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CENTRE FOR GENDER STUDIES
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES

**TRANSFORMING MEN INTO ALLIES
IN EMPOWERING WOMEN IN RWANDA:
The case study of the Journey of Transformation Approach in
Bugesera District.**

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**A thesis submitted to the Centre for Gender Studies, College of Arts and Social Sciences,
University of Rwanda, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a
Master's Degree of Social Sciences in Gender and Development.**

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Kigali, September 2020

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the University of Rwanda, the dissertation titled: “Transforming Men into Allies in empowering women in Rwanda: The case study of the Journey of Transformation approach in Bugesera District”, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Social Sciences in Gender and Development from the Centre for Gender Studies, College of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Rwanda.

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To

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DEDICATION

First and foremost I would like to thank GOD Almighty for sprinkling His wondrous blessings over me.

From my heart, I dedicate this work that needed self-efforts as well as guidance to those who were very close to me throughout.

I humbly dedicate this book to my loving husband and my kids, whose inspiration, affection, love, motivation and sleepless nights of prayers enabled me to achieve such an honourable feat, as well as my respected Lecturers.

ABSTRACT

This study was meant to assess the effectiveness of men's engagement in women's empowerment process. Hence, it was designed to examine the functionality and expediency of the Journey of Transformation model, as a couple curriculums and a community based approach to engage men in empowering women, and to make appropriate recommendations for a more effective involvement of men in achieving meaningful women's empowerment.

This research used mainly a qualitative approach, but its findings were also expressed in numerical facts. It was an intensive and systematic investigation about a specific group of people and was carried out in Bugesera District, Eastern Province, Republic of Rwanda. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, and data was collected through in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

The study findings indicated that engaging men using a couple curriculum approaches or the Journey of Transformation model has proved to be effective. The effectiveness of that approach was reflected through men's behaviour change that led to the establishment of Men Engage clubs, out of which Male Champions for women's empowerment and men Agents for change were born.

But a part from that, the effectiveness of that model was also mirrored through a positive change in attitudes, perceptions and practices on the side of men, as the latter became remarkably supportive towards women's empowerment process, and even resolved to denounce and dismantle the destructive social norms that had all along driven them and constituted a big hindrance to the advancement of women. More so, local leaders of Bugesera where the approach was implemented, together with different actors inspired by the results of Journey of Transformation tactic decided to put in place sustainability measures aimed at safeguarding the model's outcomes..

Following the opinions described above, this study revealed that the Journey of Transformation has been vital in transforming men into active allies in empowering women in Rwanda, as due to that model, men became active agents for social change.

ACRONYMS

GE	: Gender Equality
GMO	: Gender Monitoring Office
ICRW	: International Centre for Research on Women
IMAGES	: International Men and Gender Equality Survey
JOT	: Journey of Transformation
MIGEPROF	: Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
NWC	: National Women Council
NYC	: National Youth Council
RWAMREC	: Rwanda Men's Resource Centre
S.N	: Serial Number
VSL	: Voluntary Savings Loans
WE	: Women Empowerment

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

In this study, the intention is to examine the effectiveness of men engage programs in transforming men into allies in women's empowerment agenda. However, as there is a wide range of strategies to effectively engage men in that process, this study focuses on the "Journey of Transformation model" run by RWAMREC in Bugesera District, Eastern Province, Rwanda.

Women empowerment is one of the cross-cutting issues and key dimensions of Rwanda's socio-economic and political development enshrined in its key pillar documents such as the Constitution, the Vision 2020, the forthcoming Vision 2050, the National Gender Policy, the National Decentralization Policy and National Strategy for Transformation NST1(GMO, 2019).

Considering its socio-political context after the horrific 1994 genocide against The tutsi, which occasioned many losses in human lives and a big number of women and girls that took on new roles and responsibilities, Rwanda felt compelled to adopt special measures to solve issues caused by a special situation (Baldwin, 2000).

For that purpose, the country resolved to start a women's empowerment journey by engaging men and transforming them into allies in embracing a more inclusive idea that values complementarity between men and women, in its quest to move from transition to a meaningful transformation (Powley, 2003).

This would not have been possible without challenging the traditional norms and stereotypes, through which women and girls were only portrayed as caregivers, weak and submissive to men, the latter being seen as breadwinners and head of families (Cherry, 2013).

Thus, Rwanda established both legal and institutional framework and adopted other programs for gender equality and women empowerment promotion. This noble initiative was quickly supported by civil society organizations in their quest to contribute to the government's efforts to promote and empower women in all spheres. Men engagement approach was used and meant to transcend harmful gender attitudes and behaviours that negatively impact women's emancipation and hinder their progress (PROMUNDO, 2019).

It is in this context that Rwanda Men Resource Centre (RWAMREC), a local non-governmental organization, of which the core mission is to address issues caused by negative masculine behaviours and gender inequalities, resolved to be part of this struggle, using the Journey of Transformation model (JOT).

However, though the JOT was implemented in 8 Districts of the country, no academic research has ever been carried out to appraise and establish the veracity on its effectiveness, so that it can be recommended for future interventions and planning.

Therefore, the present study is aimed at curing that mischief by deeply exploring the effectiveness of the **Journey of Transformation approach**", as a strategy to engage men and transform them into active allies in promoting women's empowerment in Rwanda.

This introductory chapter highlights the background of the study, presents the research problem, the objectives of the study and the research questions. It outlines the rationale, the purpose and significance of the study. It also describes the scope and the limitations of the study, and reflects definitions of key concepts used in the study, for the reader to be acquainted on what transpires herein. Finally the outline of chapters on which the present study is built upon will be mentioned at the end of this chapter.

