relationships – at times with external support – is, in itself, a challenge to discriminatory social and gender norms. Third, it is increasingly urgent to nurture politically conscious collective action by survivors themselves, drawing strategically on specific individuals' unique capabilities and facilitating joint advocacy to influence broader international humanitarian policy and politics. Recognising the therapeutic activism of refugee survivors of sexual violence, their self-determination and their claims for the realisation of human rights will make a major contribution to the efforts of humanitarian and development policymakers and practitioners to address the issue of sexual violence effectively and sustainably.

Recommendations

In order to put into practice global policy commitments to working with all survivors of sexual violence, be they women, girls, men or boys – as outlined in the G8 declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and UN Security Council Resolution 2106 – we propose the following recommendations.

National and multilateral/United Nations (UN) development aid agencies should:
- ensure that legal and policy frameworks adopt an approach to gender that is inclusive of men and women and emphasises how gender relationships construct gender identity;
- enable processes of global citizen engagement that support survivors of sexual violence to influence international legal frameworks;
- ensure that ongoing research analysis of conflict-related sexual violence includes the issue of sexual violence against men;
- provide increased funding to address sexual and gender-based violence in conflict-affected settings, to strengthen prevention and response for all survivors.

NGOs and national implementing service providers should:
- examine their policies and services to determine whether they are inclusive of male survivors, sensitive to their needs, and empowering;
- develop training to support humanitarian service providers to ensure more inclusive approaches to addressing conflict-related sexual violence;
- provide help and mentorship in situations where support groups do not exist;
- strengthen and foster the capacities of refugee-led support groups.

Researchers in gender and sexuality, in organisational strategies and citizenship should:
- develop new approaches to addressing sexual violence with refugee groups of male survivors of violence (action research can open up possibilities of new learning);
- conduct participatory action research to support new strategies;
- assist service providers by focusing on adapting psychosocial models for individual and group healing, moving away from simple rehabilitation and reintegration.

1 Introduction

Globally, men's experiences as victims of sexual and gender-based violence remain little recognised in research, policy or practice. Yet, having been linked to forced migration in contexts of conflict (Russell 2007), sexual violence against men is slowly becoming more recognised as a global problem and one that is far more widespread than previously thought (Refugee Law Project 2009, 2011; Sivakumaran 2007, 2010; Solangon and Patel 2012). It is generally recognised that women suffer relatively more from sexual violence than do men. However, few observers openly recognise men as significantly affected by sexual violence at all, and mainstream narratives generally continue to depict men as perpetrators of sexual violence, and women as victims (Sivakumaran 2010). Male victimisation runs counter to many traditional notions of masculinity (Stanko and Hobdell 1993; Connell 1995). Sexual violence in particular aggravates the threat to victims' masculinity and of their being associated with homosexuality (Sivakumaran 2005), which is an identity that is persecuted in many conflict-affected contexts. Not surprisingly perhaps, such experiences also prevent male victims of sexual violence seeking – and receiving – treatment and support services (Mezey and King 2000; Refugee Law Project 2015b).

As part of a broader six-country research programme on 'effective organised activism against gender-based violence', the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) approached the Refugee Law Project (RLP) and Men of Hope in order to jointly design and carry out a case study. It aimed to find out how male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Men of Hope Refugee Association Uganda (MOHRAU) have sought support and recognition. (The broader research programme comes under the theme 'Empowerment of Women and Girls', within an Accountable Grant from the UK Department for International Development (DFID).)

This report is based on that case study and explores the central question: 'despite the odds stacked against them, what makes it possible for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to organise and become activists, challenging discriminatory social and gender norms?' The case study involved 36 Men of Hope group members and four of their female partners, using collaborative qualitative and visual research methods. All participants are living as refugees in Uganda, predominantly as a result of having moved away from conflict within the Great Lakes region of Africa.

The issue of male victimisation due to sexual violence is very serious in many of the conflicts of the Great Lakes region (Storr 2011; BBC World Service 2012; AFP 2013; Dolan 2014a, 2014b, 2014c). In Uganda, there are very real obstacles to an effective response – in terms of recognising and addressing male victims of sexual violence and their needs. Asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced people face multiple challenges with regard to their residence status, access to services, and marginalisation.

Despite these challenges, three support groups of male survivors of sexual violence have emerged over the past few years. They have been supported by the RLP in Kampala (RLP 2014c; Men of Peace 2014a, 2014b). Two of these groups comprise refugees, the third comprises former internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northern Uganda. The longest standing of these three groups, MOHRAU, comprises refugees living in and around the capital, Kampala. It is now entering its fifth year of existence.

This report explores how male refugees in Uganda who have been the victims of sexual violence and who live with discrimination based on xenophobia and homophobia can bring little-heard perspectives to thinking and discourse about gender-based violence. Their experience can inform interventions to address underlying gender dynamics and norms that further harm and isolate victims, whether men or women. This study finds that, despite

pervasive discrimination, groups of male survivors have been able to develop resilience and mutual support through collective action. Further, third-party support from service providers and others can play an important role in reinforcing male victims' resilience and capacity to organise collectively.

These core findings offer three important contributions to work on gender, violence and collective mobilisation, both within Uganda and beyond. First, the findings reveal the value of challenging simplistic notions of gender that disconnect men and women from each other; second, they complicate narrow perceptions of who are victims and who are perpetrators; and third, they bring feminist thinking on empowerment and collective action to bear on the situation of men who, because they are men, are frequently assumed not to need such strategies.

The study's findings are timely. Despite recent changes in international rhetoric towards inclusion of men and boys as victims and survivors (Al Jazeera 2011; Dolan 2015b), these have yet to filter into mainstream international policy and practice on gender-based violence (GBV). This remains predominantly shaped by a politics of pursuing women's gender equality in ways that make it virtually impossible to recognise and address the humanitarian needs and human rights of male survivors (Dolan 2015a). There thus remains a dearth of information about what kinds of work are possible with male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and how to go about it. This report offers a contribution to addressing that deficit.

The report addresses the overarching question of what makes it possible for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to organise and become activists through three main sub-questions:

1. How can looking at male survivors of sexual violence help us understand the complexity of men's relationship to sexual and gender-based violence?
2. How and why do groups of male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence respond to their experience of violence, oppression, stigmatisation and marginalisation, including as refugees?
3. How does the individual agency of male survivors of sexual violence living as refugees interact with collective action to respond to the experience of violence and marginalisation?

Section 2 lays out the background to the research. It offers a short description of the research context and provides an overview of the emergence of Men of Hope from 2011 to date. Section 3 sets out the approach taken, starting with the conceptual frameworks and existing literature, which we drew on to develop the study. This is followed by a description of the study methodology, including ethical considerations and methodological limitations. Section 4 presents the major findings, beginning with survivors' own perceptions of their situation, as well as how their experiences have affected them, and the role of collective action in their own healing processes. Section 4 ends with perspectives on the relationship between the support group and other stakeholders in the refugee sector, who are providing support in different ways. These findings are then discussed in Section 5 against the theoretical framing. Finally, Section 6 presents some conclusions and recommendations addressed to a range of key stakeholders, including donors, multilaterals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), activists, survivors and researchers.

2   Background

The following sections aim to contextualise our understanding of the issue of conflict-related sexual violence against men, and how and why survivor support groups have emerged as part of the response.

2.1   Sexual and gender-based violence in conflict settings in Africa

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a marked feature of many of the recent and ongoing conflicts in Africa, including but not restricted to: Sierra Leone, Somalia, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Central African Republic, Chad, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and, notoriously, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Dolan 2014b, 2014c). Sexual violence is frequently employed as a 'weapon of war', which has helped to mobilise public opinion and (some) political will to tackle it.

The majority of international attention and funding is focused on women and girl victims and survivors of sexual violence, and there is resistance in some quarters to extending attention to male survivors. Such resistance is rooted partly in fears over competition for inadequate funding, and partly in a sense that even where men are victims, they are nonetheless representatives of the primary perpetrator group, and (as such) should not be considered a high priority for assistance. In addition, there remains a widespread perception that women are 'disproportionately affected' (United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and onwards), even though there are insufficient data on the prevalence of SGBV against men to assert such a claim with regard to any given conflict situation.[1]

There are serious and powerful obstacles and disincentives to disclosure for male survivors, both in practical and normative terms. First, normative obstacles reside in models of masculinity that do not entertain male vulnerability. Second, they reside in related notions of male sexuality as characterised by penetration and female sexuality as characterised by being penetrated. Together, these two models – which are upheld through social norms as well as internalised by individual men – result in assumptions that men cannot actually be raped. They also imply that if men are penetrated in a same-sex 'act', they must have wanted it to occur and they must therefore be homosexual. Whether consent is being considered or not, they are, at any rate, regarded as having been feminised, or as having become women. Such assumptions reflect (and are reflected in) legal frameworks that focus on involvement in same-sex sexual acts with complete disregard to questions of consent and coercion (Sivakumaran 2007; Dolan 2015b).

In practical terms, the absence of services that can deal with male victims' specific needs is a major disincentive for survivors to disclose their experience of sexual violence (Coxell and King 2002). RLP's own interactions with a range of potential service providers in Uganda – ranging from police to medical professionals, lawyers and humanitarian workers – confirms that none of them have received any training on how to work with male survivors, whether in terms of their own attitudes, technical skills, or knowledge of dealing with male-specific harms (RLP 2013a, 2014a, 2014c).

When journalists do tackle the issue of men and boy victims, they frequently present their reports as though they are breaking a hitherto untouched taboo topic (see, for example, Storr 2011; BBC World Service 2012). While male sexual assault against other males has been

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[1] These claims are not peculiar to conflict-related sexual violence. The literature on sexual assault is replete with unsupported statements such as 'Although men are victims of sexual assault, the large majority of sexual assault victims are female' (e.g. Bennice and Resick 2002: 69).

under-researched and therefore under-addressed, there is nonetheless increasing recognition of male victims' experiences of sexual violence in situations of conflict (see Taylor 2003; Sivakumaran 2007; Dewey and St Germain 2013). In terms of shifting public awareness, a number of news items and documentaries can be found online. Many of these refer to RLP's work (Al Jazeera 2011, 2013; BBC World Service 2012; AFP 2013), and the organisation itself has been closely involved in the development of a number of documentaries – *Gender Against Men* (RLP 2009), *They Slept With Me* (RLP 2011) – and collaborations with survivor groups – *The Bench* (Men of Hope 2013), *Unbearable Experiences* (Men of Peace 2014b) and *Men Can Be Raped Too* (Men of Hope 2015).

Within the sizeable and ever-growing academic literature on conflict-related sexual violence, the work of Johnson *et al.* in both DRC and Sierra Leone indicates that while levels of sexual violence against men appear lower than against women, they are not negligible (Johnson, Asher, Rosborough, Raja, Panjabi, Beadling and Lawry 2008; Johnson, Scott, Rughita, Kisielewski, Asher, Ong and Lawry 2010). RLP's own findings on sexual violence against refugee men (Dolan 2014c) similarly suggest that levels of violence are much higher than commonly believed.

From a policy perspective, perhaps one of the most important instruments is the Rome Statute, with its gender-neutral definition of rape and its potential to address a wide range of forms of sexual violence regardless of the victim's gender (RLP 2014d). This is further reflected in the International Criminal Court (ICC)'s policy on gender crimes (ICC 2014). In practice, the attempt to charge forcible circumcision during post-election violence in Kenya as sexual violence stumbled at the first hurdle (the pre-trial chamber of the ICC ruled that this should be considered under 'other inhumane acts' rather than as an instance of sexual violence), but instances of rape of men are currently being tackled by the Court.

The intention to address the whole spectrum of victims of sexual violence was clearly expressed by the G8 in their declaration on 11 April 2013 that all survivors should receive adequate support, be they women, girls, men or boys (Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2013). The first UN Security Council Resolution to make any mention of men and boy victims of sexual violence was UNSCR 2106 (June 2013). This shift in language continued into the Global Summit on Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict in June 2014. It is further evidenced by the gradual inclusion of units on the issue in training provided by, *inter alia*, Justice Rapid Response (UN Women), the Geneva Centre for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action (CERAH), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).

Statistics on levels of sexual violence against both women and men are generally absent and it is widely believed that experiences of sexual violence are hugely under-reported. However, RLP has been able to conduct systematic screening of refugees it works with. Depending on the location of screening (upon arrival in Uganda, at medical clinics in refugee settlements, or at RLP's offices in Kampala), the percentage of men reporting having experienced sexual violence in their lifetime ranges from 25 per cent to 39 per cent.[2]

2.2 The emergence of Men of Hope Association

Back in 2009, RLP was seeing a number of male survivors of sexual violence from around the Great Lakes region, but there was nothing in place to respond to their needs. So it convened a one-day workshop for men only. A total of 150 men participated and discussed two questions: 'What does sexual and gender-based violence mean?' and 'How does it affect you?' Following this discussion there was a gradual increase in the number of survivors presenting to RLP staff. Small amounts of discretionary funding were set aside for

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[2] Glass *et al.* (2013).

emergency medical treatment for sexual violence survivors, both women and men. This work was documented in an award-winning piece of investigative journalism by Will Storr (2011). It has subsequently had more than 50,000 shares from *The Guardian's* website.

Also in 2011, recognising that working only with individuals has severe limitations, RLP initiated a broad process of encouraging clients to form self-help groups around particular experiences or vulnerabilities. These included groups for women, for people living with HIV, people living with disability, people who had survived torture, people bringing up children born of rape, people living with experiences of sexual violence, people involved in sex work, members of a sexual or gender minority, and so forth.[3]

As part of this broader process, three male survivors were brought together to begin a discussion about their specific experiences and challenges. Within a year, the number of men participating in this small group had increased to more than 40, meeting at least once a month but sometimes more frequently.[4] The Men of Hope Refugee Association came together in 2012, at a workshop for the group. Workshop participants elected a president and an executive committee.[5] A similar process was followed in Nakivale Refugee Settlement in 2012, resulting in the establishment of the Men of Peace Association in January 2013.

In April 2013, RLP convened the first South-South Institute on Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys, in collaboration with First Step Cambodia and Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Trust New Zealand.[6] The Institute brought together 30 refugee and internally displaced survivors of sexual violence with a range of practitioners, academics, policymakers and government officials. To coincide with the Institute's launch, Al Jazeera prepared a five-minute news item,[7] an important element of which was the public disclosure by the then president of Men of Hope, Alain Kabenga, of his status as a survivor. This courageous and visionary step was disseminated globally, and marked the beginning of a series of important steps in bringing public attention to the challenges facing male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, not least the dearth of adequate responses and legal frameworks.[8]

In the same year, following a conference entitled 'Undressing Patriarchy', held in Brighton, a film workshop was held with members of Men of Hope, led by a media activist from Bangladesh and a member of the research staff from IDS. This resulted in participants producing a short film, *The Bench* – a poignant take on the silencing of refugee voices in general, and those of male survivors of sexual violence in particular (Men of Hope 2013). This also helped both Men of Hope and RLP to broaden thinking about different ways in which issues could be raised and discussions catalysed.

Alongside the increasing momentum around getting the voices of male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence heard internationally, MOHRAU also began engaging in direct advocacy with local government leaders. In 2013, it convened a number of workshops at community level, with technical support from RLP. These aimed to raise awareness of the specific challenges facing male survivors, and to create a more conducive and supportive

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[3] For a full listing of refugee support groups with which RLP works, see Support Group Leader's Profile at: www.refugeelawproject.org/files/others/RLP_support_groups_profile.pdf.

[4] As of January 2016, the Association has more than 100 members.

[5] In Nakivale, one of Uganda's largest refugee settlements, located in the south-west, a pilot screening process for male survivors in late 2012 led to the formation of a similar support group, Men of Peace, in January 2013.

[6] The report of the first South-South Institute on Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys on the theme 'Inclusive Responses to Sexual and Gender Based Violence' is available at www.refugeelawproject.org/resources/briefing-notes-and-special-reports/11-sprpts-gender/331-report-of-1st-south-south-institute-on-sexual-violence-against-men-and-boys.html (accessed 7 January 2016). See also the video at www.refugeelawproject.org/resources/video-advocacy.html?slg=1st-south-south-institute-on-sexual-violence-against-men-and-boys&orderby=latest.

[7] See 'Male rape victims meet in Uganda' at www.youtube.com/watch?v=mP__hcg5URo.

[8] See, for example, 'Victims of male rape in DRC suffer from lack of support' on www.youtube.com/watch?v=iP8PwLvFoO4.

host environment. The workshops even led to some referrals of Ugandan male survivors to RLP. An important step in international advocacy was the participation of the first Men of Hope president, Alain Kabenga, in the second South-South Institute on Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys, which took place in Cambodia in May 2015.

There have also been two particularly noteworthy moments in the development of Men of Hope's thinking about how members relate to broader discussions about gender and sexuality. The first moment was in March 2015, when, on the occasion of International Women's Day, a meeting was convened specifically for married members and their spouses. A discussion on the implications of one or both spouses being a survivor of sexual violence was opened up during this meeting.

The second moment was an outcome of the research process adopted for the present study. Following a focus group discussion between Men of Hope members and the research team from IDS and RLP, a challenging conversation emerged. It was about whether or not – given members' wishes to distance themselves from the stigma of homosexuality brought about by Ugandans commonly conflating it with the issue of male rape – the group may have any homosexual members. As a result, MOHRAU members requested a workshop specifically on sexualities and sexual violence in order to improve their own understanding of the issues involved.

Underpinning all the advocacy and outreach work, key events and turning points in the development of Men of Hope has been the self-help and mutual support provided within the group. For example, members visit one another in hospital, make contributions to one another in financial emergencies, provide their skills (e.g. nursing) to members of their family when required, and engage in peer counselling (with each other and with other family members). In 2013, a sub-group was trained in understanding post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and counselling skills, and this has also contributed to the MOHRAU's capacity to address the immediate needs of its members.

Initially, Men of Hope only comprised individuals who were already interacting with RLP staff who then referred them to the group. Over time, however, members have begun to identify other survivors in the community who are not necessarily on RLP's client list; indeed, Men of Hope now makes peer referrals of men who would not otherwise have approached RLP. While Men of Hope thus maintains a close relationship with RLP, it is an independent association and has successfully raised funds to support its core activities. It is currently seeking to establish a separate legal identity. In May 2015, it held elections for a new executive.

3 Approach

3.1 Analytical approach

This section sets out the analytical approach and conceptual tools adopted to explore the central question: 'Despite the odds stacked against them, what makes it possible for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to organise and become activists, challenging discriminatory social and gender norms?'

This study adopts key elements of a feminist analytical framework of empowerment through critical consciousness and collective action (applied to male rather than female victims). It also uses relevant and up-to-date critical theory and selected concepts on masculinities, trauma recovery, agency, migration and refugee status in relation to activism and citizenship.

This fresh combination of perspectives is chosen not simply to explore our specific research questions, but also to assist us in moving away from common assumptions about SGBV, as well as about gender more broadly. Furthermore, it allows for a substantive recognition of the unique set of difficult issues driving these men's experience of marginalisation and their responses – both to their own individual challenges and their deliberate collective struggle to change their situation. It also highlights some of the dynamics and inevitable contradictions in narratives, policy and practice.

3.1.1 Deconstructing simplistic gender binaries

A widely held and resilient view of 'gender' in policy and practice is a basic classification of gender as sex – involving two separate and distinct 'kinds' of human beings (males and females) defined in opposing terms of masculine and feminine traits. This view remains prevalent despite considerable progress in research and social science, which foregrounds an understanding of gender as relational and socially constructed (Butler 1990; Connell 1995).

One important problem arising from this gender binary view (and the narratives that depend on it) is that it also overlays male and female onto the categories of 'perpetrator' and 'victim' respectively. It thus also compounds the very essentialism that a critical gender analysis would, ideally, address (cf. Edström 2010; Myrttinen, Naujoks and El-Bushra 2014). While readily applied to stereotypical situations in homes and communities of the global South, this binary construction also filters up and down through the power structures of the state and civil society into international policy narratives and frameworks. This can be seen, for example, in the position taken by governments on sexual violence in conflict, as reflected in the history of UN Security Council Resolutions; until very recently, these have excluded the possibility of addressing men's vulnerability to – or victimisation in – conflict-related SGBV (Dolan 2014a). It can also be seen in the policy positions of the humanitarian mainstream reflected in documents such as the Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action produced by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (Dolan 2015a).[9]

Focusing on *male* survivors of sexual violence and drawing on critical feminist perspectives on masculinities helps us better understand our first sub-question: 'How can looking at male survivors of sexual violence help us understand the complexity of men's relationship to sexual and gender-based violence?' It does so by helping us deconstruct the mainstream gender binary that simply homogenises men and women into two counterposed categories. Critical feminist perspectives on masculinities critique certain 'male engagement' perspectives focused on helping men build more responsible masculinities and 'protecting

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[9] The guidelines (IASC 2015) can be found at www.refworld.org/pdfid/563713544.pdf.

women' as facile and superficial – that is, as neither challenging gender-binary essentialism nor addressing the structural roots of gendered power inequities or men's systemic investment in associated privileges (e.g. Cornwall and White 2000). Whereas a reductivist mainstream gender binary obscures the structural drivers and dynamics of gendered violence and conflict, as well as the role of men and masculinities within that (Connell 2003; Dolan 2003), men's experience of sexual violence sheds light on them.

Once the fallacy in this binary reductivism is exposed, it allows us to explore how individual men can benefit from patriarchal privilege accruing to men as a gendered group and yet, at the same time, be vulnerable to patriarchal power dynamics which disempower (and emasculate) them in relation to other men and social groups more broadly (Edström, Das and Dolan 2014).

Additionally, by exploring and uncovering the vast diversity in men's (and women's) lives and performances of masculinity, we are able to explore how other categories of social difference intersect to shape gender dynamics and identities, and the role that women and men play in reproducing violence (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994; Myrttinen *et al.* 2014). Therefore, while heeding the warning not to duck the realities of systemic male-centredness and male privilege (Cornwall 2000; Greig 2006), we believe that men's experiences as victims of sexual violence call attention to the diversity of men and of their diversity within gender relations.

3.1.2 Intersections, transitions, transformations and liminality

A second sub-question of the study is: 'How and why do groups of male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence respond to their experience of violence, oppression, stigmatisation and marginalisation, *including as refugees*?' To explore this, we need a deeper troubling of concepts of vulnerability and victimisation vs resilience, perpetration and agency, particularly in relation to the structural violence of patriarchies as dynamic, multidimensional and complex (Cornwall, Edström and Greig 2011; Edström *et al.* 2014).

In bringing together research on multiple masculinities in the transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa, Morrell (2001) drew attention to how men were affected by – as well as responded and contributed to – social norms around gender, highlighting the importance of understanding political context and of how race and class *intersect* with notions of masculinity. That is, the shift to democracy heralded a political rupture that called for a reconfiguration of axes of inequality that were not only linked to race but also to gender and sexuality (*ibid.*). Uganda too has undergone significant transformations over recent decades as a result of colonisation, decolonisation, militarisation, neo-colonial dynamics, and shifting trends in the application of religion. Taken together, these can be seen to promote particularly oppressive masculinities for men structured around the rejection of vulnerability and social difference within a highly militarised, religious and homophobic context (Dolan 2002, 2011; Coughtry 2011; Cheney 2012; Wilhelm-Solomon 2013; White 2013).

In considering the particular situation of men who have been victimised by conflict-related sexual violence in the Great Lakes region of Africa and gone into exile as refugees in this oppressive context,[10] we need to acknowledge that – even where no sexual violence has occurred – migration *per se* (particularly forced migration) can deeply shift gender relations and men's sense of masculinity (Donaldson 2009; RLP 2009). We must also simultaneously recognise the limitations as well as the potential of refugees and other categories of forced migrants engaging as active citizens (let alone visible activists) in a particular local or national context, whether because of their particular residence or migration status (e.g. Clarke 2009) or due to other forms of marginalisation.

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[10] While the majority of members of the Men of Hope group are from DRC, other members originate from Rwanda, Burundi and the Horn of Africa.

The notion of 'transitions' is relevant for reflecting on these questions. However, to avoid simplistic notions of transitions as simple passages between separate stages, it can be helpful to think in terms of 'transformations' and the anthropological concept of 'liminality'. The latter was historically used to refer to rites of passage (e.g. between life stages) in so-called 'tribal' settings (e.g. Turner 1969, 1977). It was understood to describe periods of uncertainty and chaos, but also creativity, foregrounding 'agency' and a positive dissolution of old ties and meanings, towards transformation into new ones, a new sense of identity and reintegration (*ibid.*). Of course, 'reintegration' can be interpreted as returning to the same community (as in rites of passage from childhood into manhood), into a new community (e.g. into a religious order or institution), or into a new community with associated new value systems (e.g. break-away communities, new religious orders or local settlements).

More recently, the term 'liminality' has also been applied to concrete historical events and situations where transformative transitions can emerge out of highly negative events and crises (e.g. Horvath 2013). While there may be no need for the particular term 'liminality', a sensitivity to the dynamic linkages between affliction, turmoil and loss and the construction of new situations, meanings and identities is useful in interpreting our findings, as it relates to agency and activism coexisting with vulnerability and refugee status.

3.1.3 Individual and collective healing

In considering male survivors' recovery from trauma and their expressions of agency, we also need to consider both how men are affected psychologically by trauma (physical as well as mental) and the nature of the healing process itself. Traditional medical models have tended to see psychological conditions as pathologically deviant (i.e. in terms of 'disorders') and mainly internal to the person (analogous to biomedical conditions or diseases, treated with interventions on/with the person).

In contrast, a positive psychosocial perspective *also* deals with social wellbeing and with 'functioning', as opposed to only the 'mal-adaptation' found in more traditional medical models (Joseph and Linley 2008). Furthermore, a positive psychology approach sees psychological conditions as differing more by degree than by kind (*ibid.*). By taking into account the role of social interactions and support in how people process traumatic events, this approach enables us to perceive a person's struggles in relation to their environment, and to conceptualise support in socially contextualised terms using educational, relational, social and political strategies (*ibid.*).

The concept and methodology of 'peer support' focuses on groups of people with shared challenges, who support each other and collectively develop a critical awareness (or shared critical consciousness) about their situation. This can be achieved through mutual support and training in groups. In developing a critical awareness through peer support, people explore their experiences (such as stigma, linked to terms like 'disabled' or 'patient') and they can unpack the causes and impacts of these experiences. In turn, this promotes individual and collective development of new skills, which contributes to changes at personal, interpersonal and – potentially – societal levels (Mead, Hilton and Curtis 2001).

While 'self-help' as a collective form of local peer collaborations (not limited to rehabilitation) has a long history in community development, the 'psychosocial' approach has also existed for some years in health work. It has been applied in various contexts, from the response to HIV and treatment by and with local groups to recovery from trauma in post-conflict settings, promoted by agencies such as MSF (De Jong and Kleber 2007). The psychosocial approach emphasises personal psychological recovery, as linked to supportive and enabling social environments. While usefully drawing on a positive psychological framework, the theory behind the MSF type of supportive intervention for trauma recovery is somewhat reliant on

the re-establishment of pre-existent norms and social functionalities. Drawing on ideas of community reintegration, collective healing is often cast as a linear journey from 'vulnerability' to 'resilience' and 'coping' (*ibid.*), rather than a dynamic evolution of agency towards changing norms and establishing new communities. So, in engaging a positive psychological framework and paying attention to psychosocial dynamics, enabling environments, self-help and peer support in healing, we need to be careful not to fall back on static notions of 'reintegration'. It is therefore important to add conceptual tools for how refugees can also shape their own identity, context and destiny.

3.1.4 Individual agency and collective action of survivors

Our third sub-question asks: 'How does the individual agency of male survivors of sexual violence living as refugees interact with collective action to respond to the experience of violence and marginalisation?' For this, we start with a focus on feminist ideas of empowerment through politically conscious collective action. 'Empowerment' can be understood as gaining the ability to make strategic life choices where this was previously denied. It is therefore articulated as a *process* rather than a set of end goals (Kabeer 1999). In her analysis of women's empowerment, Kabeer emphasises that changes in the ability to exercise choice involve three interconnected elements: acquiring and accessing resources (material and social); individual and collective agency (through a process of reflection and action); and achievements (the outcomes of choices) – all of which interact with structural inequalities and underlying distributions of power (*ibid.*).

Agency – understood as pertaining to both the individual and the collective – reflects how the individual agency of male survivors interacts with their collective action to respond to the experience of violence and stigmatisation. Drawing on Freirian ideas of empowerment for 'politically conscious' agency and 'collective action', it is argued that marginalised people themselves are building new (individual and collective) identities in their claims for belonging and inclusion through the formation and strategies of their groups (Kabeer 2005). Many refugees, in fleeing their country, lose both social networks and social status (Clarke 2009). When they become refugees, they enter into a status that is largely managed by stakeholders like national government departments, service providers and humanitarian agencies. Such actors do little to help reconstitute a social identity, and focus instead on meeting the basic needs of broad categories of individuals and households, as based on ideas of vulnerability; in other words, an atomising approach in which a particular governmentality centred on managing individuals compounds the difficulties of arriving at collective voice and action.

An understanding of agency, social relationships and peer support in the healing process, and the reality of group members' confronting their stigma and exclusion, challenges notions of passive vulnerability and victimhood. Further, it also suggests that empowerment – as a process that integrates collective and individual action and consciousness – is intimately connected to the manner in which activist self-help groups make new claims and demands which in turn build new identities and catalyse new notions of belonging and citizenship. In short, what might begin as a collective psychosocial *healing process* can ultimately become a *political process*. This vision of empowerment means that we must also explore the roles of actors and stakeholders that nurture spaces of – and relationships for – change among male survivors of sexual violence.

3.1.5 Notions of citizenship

This study engaged with men who, as refugees, were not only marginalised and disempowered in the 'host country' but had also come from a 'home country' that could be characterised as a 'failed state'. Furthermore, many of these men existed in a liminal space, as their past – shaped by their 'home' country – was present in their everyday lives in the 'host' country, whether in the form of traumatic memories or in the visible presence of fellow refugees, or (given the geographic proximity of their country of origin) in the form of reprisals across borders for those who disclose what was done to them prior to flight. This suggests that historic notions of citizenship need to be extended beyond a narrow definition of the individual rights-bearing citizen's relation to a duty-bearing nation state, to a broader form of global citizenship.

Robins and colleagues (2008) propose researching citizenship in different ways, starting from everyday experiences in particular historical and cultural contexts rather than from predetermined normative frameworks. Since prevailing use of the term 'citizenship' in mainstream discourse typically fails to account for perspectives and dynamics beyond formal frameworks and processes of nation states, service providers and organisations, it is suggested we need to rethink citizenship from the perspectives of citizens themselves, paying close attention to contextualised notions of 'the politics of everyday life' (*ibid.*: 1069).

3.2 Methodology

This report documents a collaborative in-depth case study of the dynamics, resilience and proactive agency of the Men of Hope survivor group, in the context of the structural violence they face. This multi-method case study research was undertaken by RLP and IDS between May and December 2015 in Kampala, Uganda. It is part of a global programme to 'explore the role of men and boys to address sexual and gender-based violence in collective action'.[11]

3.2.1 Methodological approach

The research employed a collaborative and grounded approach. Research framing and questions were co-constructed between Men of Hope members, RLP and IDS staff. Furthermore, the research design aimed for insights and understanding to emerge directly from the data, as opposed to searching for a predetermined hypothesis. It also aimed to ensure that context and history were taken into account in the way that meaning was constructed in the analysis. This reflects the research team's commitment to the research subjects being able to influence the direction and character of the research (Reason 1994).

Research subjects comprised 40 participants – primarily male members of Men of Hope but also selected female partners who are living as refugees in Uganda, predominantly having fled conflict within the Great Lakes region of Africa. Given the aim of understanding both the individual journeys of Men of Hope members and the internal dynamics of the group, it was agreed that members and their partners would be purposefully sampled to participate in the study. The detailed process of the methodology is outlined below.

Collaborative research framing
Through a dialogue facilitated by IDS and RLP, a context-specific framing was developed collectively between the Men of Hope leadership group, RLP and IDS, resulting in a focus on the role of peer support groups in driving change in the lives of male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. The same members of the Men of Hope leadership group, RLP and IDS identified the core research questions for the study and developed the wording of a

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[11] More information on the global research programme 'Effective Organised Activism Against Gender-based Violence', which this case study is part of, can be found here: http://interactions.eldis.org/gender-based-violence.

semi-structured interview schedule to guide in-depth interviews. This informed a set of guide questions, which were developed for a focus group discussion exploring how Men of Hope operates as a group.

In-depth interviews and discussion led by RLP/IDS with Men of Hope members and female partners.

1.   The RLP and IDS research team conducted 13 interviews with Men of Hope group members and four with their partners. (See Annex A for the interview schedule, which was adapted for female partners.)
2.   In order to build on findings from these individual interviews, one focus group discussion was conducted with Men of Hope members to enable collective deliberation of the issues posed by the research questions and analysis of key issues emerging from the individual interviews.

To create a supportive environment for research participants, the gender dynamics of interviewing teams were considered, ensuring that female participants were interviewed by a female team member, while men were interviewed by a male team member. Interviews and the focus group discussion took place at RLP's offices, which are familiar to participants, and where quiet and confidential rooms could be ensured. The research was conducted in the most appropriate language for each participant, with RLP's trained interpreters (themselves from the refugee community) providing assistance to the team where necessary.

Men of Hope-led individual and collective films
Alongside these steps, led by the IDS/RLP research team, Men of Hope members led their own process of telling and visually capturing individual and collective narratives of their experiences of and responses to sexual violence. This involved:

1.   Five Men of Hope members in leadership roles, who play an active public role in communicating about issues of sexual violence, developed video recordings of their individual testimonies of their experience of sexual violence. RLP provided technical support.[12] These interviews responded to the semi-structured interview questions developed for the case study and were conducted in the language of choice of the interviewee.
2.   Men of Hope collectively produced a film called *Men Can Be Raped Too*.[13] The script combines experiences of numerous activists within the group and presents a shared, dramatised narrative of their experiences of violence and subsequent journeys towards healing and activism. RLP and IDS provided training in participatory film-making. The framing for the film was informed by the shared framing developed for the case study. The process of film-making involved collaborative script-writing led by a member of Men of Hope. Casting, acting and shooting were primarily done by Men of Hope members, with RLP providing technical support for filming and editing. Participants used their own languages (Lingala, Swahili, French, English), with English subtitles provided throughout.

The team drew on the textual and visual data generated from these four components of the case study in our analysis, and they are reflected in the study findings. Table 3.1 outlines the number of Men of Hope Association members and female partners involved in each component. The research process categories overlap, as members were involved across research methods to capture individual testimony and collective discussion; in total, there were 36 Men of Hope members and four female partners involved in the study.

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[12] See, for example, Aimé Moninga at www.refugeelawproject.org/resources/video-advocacy.html?slg=journeys-to-activism-aime-moninga&orderby=latest.
[13] www.refugeelawproject.org/resources/video-advocacy.html?slg=men-can-be-raped-too&orderby=latest.

Table 3.1   Sample of research participants by gender, positionality and method

Research process	Men of Hope members	Female partners
1. Individual interviews	13	4
2. In-depth focus group discussion	10	
3. Men of Hope leadership group and video testimonies	5	
4. Participatory video (including core reference group)	22	

Thematic analysis was an iterative process involving Men of Hope, RLP and IDS, with emergent themes being identified throughout, and discussed in relation to history and context of the Men of Hope group. These themes informed the development of an analytical framework that was further established through a conceptual literature review undertaken by IDS and RLP. These various analytical lenses (see Section 3.1) enabled the grounded knowledge generated through the research to be merged with concepts and theories, enabling different interpretations of the lived experiences of the research subjects. This process evolved over the course of the project, responding to the emerging analysis and findings. The written analysis and final report was developed by IDS and RLP.

In order to ground the research analysis in a shared and contextually relevant understanding of the issues, a background context review was undertaken. This explored key issues of conflict-related SGBV at a national and regional level, and included a review of legal and policy frameworks at both levels. In addition to the desk review, personal reflections on the history of MOHRAU were documented and shared by RLP researchers. This historical and situated knowledge revealed dynamics of change pertaining to the emergence of Men of Hope and has thus deepened the analysis of the organisation.

3.2.2 Knowledge sharing and research uptake

Effective knowledge sharing is integral to ensuring that the research findings reach diverse audiences to influence change in policy and practice within the response to conflict-related sexual violence. To this end, the finalised video testimonies and the film *Men Can Be Raped Too* are available on the IDS Interactions website and on RLP's website as well as YouTube, and have had many views. Spaces for dialogue have also been created to support engagement with the substantive content of the film. For more information, see Annex B.

3.2.3 Ethical considerations

The Men of Hope support group members, RLP and IDS combined ethical protocols to ensure high ethical standards that were relevant to local sociocultural realities. Informed consent was gained from participants in relation to all of the data collected. All participants were given the option of anonymity, of using a fictional name, or using their own name (full name or first name only). The consent form used is attached in Annex C. Within the visual methods work, all participants were mentored regarding the possible repercussions of speaking publicly on these issues, and RLP provided guidance and support throughout the process. Consent and release forms were signed by all participants. Given the complex realities of the men and women involved in the research, it was important that research teams included RLP staff with experience in making referrals to services (including health, psychosocial support and access to justice).

The research approach was action oriented, avoiding simply extracting knowledge and instead contributing to the changes that Men of Hope members are trying to achieve (Varcoe 2006). The participatory visual elements help ensure that the research process and products are accessible and inclusive, and constitute a more direct contribution to the work of Men of Hope activists, enabling the dissemination of their narrative from local to global levels.

3.2.4 Study limitations

The sampling approach poses a question of reporting bias, as men and women within the wider refugee community were not engaged, and nor were service providers. This may limit some of the potential claims of the research as further triangulation was not possible. However, the diversity of identities, experiences and perspectives gained from across the Men of Hope group ensured that this limitation was minimised.

There is also a potential bias in the divide between the Men of Hope leadership group (engaged through video testimonies) and the wider Men of Hope group (involved through private interviews). This was a choice made by the Men of Hope group, as to where and how members felt comfortable sharing their stories. The voices of research subjects were not privileged within either medium by researchers in the analysis.

The views of IDS/RLP researchers may privilege certain perspectives. To mitigate such bias, interview teams were set up as pairs, or in threes, in order to cross-check impressions and scripts after interviews, as well as during analysis of the data and in writing-up. Furthermore, the nature of the visual research strengthens transparency of the process of interpretation within the research analysis.

4　Findings

The research findings shared here are drawn from the perspectives, reflections and experiences of Men of Hope group members and their female partners. These primary data help us to understand more deeply how and why male survivors respond to sexual violence at the individual and collective levels. Following an introductory section describing the everyday context of Kampala as experienced by the refugee male survivors of sexual violence, the rest of this section is structured around the three sub-questions of the study, outlined in the Introduction.

4.1　The context for male refugee victims and survivors of sexual violence in Kampala

As articulated by Men of Hope group members, the context in which they are navigating their recovery is complex and embodies multiple forms of stigma, discrimination and isolation. As refugees in a city with structural challenges (such as under-resourced and ill-informed service providers, limited access to employment opportunities, etc.), they face a range of formal and informal obstacles related to their refugee status and various levels of xenophobia among Ugandan nationals. As male survivors of sexual violence seeking support, they are confronted with a lack of understanding compounded by homophobia from hosts and home communities alike.

This context compounds the sense of marginalisation brought about by their experiences of sexual violence and interacts with their healing process, as well as their capacity to make choices and effect positive change, both as individuals and within the Men of Hope survivors group. Underpinning the injustice and inequality within this context is the reality that sexual violence against men is not widely recognised. Men and women connected to Men of Hope explained that there is a lack of awareness and understanding of the issue of conflict-related sexual violence against men, within government, medical institutions and the local community.

A lack of understanding of the physiology related to men's experience of sexual violence makes it challenging to get effective medical responses from hospitals and clinics. The discrimination and stigma attached to the status of being a male survivor of sexual violence is reinforced by health service providers. United Nations (UN) agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs) only fill a small part of the void in the services required by refugee survivors. This situation prevents refugees accessing basic services and justice from the Ugandan government, and creates severe disenchantment with multilateral organisations and NGOs.

Cultures of hostility and disbelief towards male survivors and refugees more widely are further reinforced within the legal system. Specifically, repressive laws and policies in Uganda in relation to freedom of sexual orientation and gender identity play out in complex ways in the lives of male survivors of sexual violence. As the former president of Men of Hope, Alain Kabenga, explains:

> [T]here is a confusion… between male rape and homosexuality. People don't really know [how] to differentiate who is a male survivor and who is a homosexual. I remember, some time ago I got a problem with 'boda boda' guys,[14] even taxi people two times: [T]hese people recognised… me [from] TV [and] then they [would] say 'this

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[14] 'Boda-boda' is the term used in Uganda for motorbike taxis.

is the man promoting homosexuality on the TV.' I went to my local councillor to report to him what had just happened to me… [H]e [asked] me, 'Tell me really, who are you? Are you not a homosexual?'

This 'confusion' undermines the rights claims of male survivors of sexual violence insofar as, where the violence occurs in the country of asylum, they feel unable to lay charges for fear of being construed as a homosexual. At a more emotional level, it also compromises their personal expressions of sexual identity in that people often pre-emptively assign them the identity of 'gay' without ever listening to the individual's own perspective. The same 'confusion' arising from the failure to distinguish consensual and coerced sexual acts has also restricted MOHRAU's capacity to function – for example, not being able to register independently or to have an office.

Issues of insecurity related to the context of violence that refugees have fled are also present in Men of Hope members' daily lives and restrict their freedom to make their experiences public. As Didier, one member, explained, 'Due to what happened to me, and the threats, if I was to talk about what had happened, then the people who did this to me will know where I am… They will find my hiding place... Being in Uganda is not far'.

The precariousness of life for men and women living as refugees and survivors of sexual violence is experienced across social and economic spheres. Men and women spoke about limited economic opportunity and capacity to sustain a livelihood and how this affects them materially as well as their sense of wellbeing. Integral to this sense of personal harm is the way that this affects gender identity. As Tito explains; 'The father is supposed to be the protector of the family, but now I can't do anything. I can't respond to the needs of my family… That affects a human being's feelings.' Where it is not possible to meet the social expectations placed on men and women in terms of being able to provide for their family, this can further undermine gender identity and, in the process, increase vulnerability.

Male survivors explained that the physical impact of the violence they experienced has meant that they are not able to take on manual labour (which is often the most accessible work for refugees living in Kampala), and that inadequate support from the health system for physical recovery perpetuates this state of affairs. Others explained that the informal economy has its own risk, with street vendors often arrested by the city council. Some Men of Hope members also highlighted the intersecting impact of socioeconomic influences such as xenophobia and negative stereotypes in restricting opportunities for decent work. One survivor, Amani Ludovic, noted how discriminatory attitudes towards male survivors also affect livelihood opportunities and further hinder the possibilities of sharing his experience within his community: 'If I could disclose to anybody that I was raped… I may not be given a job. I do not have a permanent job and I move around vending but if people knew that I had an experience of sexual violence, they might not buy from me.' Susan, the wife of a male survivor, explained how this situation fosters a sense of hopelessness about the future: 'I have many challenges; the livelihood, my husband doesn't have a job. I don't really have hope for the future or for tomorrow. My husband is jobless, I am always worried.'

4.2 Personal impacts of victimisation through sexual violence against male refugees

This section explores participants' accounts of how their experience of sexual violence has affected their sense of self, agency, identity (including gender identity as 'men') and their understanding of sexuality.

While the study did not seek to describe or categorise the sexual violence experienced, diverse types of exposure to sexual violence were divulged in the confidential setting of the interviews. Participants' accounts varied in terms of: the types of sexual violence

experienced; variations centred around whether the person was targeted directly or indirectly (by association); being raped individually or gang-raped; being tortured and/or forced to watch other family members being raped; and sexual denigration.[15] It appeared, based on these interviews, that rape is often used deliberately as a tactic for attacking opponents (as individuals, families or communities) in situations of political conflict. However, the motivations of individual perpetrators may be diverse and sometimes conflicted. For example, one anonymous participant described trying to understand his assailants' motivations:

> *I was taken to the bush and was abused by many men, many times. One time I asked one of them 'why they are doing that to me'. [He] told me that they too have sexual needs and it was not necessary to go for women, because they can satisfy themselves with the men.*

Despite this diversity of types and forms of sexual violence, the accounts of the impacts of such violence were strikingly consistent in many respects. Virtually all participants dwelled on the horrific impacts on their physical wellbeing (often through internal injuries sustained through experiences of rape and torture), but equally on enduring and disabling psychological and social impacts. All commented on the devastating impacts the violence has had on their sense of identity, gender, power and sexuality.

4.2.1 Displacement from 'self' and personhood

The devastating effects of sexual violence on men's lives and *sense of self* were strikingly intense in all cases. One participant, Steve, described the impact of his ordeal thus: 'When they finished, I felt as if I was no longer myself…' After describing having also been forced to witness the gang rape and murder of his late mother, he concluded: 'I feel I am no longer a human being. I have lost my personality and dignity.' One anonymous participant explained: 'At the beginning, I felt like somebody who was in a pit where I could not get out. Given the environment where I was living, people used to say it was a curse and witchcraft.' Another participant, David, agreed: '[f]or me, I can say it is a disease, a curse...'

The emotional and psychological impacts of sexual violence were linked to a sense of alienation, loss of hope, isolation and silence. In the words of one participant, Alain Masikini, '[w]henever I think about what I went through, I see a very dark future.' Another man, Waka Inongi, explained that '[y]ou can even lose your value as you risk being regarded as someone without value. This is the reason I hid the story and could not talk about it.'

4.2.2 Stigma and isolation

The impact of isolation and 'silence' was common and it was seen as particularly disabling; hence a strong focus on the need for 'breaking the silence' in the narratives of activists. The strong and deep connection between stigma and silence was striking across the interviews. The main reason for the stigma lay in the perceived 'unnaturalness' of same-sex sexual relations in the cultural context of the refugees' home communities and their host country, sometimes referred to in a general way as 'African culture'.

One participant, Jean-Baptist, described how he experienced this aspect of having been raped: 'I felt diminished and humiliated. You have become like a woman, taken the place of a woman. It's shameful. I feel fear. I didn't want to talk to other people.' Another participant, Amani, explained: 'I have never talked to anybody about my experience of sexual violence because I fear that they might call me a homosexual. It is only my wife who knows.'

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[15] The diversity of forms of sexual violence against men and boys is more extensively captured in the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's Office following a workshop in June 2013 (United Nations 2013).

There was a sense of hopelessness about the isolation experienced, resulting from this *silence* – an inability to open up to others, including to family members, who may themselves have been victims of sexual violence. In many cases, both men and their female partners had been victims of violence, but it was also apparently common for both partners to stay silent. In such scenarios, each individual had been trying to understand their problems without realising that their partners were also victims. Frequently, this resulted in self-blame for relationship tensions and problems, particularly in terms of sexual relations. The female partner of one of the men interviewed explained that for a long time she did not know what had happened to him. She went further to say, 'I am also a survivor of sexual violence... I started thinking that my husband was neglecting me, and didn't want to have sex with me because of what I went through.' She added: 'I kept it secret and I didn't know – or want to know – why my husband was acting this way.' Their mutual silence was eventually broken when a friend arranged for them to get counselling as a couple at RLP.

4.2.3 Gender identity and 'being a man'

As with Jean-Baptist, many other participants described the paralysing effect of their disbelief and lack of understanding of what was happening to them as 'men', which affected their sense of gender identity or – in other words – their identity as 'men'. For example, the former Men of Hope president, Alain Kabenga, explained: '[i]t has affected so much my personality… also my gender. I was born a man, [but] when these things happened to me, it affected how I felt I was a man. I had so many questions.' He gave some examples, such as 'Why could I be treated like a woman? Not that this should happen to a woman, but am I a man? Or, am I no longer a man?'

Another participant, Chris, described feeling '…like a half-man…' as a result of having been raped. One member of the group, Germain, explained: '…I used to hate men and I was feeling like I had a very bad heart. I was feeling as if I am no longer a man.' When probed about his 'hatred' of men even though he himself is a man, he replied: '[w]henever I would reflect on this, I would feel overwhelmed, sometimes I didn't want to think about it.' Others fear that the exposure to rape calls their heterosexuality into question, like Amani's fear that others might call him homosexual.

4.2.4 Erections as the overriding marker of manhood

One of the most common physiological dimensions of the impact on male victims of sexual violence appears to be its almost universal numbing of their capacity for sexual arousal. An inability to achieve or maintain erections – so central to their relations with their wives or female partners – is the visible symptom. As one participant, Amani, explained: 'At the family level, it has affected me a lot, because erection was a big problem and I had to watch hours of pornographic movies to get an erection.' Underlining his perception that this was a medical problem, he went on to explain: '[t]hat was before the medical treatment that I got from Ntinda Family Doctors… It helped me to get an erection.' Another participant, Didier, explained: 'I have lost my identity and the social life was affected… with my wife, the happy moment that we really had was when I could satisfy her with the sexual relationship.' The central importance of men's erectile performance came through across the board for men and it was also echoed by the female partners interviewed. One anonymous partner explained: '[t]he biggest problem is [our] sexual life, and because – as a woman – when I want him, then he can't satisfy me.'

Some of the concern around this is, of course, centred on the absence of sexual pleasure and joy in a person's private life, as suggested by Didier, above. But it is also linked to fundamental issues around masculinity and identity, not to mention serious concerns over reproductive health and choice, which has a central importance for heterosexual couples. One member described how this dilemma had been compounded by both partners' exposure to sexual violence:

I am not the only one who is a victim of sexual violence. My wife is also a victim of sexual violence, when she was raped she did not get the treatment… Now she has an infection that has closed her tubes... The doctor told us that she can [re]produce [but] that it is me that has the problem with the erection. But, I was also so worried about her situation.

4.2.5 Being a victim, a survivor or an activist?

In light of these types of impacts of their exposure to sexual violence, the study team asked a number of questions about the participants' self-identification as *victims, survivors and/or activists*. For the great majority of participants, being a victim was in some way central to their self-identification, while five out of the 13 men interviewed identified *only or primarily* as victims. For example, one anonymous participant explained, 'I am a victim because I experienced sexual violence. However, through RLP, I discovered that I am not alone... It is true I am a victim because I suffered those consequences but I need to speak out.' On the other hand, four participants saw themselves *primarily* as activists, while at least two others identified clearly with all three descriptions simultaneously.

One of the questions related to this topic was how the different terms are understood by participants, and there was a good degree of consistency in their accounts. One Men of Hope member interviewed, Steve, defined the words in the following way:

I experienced the reality of being a victim in my life. I am a survivor because I escaped from a place where I could have been killed and I am still alive… I think I am on my way to becoming an activist because one day, I will be able to talk to people who have lost hope like me.

Echoing the temporal trajectory recounted by Steve, there was a broader underlying theme emerging across most interviews about transitions or journeys, as also illustrated by another participant, Jean-Baptist: 'I have been all of these roles. In the beginning I was a victim and experienced health problems. Now, when we find ourselves together, we try to encourage each other… to talk… I am now an activist.'

However, there was by no means a consistent view of a simple progression or any notion of separate stages that participants simply pass through. More complex self-identities were particularly held on to by those participants describing themselves as belonging to all of the categories, and also illustrated by accounts of flashbacks and the sense that 'what was done to you stays with you'. One participant, Amani, described the latter vividly when he explained that '[w]henever, I feel back the image of what happed to me, I feel as if I am not in the world.'

Furthermore, the notion of 'survivor' was seen differently, as either problematic or positive. That is, it was not merely seen as physically surviving death (as above), but also as either diminishing the reality of the victimisation, or seen as a process centrally linked to the process of 'healing'. For example, one participant, Tito, argued that '[t]here is not a big substantive difference between being a victim and survivor, but when you call someone a survivor it undermines the victimhood…' Later, he concluded that: '[i]f you… call me a survivor it diminishes, undermines the experiences.' On the other hand, another Men of Hope member, David, felt that: 'I still have the identity as a victim, since I am not yet healed. I believe to become a survivor it is in the process of healing.'

The emerging pattern of participants' accounts built up a sense of complex and painful personal transformations rather than simple transitions. This pattern included stories of pain, chaos, confusion, loss of identity, silencing and isolation, followed by struggle, connection, gradual healing, flashbacks, hope and camaraderie in the face of self-doubt, as well as a burning desire to help others and/or 'speak out'. For most participants it was not so much

'being an activist' as 'becoming' one. This pointed the research team to ask questions of how 'healing' itself may be part of the 'political project' of their activism. In a sense, the term 'survivor' appeared to be most problematic (or least central to the participants' self-identification). The term 'healer' might have been more appropriate, as the discussions quickly turned to the need for healing and the mutual healing experienced in helping others who have had similar experiences, which we turn to below.

4.3   Rebuilding agency and recovery from trauma through collective self-help

In the beginning we were victims just seeking assistance. The journey is coming to seek assistance without any idea of becoming a group or being activists. Then we were helped and encouraged through counselling. There was a healing process. From that, we thought about how to help others, how to break the silence, how to bring others with similar problems [to] come together and be assisted.
(Jean-Baptist)

This next section shares the perspective of Men of Hope members and their partners on the role of peer support in their process of healing and recovery. Men of Hope, as a collective, provides space for individual self-expression and mutual learning as group members enter into a process of reconstructing history and identity. The group process simultaneously recognises the journeys of individuals in relation to the journey of the collective and provides space for both to develop over time.

4.3.1   Creating a safe space for uniting refugee men who are survivors of sexual violence

Within the peer support group, feelings of isolation and hopelessness are countered by the building of relationships with other men that understand a shared reality. As Francine, a partner of one Men of Hope member, explains: 'The group intervenes by bringing in a male survivor by counselling him so that he can understand that he is not the only one that this happened to. They explain to him, after all, you didn't die, life still goes on.'

A large number of the Men of Hope survivors that we spoke to expressed how, at some point within their journey of recovery, their individual counsellors and peer group members were the only people who knew of their experience of sexual violence. There were a number of reasons for this, including their own trauma, and also the fear of emotional harm or ostracism of their families within their social and geographic communities.

It was critical, therefore, that the Men of Hope Association be a safe space for engagement in which narratives of trauma and the impacts of violence and displacement on men's sense of self and identify as men could surface in confidential settings. The building of relationships within this safe environment plays an important role in supporting transitions towards recovery: 'The most important thing is unity and trust. When you are together, you feel as if you are one and even when a problem seems too big, it will look small' (anonymous).

4.3.2   Peer support as important within the process of healing and recovery

The nature of peer-to-peer support helps build a sense of belonging that assists survivors of violence to overcome the resulting stigma, isolation and erosion of trust and dignity.

As one Men of Hope member, Tito, explained: 'Sometimes when you are alone you feel like God has abandoned you. When you are many you realise that others have undergone the same experience and you can together talk about what has happened to others.' For Steve, this recognition has a deep and liberating influence on his individual sense of personhood

and self-worth: 'The shame has been taken away and I feel I am a free person. I feel liberated as I have the strength to talk now. I also got the courage to say what I want to say and what I experienced.' Francine, a woman who has survived violence and who is a partner of a Men of Hope member, explained that 'the relationship he has built with his peers has comforted him a lot', and emphasised the importance of friendships and relationships in re-establishing a sense of community.

This building of trust and sharing of experiences of violence is supported by sharing of knowledge of support mechanisms (e.g. peer counselling), which provides the tools for members to take steps towards recovery. As one group member, Amani Ludovic, expresses: 'To me, the group is very important. Through it I got knowledge that I would never have been able to get. I see my group as a school because I gain knowledge from that school.' This knowledge is expressed in different ways: it involves tacit knowledge (for example, the capacity to learn from how others approach healing and to feel inspired by their journeys of recovery); and explicit forms such as accessing additional services, including relationship counselling. Men of Hope members themselves have received training, facilitated by RLP, in peer counselling and dealing with PTSD, which reflects their commitment to the method of psychosocial healing.

The process and impact of peer support also extends beyond formal spaces of engagement within the group. As one female partner, Susan, explains: 'When he comes back from the meetings… you notice the change... When I see my husband smiling with joy and good face, it is motivating and makes me really happy.' Another partner, Antho, explains that where peer support has extended into her home life, that this has been 'really supportive, and sometimes when we are having problems they intervene and provide guidance and advice'. One Men of Hope member spoke of how he is engaging other men in the community from his church group – that is, identifying other male survivors of sexual violence and supporting them to join MOHRAU. In doing so, he supports them by starting with them in their own daily context, in the community, and inviting them into his home. Building relationships in this way is seen as a form of counselling for that person.

4.3.3 Working collectively to break the silence and help guide the recovery of others

The peer support provided through the survivor group Men of Hope has motivated many members to support other men to recognise and deal with the trauma of sexual violence that they have experienced. Many group members recognise their own agency to help change the situation of others as an expression of activism. As Amani explains:

> *The way I feel the activism is that if there is another person who experienced the same problem, I can guide that person and I can tell him that he can get services, where to get them and this was not before because I can now talk and guide.*

Tito explains that being able to talk about these acts is an expression of activism, that this may save the life of someone otherwise living in silence. Tito sees it as possible to do this even as you are in recovery yourself: 'You can be healing yourself gradually, and then I can help someone else who is not dealing with it to open up, especially the acts that are connecting with the discrimination.'

It is important to recognise the emotion involved within this process, and the significance of this outreach work to other survivors happening within a supportive space, with networks and relationships that constitute an ongoing and continuous process of recovery. Tito explains that the process of engaging with men who have not disclosed before can evoke earlier feelings of trauma: 'Myself, when I was disclosing for the first time, I could cry, and when I talk to such a person I happen to remember how I disclosed for the very first time.' However,

he also raised the importance of finding the emotional strength needed to support peers. As such, 'If such a person comes to you, you must do your best not to discourage the person, and to maintain your emotions and strength to encourage the person.'

This process of engagement happens in multiple ways, and can often vary according to the place in their journey of recovery that individual Men of Hope members identify with. This may take the form of more private conversations within individual relationships and as a result of understanding intimate dynamics within community social settings such as churches. It can also involve public outreach events where Men of Hope Association enters into the community and supports other survivors to come forward. Alain Masikini describes that 'we spoke to community members three times and we told them that in case you have any of those problems (problems arising from male rape), you can seek services. We also went to different churches several times.'

4.3.4 Mutual support enables social and economic capital

Having control and agency over addressing their economic problems contributes to a sense of rebuilding identity, family and community – socially, politically and economically.

> *When you are raped you lose control over your life, but in the peer-to-peer counselling you get that control back. You see the actions of others; this inspires you to earn an income and support my family… People are finding the strength to refocus again and to see themselves again playing a leadership role...*
> (Alain Kabenga)

Group members help each other to access economic opportunities and also to build savings in order to support welfare needs. Participants in the in-depth focus group discussion with Men of Hope members explained that:

> *We provide mutual support to group members who have problems (like if someone is seriously sick); the support is not only financial but we also visit them as a way of giving them psychological support. The source of that money to support members in problems comes from contributions from members; for instance, if one member earns money from the work he has done for the group, he gives a certain percentage to the group.*

The importance of this support to group members was seen to go beyond the material. Respondents frequently alluded to how these support structures make the association feel like a family. Its former president, Alain Kabenga, outlined that this kind of support is integral to the group in that it enables a sense of self-determination within an otherwise harsh and debilitating context. However, given the everyday constraints experienced by members, the association could also become a focus for the frustrations of the male survivors involved. In response to the critical importance of socioeconomic support, Alain Kabenga highlighted the need for 'training for vocational skills, carpentry, computer skills. Giving money is not the only option, but this training can then support them to take care of their families and access the medical care that they need.'

4.3.5 Mobilisation and social action in the response to sexual violence against men

The space for dialogue created within the group space has, in many cases, enabled the individuals to transform themselves through learning from others so as to have critical awareness of the structural conditions that negatively affect them, beyond their specific individual experience of violence. Awareness has grown that addressing sexual violence is a shared objective of members of the group and that there are institutions that should be held to account for this. This was expressed during the focus group discussion: 'We need to

influence the policymakers, law makers, because most of the time different organisations are ready to assist females who were raped, but there is almost none which cares for men and boys.' For some Men of Hope group members, this consciousness has sparked a commitment to raising their voice publicly against the issue:

> *I would like to take the opportunity to speak about it to people so that such experiences do not happen to other people. It is true I am a victim because I suffered those consequences, but I need to speak out.*
> (Anonymous)

Sensitisation is an important strategy employed by the group to ensure that service providers (including the health service, police and refugee agencies) are accountable for responding to the rights of male survivors. Men of Hope members and their women partners explained that it is important that diverse community actors are engaged, including those that have the power to make decisions to strengthen the possibilities of influence: 'If he can talk to the local councillors and help them to understand, then they can also tell the hospitals that this is something that has happened and their work can be better' (Francine).

However, there can be resistance to this process. Okoko Abedi described how, in his experience of sensitising local government and police officials, 'There was a time when we were planning an activity and we had to sensitise the local council chairman, but he could not give us assistance because he did not understand.' This rejection reflects both entrenched homophobia and a lack of understanding of the possibilities of men being victimised through sexual violence.

MOHRAU's members have a vision for change that spans the local and the global levels, recognising that lasting change involves the transformation of international legal frameworks, national political commitments as well as local-level accountability so that people can claim their rights. As Jean-Baptist explains:

> *The way I was treated was an injustice. It should not happen that way. I talk about it to the community at the local and international level so that through my contribution it would be possible to get solutions, to us as victims, but also to stop or reduce the problem. The international community and organisations should know what is taking place and what armies and armed groups are doing, so that people can be helped by international organisations.*

This global framing represents a claim for men's individual rights as refugees and, relatedly, for citizenship that extends beyond state boundaries – in other words, for global citizenship. It is important to note that, despite the intensely personal nature of all members' own experiences of sexual violence and the associated lack of response, they seek to promote not just their own immediate interests, but also to lodge claims for the rights of all male survivors of sexual violence. They are also promoting a sense of humanitarian justice that goes beyond gendered framings of women and girls that are exclusionary of the situation of men and boys. In this sense, also, they position themselves as global citizens speaking to global audiences. As Steve expresses: 'I would wish that the issues of sexual violence against men be recognised in the entire world'; and as Alain Kabenga argues: it is only when 'they [policymakers] understand the challenges of male survivors, then we are able to make a difference in their lives'.

4.3.6 Reframing of intimate social relationships through building communication and openness

The need to communicate and express freely the realities of SGBV in the lives of men and women connected to the group has been important in shifting assumptions around gender norms and identities. This has resulted in closer and more egalitarian relationships between men and women, recognising the needs and aspirations of both genders within the family and personal relationships.

> *Socially we have become friends. When we reached here with all the conditions we were under we have tried to understand each other, and we have tried to build a close relationship and we are just going on with life. We understand each other because we know what we are going through. It is so heavy, but by being together we can manage.*
> (Francine)

The interplay between support within the peer group and ongoing interpersonal relationship counselling has helped this, enabling a deeper understanding of the issues. As Didier explains (talking about his wife): 'She really understands my problem. This is something that is really important to me that my wife has been able to talk to me, and I really appreciate this.' Women also expressed how learning of their partner's experience of sexual violence has contributed to their own psychological healing process as it helped to address some of their questions and reduced their sense that all the stresses and challenges within the home were somehow *their* responsibility because of what they had been through themselves.

Female partners also shared how they have been members of peer support groups for women survivors of sexual violence, and thus have also shared their own experiences of sexual violence with other women in their community, showing expressions of agency in their own processes of recovery and healing. The meeting of MOHRAU members with their spouses held in honour of International Women's Day 2015 led the women present to consider organising a women's group specifically for women partners of men who have survived sexual violence. The need for this is exemplified by one female partner who shared that when her partner 'was trying to sensitise others about that, some refugees were saying it was a lie. I could tell other refugees that it was possible, but that I could not share my own experience' (Francine).

Such emergent developments highlight the relational nature of recovery and healing, and suggest that both male survivors and their female partners are engaged in a complex analysis of the changes needed for individual and group development, and effective mutual support within private relationships.

4.3.7 Evolving activist identities

As outlined above, space has been created for multiple forms of activism that complement each other and enable a situated understanding of how and why different men take action to address SGBV. The resultant expressions of activist identity within the Men of Hope Association are evolving and diverse.

For some, an important marker of an activist identity is the capacity to inspire and motivate others in their own journeys of change and expressions of agency. Amani Ludovic, in talking about his own activist identity, described how 'I got this from Pastor Alain when he spoke in Al Jazeera, a big TV station. I said "If Alain can go and talk and disclose, what about me?" The reason why I am here and able to talk about it is because that fear disappeared.'

For others, being a member of Men of Hope involves reconnecting to deeply held commitments to social justice, the reclaiming of which – particularly when it involves finding ways to reject and address the discrimination and violence in their lives – contributes to recovering a sense of identity. As Tito explained, he used to talk a lot about discrimination in his country of origin, and had been in search of a movement to be a part of. For him, activism involves amplifying the voices and issues of those who are marginalised: 'It means being a messenger for others, because you may have someone who is suffering from something who is not able to talk about their problem.' Alain Masikini similarly reflected that raising voice in the public realm is an integral part of his activism: '[to be] known by other people and by the world, to be able to stand before other people and to talk about what happened to you'.

Within these expressions of activism there are barriers, choices and calculations to be made as to the extent of public sharing of personal experiences of violence. These calculations can relate to differences in security, fear of reprisal, and the perceived stigma and discrimination that may be attached to family members. Churches emerged as important communities in the lives of many respondents, but also – given that these institutions frequently uphold rigid gender norms and assumptions – as potential sites of rejection (were their identity as a survivor and activist to become known). Gaining support from family members and intimate partners has been an important catalyst for overcoming such fears and for sustained public activism.

The role of individuals in relation to the broader collective varies and relates to their own stage of transformation. The appearances of MOHRAU leaders in public spaces and on TV, for example, was shown to be highly inspiring to other, newer members, and to have emboldened them to 'break the silence', as illustrated in our findings above and, for example, in the film *Men Can Be Raped Too*. The relationship between the need for leaders to demonstrate leadership on the one hand, and on the other, the risk that they will 'take up space' and exclude other members who have reached a point where they feel ready to speak, is nonetheless complex. In this regard, the democratic dynamics and the procedures adopted by the group are of significance in enabling new voices to emerge. This was reflected in the election of a new MOHRAU president, which took place during the initial visit to frame the research jointly with Men of Hope. In accordance with its agreed statutes, the first president, Alain Kabenga, stepped down gracefully while continuing to support the new president and other members. A strong egalitarian ethos is reflected in both the members' respect and adherence to agreed rules and in their informal interactions on a personal level.

4.4   The enabling role of partnerships and institutions
The roles of different actors and networks at local, national and international levels in MOHRAU's creation and growth are consistently highlighted by Men of Hope activists. This section explores some of the important lessons to be learned about the enabling role of these partnerships and institutions.

4.4.1 Role of CSOs in making services more responsive to survivors' needs
Men of Hope members and their partners spoke of the integral role of humanitarian agencies and CSOs in facilitating access to services and support in addressing their needs as refugees and as survivors of sexual violence; this has included medical, psychological, livelihood and housing support.

> *We need partnerships to achieve our goals, and here locally we have, we are working with different institutions. So partnership is needed because all those providers are working with refugees here in Uganda, and Men of Hope members would like also to benefit to have access to the services they are providing.*
> (Joseph)

Male survivors highlighted that referrals alone were not enough, and that a more substantive engagement with the receiving institution is required to ensure that they understand the specific situations of male survivors of sexual violence. Organisations involved in brokering these relationships need to ensure that they facilitate access to services that are responsive to the rights of male victims, rather than services that simply reproduce harmful norms and assumptions. Members of Men of Hope spoke on a number of occasions about the important role RLP has played in training and sensitising medical professionals to make their services more effective.

It is particularly important that service providers understand sexual violence against men because those services are often the starting point for large numbers of men to access longer-term support for recovery, including being referred to the Men of Hope Association itself. Men of Hope survivors explained how they themselves have also played a role in sensitising certain organisations. Armani Kudofiq explained how he went with Men of Hope members to conduct a training session with one national NGO, InterAid, to address misconceptions and discrimination regarding issues of homosexuality and to make visible the reality of male survivors of sexual violence: 'We went to them to let them know that we exist. Before then, they were not aware that we exist and they did not know our problems. Through the groups, we learnt human rights and other knowledge.' Another activist highlighted the importance of CSOs being aware and transparent about their position of power in their relationship with refugees, who are constrained by perceived threats to their resettlement if they were to speak out and challenge the actions of NGOs.

4.4.2 Support and independence enabled through the relationship with RLP

The emergence and evolution of Men of Hope is integrally connected to the group's relationship with RLP. Throughout the focus group discussions, individual interviews and video testimonies, nearly all of the research participants highlighted the importance of Men of Hope being developed in partnership with RLP. This has supported the growth of the organisation, including its formalisation, being established as an association within the constitution of RLP. During the focus group discussion, it was highlighted that in the wider context of informality and uncertainty that Men of Hope members live with (as refugees and male survivors) in Uganda, RLP has provided an important sense of home and belonging.

The strength of the relationship has been fostered as RLP and Men of Hope have established open and democratic forms of communication that enable everyone involved to gain mutual trust and accountability. Commitments within the relationship cover a spectrum from personal connections to a professional legal response. This mix is important in that it recognises the people at the heart of the situation, and this helps strengthen political commitment to change.

Through the discussions in this research study it was clear that RLP also plays an important role in fostering participatory dialogue and critical reflection within Men of Hope. This acts as a mechanism to provide space for the development of an inclusive and transformative agenda for social change for the group, but one that is grounded in the aspirations of the Association, and one that its members have ownership over. This has included nurturing space for the issue of taking up work with women partners, as well as the discussion of sexuality and homosexuality that was facilitated during this research process, and which led to subsequent training provided on the topic (as described in Section 2.2).

4.4.3 Extending influence and reach

Across the study, partnerships were highlighted as important in translating local knowledge into national and global spaces for equality and rights. As Alain Kabenga outlined: 'Internationally, it is promoting the rights of male survivors. When they understand the challenges of male survivors, then we are able to make a difference in their lives.' In raising this awareness, Alain highlights the media as an important partner in getting activists' voices heard at higher levels:

> *We need partners like journalists, media, because whenever we talk to them they get these images, they will publish them. Whenever they publish means they can reach where we aren't able to reach. So these partners, they are another hand, another voice supporting us to move forward.*

This is important for Men of Hope members in establishing an identity as global citizens in search of global justice. As Aimé, the Association's current president, outlines: 'It allows us to reach the world of refugees, and prisoners.' Steve also emphasises how extending the Association's reach globally helps spread recognition of the issue and also the actions the group are taking.

> *I would wish that the voice of men and boys grows and reaches out to the world. I would wish that the issues of sexual violence against men be recognised in the entire world. Men of Hope is a group of men who have experienced sexual violence and is fighting to be recognised worldwide as male survivors of sexual violence.*

It was also raised that partnerships have enabled engagement with harder-to-reach stakeholders, such as religious bodies and local government. These kinds of partnerships help to provide the resources needed for Men of Hope to extend its activities – in particular, community sensitisation, awareness and capacity-building workshops.

5   Discussion

The central question for this study was: 'Despite the odds stacked against them, what makes it possible for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to organise and become activists, challenging discriminatory social and gender norms?' Within this, there were three sub-questions. The discussion below is organised around these three sub-questions.

5.1   How can looking at male survivors help us understand the complexity of men's relationship to sexual violence?

For those familiar with (and operating within) prevalent research and policy discourses on SGBV that assert sexual violence as overwhelmingly 'an issue affecting women', this question may seem counter-intuitive.

Over and above the simple fact that the existence of male survivors challenges attempts to reduce the narrative on sexual violence to men's perpetration and women's victimisation, the experiences of the men in this study – as victims, as survivors and/or as activists – demonstrate relationships to sex, violence, gender identity, and struggles for gender-equal human rights that are complex and deeply destabilising to a simplistic gender binary.

Our findings demonstrate vividly the impact of sexual violence on the male victims' subjective displacement from 'self' and personhood. At its core, sexual violence ruptures the victims' very understanding of their own gender identity, and of what it means to be 'men'; understanding previously predicated on traditional models of masculinity expressed in relation to (and counterposed to) femininity and female identity. Furthermore, this rupture leads to stigmatisation at the hands of the broader community, resulting in raped men keeping silent and suffering a deep sense of isolation and alienation.

In one sense, this compounds the resilient 'gender binary'; the view of gender as reducible to two categories of dominant and subordinated human beings – men and women respectively. In another, it shifts the basis of gender essentialism from bodies to acts. It is the subjection to an act of penetration (i.e. being penetrated), rather than the body of the victim, that renders the victim feminine, 'a woman', and therefore subordinate. It is the act of penetrating that defines the masculinity of the perpetrator.[16] Evidently, even those whose bodies would appear to position them as privileged and dominant in a binary gender order (in the widespread and simplistic view) – i.e. men – *can* also be subordinated and victimised.

Sexual violence against men by men thus illustrates the socially constructed nature of gender relations enacted within broader relations of power, politics and conflict. It demonstrates that inhabiting a man's body holds no guarantees of masculinity, and it thus helps us to recognise the plurality of men, masculinities, and their relationships to gender inequality and violence.

While many of the men in this study had not questioned their masculinity prior to being victimised, it is clear that reassessments begin to happen as individual healing and collective consciousness start to emerge. These in turn provide illustrations of concepts of 'intersectionality', transitions, transformations and 'liminality' that we called attention to in the

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[16] One striking feature of same-sex rape as experienced by MOHRAU members is that the male victim of rape is deemed to have been feminised and assumed to be homosexual (despite being forced and without any required orientation or arousal on his part), whereas the male perpetrator is not, despite choosing to have sex with a man and being sufficiently sexually aroused to achieve and sustain an erection in a same-sex act.

framing section of this study. This case study suggests that these ideas are useful not only in unveiling the men's complex of multiple intersecting (and interacting) challenges, but also in understanding how *changes* and transformations in their relationships to sexual violence can come about.

Being marginalised as refugees intersects with and is compounded by both the marginalisation experienced in relation to gender identity and position, and the question marks raised over their sexuality. However, when survivors begin to connect with other people 'like themselves', this opens up new possibilities: of healing, of building new identities and of reassessing their roles in – and relationships to – the world. It appears to be through multiple, indeterminate and gradual processes – through very liminal spaces of confusion and reconstitution – that these reassessments can take place.

On the question of sexual pleasure, for example, participants' accounts of their struggles to satisfy their spouses sexually are suggestive of a reappraisal of providing their partners with sexual satisfaction. Equally, women who are aware of their husband's victimisation described substantial shifts away from assuming that he had lost interest in her because he was having another relationship outside the marriage, and towards understanding the profound impact of violence on the individual's capacity to relate intimately. In such instances, the men and women involved have moved far beyond the scripts in much of popular culture (which are also entrenched in much of policy and practice in 'gender and development'). Rather than seeing femininity and women's roles in relation to sex with men as passive and accommodating, and thereby de-emphasising and undervaluing female sexual pleasure, the male survivors evinced considerable anxiety about whether or not they would be able to provide satisfaction; not only is it important to their own sense of identity, but if the man is unable to offer satisfaction, the woman is seen as justified in leaving.[17]

We see three main practical implications of reassessing men's relation to sexual violence through the lens of male survivors. One is about appropriate service provision, another is about developing better policy and legal frameworks in relation to sexual violence in situations of conflict and asylum, and a third is about how this could also support women. First, it is clear that the phenomenon of male rape in conflict settings is a very significant problem, yet support services for male survivors are woefully lacking. The implication is that services need to be developed or adapted and provided for all survivors of sexual violence *without discrimination* on the basis of gender, sexuality or nationality, etc.

Second, gender-binary constructions of gender (and sexuality) in both the politics of the region and in global policy frameworks and narratives are deeply oppressive for individuals who fall outside the privileged norm (particularly those affected by intersecting exclusions). The implication of this is that policies and laws (including their implementation) need to be reformed, while the broader politics of deploying normative gender-binary models in social and cultural contestations must be challenged. This begs serious questions not only for domestic actors, but also for international actors engaging in the region – namely, do they have deliberate strategies to confront or circumvent this? Or, *are they simply complicit*?

Third, and perhaps contrary to the fears of practitioners focused on working with women, careful work with male survivors *ultimately has direct benefits for women survivors.* It increases the possibilities of mutual disclosure within relationships, it can reduce women's feelings of responsibility for domestic dysfunction, and it can increase gender equality in the domestic sphere, leading to better sexual and reproductive health, more supportive relationships, and more equal distribution of parenting responsibilities.

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[17] This resonates with research in Rwanda on men's and women's relationship to female sexual pleasure and power, which suggests that both men and women in the sub-region can, at times, take an egalitarian view of the importance of female sexuality and pleasure (Skafte and Silberschmidt 2013).

5.2 How and why do groups of refugee male survivors respond to their particular experiences of trauma?

Our second sub-question was elaborated to explore the dynamics of and reasons behind the ways in which refugee male survivors of sexual violence are helped to respond and recover through joining a support group. We have seen above how exposure to conflict-related sexual violence and displacement damages refugee men who have experienced this, and how stigma and discrimination marginalises such men, very often leading to silence, withdrawal from social relationships and deep isolation. However, the development of peer support groups has provided a safe space for male survivors of sexual violence, which has been integral in enabling them to respond to this issue. Whether identified through service screening or being referred through social contacts in the refugee community, joining a group has allowed individuals to find a safe space for interconnected individual and group healing, as well as for the building of new identities.

Our findings fit well with the literature covered in framing the question. As in other settings, peer support mitigates isolation and directly challenges the reasons for marginalisation and ostracism of men who have experienced conflict-related sexual violence. There is a collective rejection of prevalent assumptions that men cannot be vulnerable or raped. There is also the emergence of a questioning of related patriarchal norms of male dominance and invulnerability. The process of healing shows how the transformation of deeply held beliefs and attitudes is embodied within the evolution of the group itself. Related to this, the research found shifts in understanding of gender identity within interpersonal relationships between Men of Hope members and their female partners, resulting in closer and more egalitarian relationships between women and men. The opening up of communication in turn enabled disclosures of sexual violence of both men and women, enabling a deeper understanding of the issues being experienced in each other's lives.

These findings suggest that approaches to working with groups of refugee men who are survivors of sexual violence can usefully draw on positive psychology perspectives on psychosocial support, peer support and self-help. They also indicate that such approaches need to go beyond the many approaches to trauma recovery that frame 'reintegration' as a simple return to earlier established norms and communities. Thus, the approach needs to move towards recognising possible changes in identities and building new communities of belonging. In constructing group identity, the findings show the importance of the liminal/fluid spaces group members pass through or experience, along with the crucial importance of mutual support in these often difficult and non-linear journeys. This fluidity and the multiple identities of individuals and collectives can counter static prescriptive norms that limit creativity, agency and the formation of new communities.

Much as the collective identity of Men of Hope is as a group of 'survivors' of sexual violence, this research highlighted the manner in which members saw identities of victim, survivor and activist as interconnected and dynamic – interconnections that were expressed differently among group members. The importance of maintaining plural identities for many within Men of Hope relates to ensuring that boundaries, inclusions and exclusions are considered and reassessed carefully within the evolving group. Processes of critical reflection supported by their main civil society partner, RLP, on the delimitations of the group have helped to ensure change over time that supports positive and inclusive individual and collective growth in addressing SGBV.

It important to recognise, however, that strategic engagement with identity narratives established within international communities – for example, 'survivors' – is an important tactic to make claims on an international humanitarian asylum system that has systematically (if inadvertently) excluded the rights of male victims, for reasons discussed in the previous section. This linkage to strategically accessing international support is suggested in Nguyen's

(2007) analysis and concept of 'therapeutic citizenship' among self-help groups of people living with HIV in West Africa. He links the strategic collective action of such groups at local level to the frameworks of development programmes and 'global therapeutic strategies' staking their claims against universal human rights to health. However, as Whyte (2009) argues, it may be important to guard against new limitations imposed by static new identities; strategies need to recognise and be informed by individuals' and collectives' ever-shifting subjectivity, including their multiple belongings.

For service providers, the above analysis suggests shifting to more positive psychosocial models of dealing with healing and trauma recovery from conflict-related sexual violence in relation to an individual's relationships and communities. Furthermore, collective 'rehabilitation' models need to be readapted in settings with male refugee survivors, and further developed to connect to wider processes of transformation into new identities and communities that support social change and challenge harmful gender norms.

In developing new approaches with these communities, action research can open up possibilities of new learning, such as about emergent processes of social change as driven by the knowledge and aspirations of the group themselves, while also supporting and documenting such processes. In order to situate such progress in the wider context of conflict-related (and other forms of) sexual violence, additional attention will be needed to the dynamics of agency and political action of such groups within broader networks of actors. This is discussed in more detail below.

5.3 How does individual agency interact with collective action to respond to marginalisation?

In framing our approach to this third and final sub-question, we focused on literature around women's empowerment from building capabilities and collective action with critical consciousness (of challenges such as structural inequalities and injustices). We also questioned simple, reductive or formalistic notions of 'citizenship' within this context. In particular, we flagged earlier research on HIV-related therapeutic citizenship as interacting with the international biopolitics of the global AIDS response as potentially relevant to groups of refugee male survivors of sexual violence navigating the biopolitics of the international asylum and humanitarian regimes.

Our findings have illustrated many aspects of how male survivors respond, in terms of 'what they do', which may be useful to preface with 'how they do this' collectively and individually. Centrally, they provide psychosocial support to others like themselves, including referrals for medical treatment, the provision of knowledge and information on services, and direct peer support and encouragement. Furthermore, they provide sensitisation and training of local service providers and – crucially – they carry out advocacy for the recognition of sexual violence against men and appropriate response in law (nationally and internationally). This advocacy happens through attending local, national and global stakeholder meetings, sharing testimonials, giving media interviews and engaging with research such as this study. As part of their advocacy and awareness raising, they also challenge local notions of their identities and plight in the community and through local council meetings. This includes openly addressing the conflation between victimisation in male rape and homosexuality – what they refer to as 'the confusion' in Uganda.

The findings revealed a number of elements to the process of 'how' the actions of individual group members add up to – or interact with – their collective action, much of which relates to the earlier discussion of individual and collective healing. Initially, new members may be only concerned about (or act on) their own needs and interests, but we have seen how the collective healing quickly repositions members' motivations towards helping others within

(and outside) the group. Increasing engagement gradually raises members' political consciousness of their issue within a broader oppressive context and ignites their desire to be activists for the group, and for the cause of 'breaking the silence'.

Interestingly, the distinction between starting to help others and being an activist is not clear-cut in the findings and a number of members expressed their desire to become an activist, or expressed their identity and role as 'becoming an activist' through the notion of being able to speak to others in the same situation. These dynamics suggest that peer support is a therapeutic social process. They also suggest that healing is political insofar as it confounds dominant gender narratives. Furthermore, they suggest that political engagement through advocacy is also healing and central to the bigger project, both individually and collectively.

Our findings suggest that members' critical consciousness of their situation is being built in relation to the structural politics of Uganda and the sub-region. It is clear that they understand the sources of their victimisation as rooted in the oppressive and masculinised politics of the conflicts in the region. Many also clearly identified limitations of legal frameworks they have come across in the sense that only women appear to have access to support services and legal protection in relation to victimisation from sexual violence.

The collective consciousness-raising within the group has also begun to challenge many members' stereotypical ideas around masculinity and manhood, as well as gender equality and views on women. Of course, this varies depending on different members' level of engagement or length of time with the group. But several members (as well as some of their female partners) appear to reject many traditional inequitable norms and ideas.

A critical level to the dynamics of the group's functioning relates to the role of outside actors and sources of support. Men of Hope does not exist, nor did it come about, in isolation from other actors and agencies. While the group was created coming out of support activities led by RLP, the latter continues to nurture and support the group, alongside a range of other groups of vulnerable refugees and minorities. For example, RLP has facilitated spaces for group discussion among Men of Hope members (and led by MOHRAU), where female partners have been brought in to share their perspectives, or where members can explore, learn and clarify issues and concepts around sexuality and homosexuality. The latter relates to what emerged (during the research process) as an 'internal confusion' about 'the confusion' between homosexuality and male rape. This resulted in RLP providing training to nurture the group's critical reflection on balancing diversity and equal human rights against a clearer understanding of homosexuality in relation to – but as distinct from – sexual violence between men. Finally, horizons have been expanded by key members being connected to international meetings or learning experiences such as the South-South Institute discussed in Section 2. Other service organisations in Kampala also provide different forms of support, such as medical treatment or counselling.

As we have seen, the role of external supporters and allies is crucial both for the group's internal development, and for their individual and collective action and 'representation' in advocacy work, including global advocacy. Within Men of Hope's activism, it is also important to recognise that there are limits and boundaries, and changes over time. Transitions in terms of activist identities occur in interaction with transitions in the multiple spaces in which activism occurs, including intimate space, the family, the group itself, the community and globally. Recognising these iterative shifts destabilises the conventional model of human rights defenders, where only very public forms of activism are given acceptance and, in turn, a form of protection. Valuing and recognising the different forms, expressions and spaces of activism is essential to understanding the activism of refugees and male survivors of violence; Men of Hope are not passive recipients, but within their activism there are specific constraints that need to be understood.

In understanding and recognising these dynamic expressions of agency, Men of Hope may also provide a microcosmic space for their exercise of 'citizenship', otherwise so restricted in their daily lives. In framing the issue of citizenship, we appeal to Robins and colleagues' (2008) critique of simple formalistic state-centred (or organisationally centred) narratives, which can occlude the complex negotiations of the politics of everyday life. To even begin to grapple with the situation of refugee male survivors of sexual violence, let alone their activism for international recognition and support, we clearly need to see citizenship beyond a relationship between citizens and nation states.

In his research on the formation of 'self-help' groups of HIV-positive people in West Africa, Nguyen argues that in supporting 'CBOs [community based organisations] as mechanisms to implement programs, donors actually create new forms of social relations and, over time, new communities' (Nguyen 2007: 129). He describes these communities not as '*de-nuevo*' (i.e. new-fledged), but rather as 'bricolages of pre-existing social relations (such as kinship relations), global therapeutic strategies, and local tactics' (*ibid.*). Of course, we have to recognise that in the case of Men of Hope, the social relations supporting their community are not exactly 'pre-existing', in any simple sense at least.

However, there are also important differences in context here, which limit the parallels with the HIV experience. This study engaged with men who, as refugees, were not only marginalised and disempowered in the host country but had also come from a home country that could be characterised as a failed state. Many of these men existed in a liminal space – not unlike those people with whom Nguyen worked, who were facing an uncertain future without access to essential AIDS drugs. However, in the case of our study, these refugees inhabited a liminal space, as their past – shaped by their home country – was present in their everyday lives in the host country. Not only does this complicate their local social relations between refugees in the sense that they are not pre-existing in any obvious way, but their liminality is further compounded by the alienation and chaos to their self-identification triggered by their victimisation from sexual violence. This suggests, then, that historic notions of citizenship need to be significantly extended – not only beyond a narrow definition of the individual rights-bearing citizen's relationship to a duty-bearing nation state to the everyday politics of people's lives (Robins *et al.* 2008), but also in terms of the global biopolitics of the gender, humanitarian aid and law sectors.

The findings above suggest that the need for new forms of citizenship and social organisation is heightened by the refugee condition, along with corresponding rights and responsibilities ensured by an 'assemblage' of global institutions. The evolution of the HIV response suggests alternative responses to and plural routes through such a condition (Edström and MacGregor 2010). The dynamically interactive nature of change between individuals and collectives was gradually recognised, and networks (whether national, regional or global, formal or informal) were able to influence change and international assistance across borders. Such networks include locally based service providers that are connected to international supporters and can also support access, provide services, facilitate advocacy and protect rights.

There appear to be at least two sets of practical implications from our findings on this question. The first is to raise focused questions about the gaps and shortcomings of the international asylum system and its engagement with equal human rights in respect of gender, sexuality and victimisation from sexual violence. Within this, it would be advisable to take a closer look at lessons (positive and negative) about global citizen engagement from the global HIV movement and response, which became significantly influenced by globally agreed principles on the Greater Involvement of Persons Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA) in the decisions that affect their lives.

A second implication suggests a forward-looking exploration of what are the most promising avenues for 'movement building' on the basis of recognition of male survivors of sexual violence. This brings up key strategic questions about politics, potential alliances, and positionality in relation to other movements such as those mobilised around feminist goals, disability (including mental health) or sexual rights. As this is about the *evolving* politics of refugee groups themselves, this would have to be very engaged action research and strategy development.

6   Conclusions and recommendations

The phenomenon of male victimisation in sexual violence has long been an overlooked issue. Its increased visibility in settings of conflict and conflict-related fragility is casting a new light on many of the limitations and contradictions in prevalent frameworks for conceptualising and addressing SGBV. It not only highlights the urgency with which the issue needs to be addressed, it also turns these familiar gender-binary framings on their heads. The experiences of refugee male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence living in Uganda provide a clear rationale for shifts in policy and practice within humanitarian and development approaches. As this study has shown, the emergence of male survivor support groups is one response to the problem which, rather than undermining the pursuit of gender equality and reasserting male privilege, in fact offers new avenues for dethroning the gender binary. This paves the way for arriving at more inclusive and less discriminatory humanitarian assistance, conflict resolution and peace-building in fragile and post-conflict societies.[18]

Our overarching question was: 'What makes it possible for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to organise and become activists, and to challenge discriminatory social and gender norms?' The answer appears to contain three key elements:

- First, the possibility – or chances – of such responses emerging is enabled by our moving away from gender-binary models for addressing the needs of individual women and households and working instead with diverse community formations and support groups. The development of new and more nuanced notions of men's complex relationships to sexual violence provides an essential foundation for seeing the problem. These notions must necessarily go beyond prevalent essentialist framings of female victimisation and male perpetration.
- Second, it can clearly be facilitated by broadening the scope of models of recovery focused on individual trauma, toward collective healing as well, with a corresponding mix of therapeutic models. Supporting collective healing and the building (or rebuilding) of new identities and new relationships – at times with external support – is itself a challenge to discriminatory social and gender norms. Such collective work recognises that while work with individuals is essential (particularly the medical dimensions), only collective work can heal the damage done by sexual violence to the individual's *social* identity, and only collective work enables profound challenges to discriminatory norms.
- Third, the response is made possible by nurturing politically conscious collective action by survivors themselves, drawing strategically on specific individuals' unique capabilities and facilitating joint advocacy to influence broader international humanitarian policy and politics. This is an essential ingredient in enabling male survivors to organise. Male survivors are well positioned to understand structural injustice and internalised subjugation, combined with collective psychological healing, as a political project – a project built around visibility, new identities (and belonging), as well as claims for equal rights.

The findings presented in this study exemplify the significance of peer support groups for refugee male survivors of sexual violence in their individual and collective recovery and the construction of positive identities. Importantly, the experiences of Men of Hope members surface the interconnections between these processes of healing and expressions of agency within social, economic and political spheres.

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[18] For a discussion of the importance of response interventions, see also Dolan (2015b).

Living as refugee male survivors, group members are working strategically to engage diverse relationships and social actors to realise these rights claims at local, national and global levels. In turn, this positioning of accountability for addressing sexual violence challenges conventional boundaries of citizenship between subjects and the nation state. They help us to see that healing must be understood as a political process and that in building therapeutic social relationships, a deeper set of claims for citizenship and justice have been catalysed.

Recognising the *therapeutic activism* of refugee survivors of sexual violence, their self-determination and their claims for the realisation of human rights will make a major contribution to the efforts of humanitarian and development policymakers and practitioners to address the issue of sexual violence effectively and sustainably.

Below are some recommendations for different audiences on how to put into practice the global policy commitments to working with all survivors of sexual violence, be they women, girls, men or boys, as outlined in the G8 declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and in UN Security Council Resolution 2106.

Recommendations for governments, bilateral and multilateral development agencies

- Legal and policy frameworks need to take an approach to gender that is inclusive of men and women, and emphasises how gender relationships construct gender identities.

This will help to break down harmful binary thinking that positions men as perpetrators and women as vulnerable victims and, in turn, makes male survivors of sexual violence invisible, excluding them from services and recognition. By positioning only women as victims and vulnerable, these gendered assumptions compromise responses to female as well as male victims, and fail to recognise that victims of violence – whether female, male or other – can also be survivors and activists.

- Within international humanitarian law, development agencies must play an important role in challenging discourse and policy that marginalises male survivors of sexual violence and their persecution at national and local levels.

This involves holding national governments to account on global human rights agreements and the specific frameworks that articulate gender-inclusive notions of rape and sexual violence, notably the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as well as the Court's Policy on Gender Crimes.[19]

- Enable processes of global citizen engagement that support survivors of sexual violence to influence the international legal frameworks.

Lessons can be learned from the global HIV movement and response, which became significantly influenced by globally agreed principles on the Greater Involvement of Persons Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA) in decisions that affect their lives. These principles of global citizenship are of particular importance for refugees who have lost their original citizenship and have yet to acquire full citizenship in their country of asylum.

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[19] For a discussion of the Court's policy, see RLP (2014d).

- Support ongoing research analysis of conflict-related sexual violence needs to include the issue of sexual violence against men.

This means research into specific experiences of sexual violence against men, as well as the differential processes of healing and recovery for men and women – for example, enabling reflection on how the violence has shaped perceptions of gender identities.

- Increased funding is needed to address the issue of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict-affected contexts in order to strengthen prevention and response for all survivors.

Lines of accountability are needed to ensure that resources are facilitating processes of recovery that take a gender-relational approach.

Recommendations for NGOs and national service providers

- Service implementation agencies need to examine their internal policies and services to determine the extent to which they are inclusive and empowering of male survivors of sexual violence and have the capacity to address specific needs.

This relates to the need for (international and domestic) duty-bearers to ask serious questions about their engagement in the broader politics of deploying normative gender-binary models in their work and political strategies.

- There is a need to develop training that can support humanitarian and development stakeholders to ensure gender-inclusive approaches to addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

Approaches must be gender sensitive in that they speak to the specific needs of people of all genders. Engaging survivors of sexual violence in the design and implementation of this capacity-building work will ensure that evolving practices respond to their realities.

- Where support groups do not exist, service providers should support and mentor their establishment.

In doing so, service providers should also shift toward more positive psychosocial models of dealing with healing and trauma recovery from sexual violence in relation to the individual's relationships and communities. As noted above, collective 'rehabilitation' models need to be adapted in settings with male refugee survivors and further developed to connect to wider processes of transformation into new identities and communities.

- The capacities of successful refugee-led support groups need to be facilitated and fostered.

This involves working with these groups to enhance their strategies for social change through participatory learning and action approaches that promote critical reflection and political consciousness.

Recommendations for research and learning

- In developing new approaches to addressing sexual violence with refugee groups of male survivors of violence action, researchers should seek to open up possibilities of new learning, rather than relying on familiar frameworks.

This involves supporting and documenting emergent processes of social change as driven by the knowledge and aspirations of the group themselves and can help respond to key strategic questions about politics, potential alliances, and positional relationships to other movements.

- More engaged participatory action research is needed to support strategy development.

There is a need for a forward-looking exploration of the most promising avenues for 'movement building' on the basis of recognition of male survivors of sexual violence. This can usefully focus on potential alliances and positionality in relation to other movements, such as those mobilised around feminist goals, disability (including mental health) or sexual rights. Such research should also resist relying on local or static definitions (around gender, sexuality, community or services) and envisage citizenship in plural and shifting terms, engaging with national as well as international resources, policy and politics.

- In terms of operations research (assisting service providers to improve services), there should be a shift in focus towards adapting psychosocial models for individual and group healing, and away from simple rehabilitation and reintegration.

This would involve a systematic yet open-ended approach to exploring different strategies with a range of groups and contexts. Linked to researching better service models for survivors, it would also be useful to carry out research to document how careful work with male survivors ultimately has direct benefits for women survivors as well.

Annex A Questions for individual interviews

This interview schedule was adapted to reflect the positionality of each stakeholder group and expanded for the focus group discussion.

0.   How do you feel about doing this interview?
1.   How has your experience of sexual violence impacted on your sense of self (and how you relate to others)?
2.   Do any of these identifiers applies to you?: 'Victim', 'survivor' and/or 'activist'
     o   Why is this? What does this identity mean to you?
3.   What kind of support or services have you been able to access to help you?
     o   Are there any really important services you cannot access?
4.   What made it possible for you to be an activist (/Mentor)? What motivated you?
5.   When did you become an activist?
     o   What changed?
     o   Have there been 'transitions'? And, how do you understand such 'transitions'?
     o   Are there other ways you would describe your journey? How?
6.   What difference does the group make?
     o   What difference has the group made for you?
     o   What difference have you made to the group?
7.   What is the most important thing about being in the group?
     o   What is it about being in a group that you are not able to do alone?
8.   What meaning does 'the group' have for you?
9.   How do you work – and why have you chosen to work in that particular way?
10. Does your relationship with your partner or other close relations help you? If so, how?
11. How do you find working with (other) male survivors?
     o   How hard is it, how good is it?
     o   Do you keep their stories and carry them home? How do you use those?
     o   Does it traumatise you? Do you feel you need counselling? Do you get some?
12. What keeps you motivated in your activism?
     o   What is the momentum, what is sustaining your activism?
13. What are the obstacles to the group's activism?
14. What do you wish for the future?

Annex B   Knowledge sharing

Effective knowledge sharing is integral to ensuring that the research findings reach diverse audiences to influence change in policy and practice within the response to conflict-related sexual violence. To this end, the finalised video testimonies and the film *Men Can Be Raped Too* are available and widely viewed on the IDS Interactions website and RLP's website, as well as on YouTube (see Table B.1). Spaces for dialogue have also been created to support engagement with the substantive content of the film, including two online discussions hosted by IDS and RLP and a public event at IDS, which connected Men of Hope members to a UK research audience virtually, and which was streamed live, and is now hosted online.[20]

Together, these two visual processes aimed to provide the space within the research process for individuals and the collective (represented by the Men of Hope group) to rebuild a positive identity through self-representation.[21] This in turn enabled possibilities of challenging stigma and discrimination associated with victimhood within their immediate communities and more widely (Francis and Hemson 2006).

Table B.1   Viewing levels for five individual testimonies and the participatory film (*Men Can Be Raped Too*) for the period mid-October 2015 to 8 January 2016

	Refugee Law Project site	YouTube through IDS	YouTube through RLP	Total
Aimé	1,221	21	31	1,273
Alain	441	20	64	525
Joseph	221	28	21	270
Steven	189	15	150	354
Thierry	236	19	27	282
Men Can Be Raped Too	1,358	75*	268	1,701
Total views	3,666	178	561	4,405

Note: * = The figure for *Men Can Be Raped Too* on IDS' Interactions website is for a webcast IDS seminar, 'The Rape of Men: Seriously, a Gender Issue?', which screened the film, accompanied by discussion. Visitors are also redirected to the RLP posted YouTube film (and thus included in the 'YouTube through RPL' figure).

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[20] http://interactions.eldis.org/gender-based-violence/country-profiles/uganda/rape-men-seminar.
[21] For a discussion of the process of making the individual testimony videos, watch 'Using Video Narratives to End Silence on Conflict-related Sexual Violence, Oct 26, 2015' at www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3sQcXrzeEk.

Annex C   Informed consent form

Consent form to participate in the research study

The aim of this research study is to explore men's roles and contributions to responding to sexual and gender-based violence against men among refugees. This research is being conducted by Refugee Law Project (RLP), Uganda, and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK. The research will explore individual and group dynamics, roles and understandings amongst two men's support groups in rural and urban Uganda.

In turn, this is intended to help improve information access and to inform strategies of relevant actors (including activists and policymakers) in responding to the issue and to facilitate the strengthening of strategic alliances for those involved. In addition to Uganda, similar projects have been conducted in Egypt, India, South Africa, Kenya and Sierra Leone.

In all countries the work is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). We are not employed by DFID or any other government or funding organisation.

INFORMATION ON CONSENT

We are asking: 'Would you agree to participate in this research by answering some questions in an individual interview or in a group discussion?'

LIST OF RESEARCHER AGREEMENTS
- You are under no obligation to agree or to give up your time.
- You are also free to stop answering the questions and (/ask us) to leave at any point.
- If you are agreeable, you can decide whether you want what you say to be kept anonymous (the latter case in which we would not link your name to your comments in the study report).
- If you do not mind letting us link your name to your statements, you can choose for us to use just your first name or your full name.
- All documentation notes are kept confidential. (i.e. we keep the notes and papers documenting the learning safely and nobody else has access to them).
- If you are HIV positive or a survivor of violence and you choose to tell us of your status, this information will be kept strictly confidential, unless you expressly indicate otherwise.

Please ask us/me for more explanation now if there are any points that you are unsure about.

Tick as appropriate:

☐   I wish what I say to remain anonymous

☐   I do not mind if my first name and surname are linked to my comments

☐   I do not mind if my first name is linked to my comments

☐   Other – please tell us how you would like to be quoted/referred to _____
_____

I agree to participate in the research:

Name:

Signature/Thumbprint: **Signature of Documenter:**

_____   _____

Date:

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