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Over the last decades, Gender equality and women empowerment, two interlinked dimensions, became the agenda and expectations of both international and national actors. They were also considered as vital pillars for countries to fully realize the rights and potential of their citizenry (Sarwar, 2015).

In that context, countries expressed their commitments to achieve that global call through legal instruments, policies, strategies, programs and projects (Cornwall A. e., 2015). However, the adoption and adherence to legal framework and the establishment of mechanisms and initiatives cannot lead to positive results alone, without the involvement of men and boys and their willingness to change their mind-set. This assumption is explained by many facts from the practice and research findings, which ascertain that gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives which did not involve men and boys failed or led to very few positive impacts.

Instead, it is undeniably important to engage men and boys into the fight against gender inequities, by encouraging them to critically reflect on rigid norms related to manhood, in order to influence the change of stereotypical roles associated with gender (Kauffman M. , 2019).

There is an abundant literature on how interventions involving men and boys contribute to women's empowerment. This tactic is driven by the assumption that it may be operative, as it seeks to provide a unified voice to advocate for social change, by embracing approaches that critically challenge and alter patriarchal gender norms and power inequities between men and women in many societies (Marcus, 2014).

In that regard, both State and non-State actors resolved to join countries' efforts to work for the achievement of women's empowerment agenda, using the men engage approach, so that men and boys also contribute actively to the realization of that goal. Hence, it is imperative to explore how men engage approach is perceived and applied at global level, in sub-Saharan Africa, and in Rwanda.

1.2.1. Men's engagement in GE and women's empowerment at a global level

Nowadays, all countries are now striving to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, which provide for gender equality and women's empowerment not only as a fundamental human right, but also as a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world (Mercado, 2019).

In this regard, one of the strategies adopted by many countries is to involve men in all interventions aimed at promoting and empowering women.

Working closely with men was reiterated by many frameworks as an important approach that can help the world to meaningfully empower women. In the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the United Nations called upon men to become active agents in women's empowerment agenda, and underscored the necessity for women to work closely with men and boys in order to achieve that goal (Dover P. , 2014).

Furthermore, the African Union's Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment, is a strong regional framework that stresses the importance of engaging men in gender equality and women's empowerment process. The AU strategy states that engaging men in gender work is a transformational approach that aims to lessen and reject the main constraints that hinder the advancement of women, men's resistance being the major one (African Union, 2018).

In the same breath, the Rwandan Law on the Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence (2009), which involved substantial male participation both at the community level and via male parliamentarians during its drafting and passing processes, is one of the national frameworks that highlight the necessity of including men in gender interventions, as they play a vital role in preventing and eradicating GBV, through the establishment of legal and institutional mechanism to deal with GBV cases.

However, from a global perspective, men engagement in gender equality and women's empowerment takes on another level of complexity, as issues around that model are not similarly perceived. This is mainly due to the fact that men's engagement is an issue linked to societies' nature and structures, and it is well known that "issues affecting societies around the world are also not uniform" (Hassi, 2012).

Worldwide, societies are driven by their social structures which play a vital role in how people understand, explore and use the social constructs of masculinity and femininity, and it is not evident that men and women similarly reflect on how these paradigms positively or negatively play out in their own lives (ICRW, 2018).

In many instances, societies across the world have failed to empower women due to patriarchal power structures that govern them, and put women and girls in a general position of subordination and oppression and subject them to gender based violence and lack of control over key aspects of their lives and bodies.

This situation is being exacerbated by the fact that unequal power dynamics are influencing societies to the extent that the world is at a time when women's rights are under threat, with some countries accepting gender based violence, either by pushing back or withdrawing legislation protecting women and girls against violence and discrimination (Hawkes, 2017).

It is exactly due to this kind of phenomenon that the Beijing framework adopted in the course of the fourth world Women conference, envisioned male engagement as a pivotal approach to address inequalities between men and women, and challenge societal structures, beliefs, practices, and institutions that sustain men's privileges.

This measure was well thought of, because not only men were not involved in women empowerment's initiatives, but also they initially expressed bitterness over governments' policies on women's empowerment and even decried their negative impact on gender relations. Men went even further to declare that they feel threatened by any measure aimed at changing the status of women, simply because they feared to lose their power and manhood (Sidney Ruth Schule, 2017).

It is in this context that the "He for She movement" is since 2014 operating worldwide, striving to mobilize men from all corners of the world, starting from the top leaders of countries, to join and build an alliance of men striving to promote and fast-track women economic empowerment, back women's role in peace and security processes and their participation in political sphere and also eradicate gender-based violence (Corvetto, 2019).

Men engagement finds its relevancy here as excluding them from challenging societal structures and harmful practices is affecting women's lives worldwide and hinders women's advancement (Hirschmann, 2015).

However, as Western countries are still driven by patriarchal power dynamics, this leads us to conclude that men engagement approach is not applied in the western world due to societies' gender norms and stereotypes that are understood and perceived differently according to each and every society's beliefs and practices which, in many instances, do not favour women (Naomi, 2018).

Following the above mentioned argument, the relevance as well as the meaning of societal norms and values varies from one continent to another due to many factors. Africa, being one of the five continents of the world has its own realities as well, which shape African people's behaviours Vis - a- Vis gender equality and women's empowerment.

1.2.2. Men's engagement in GE and women's empowerment in Sub Saharan Africa

Some studies undertaken on the African Continent indicate that despite significant strides registered so far in women's political participation, Africa still experiences challenges in ensuring women's freedom from violence (GUMISA, 2005).

This is mainly due to the fact that countries in sub Saharan Africa are characterized by very high levels of discrimination, with discriminatory social institutions comprising laws, social norms and practices, that restrict women and girls to enjoy their fundamental rights such as access to empowerment opportunities, education and resources (Pujar, 2016).

Such a situation calls for going beyond the enactment of gender sensitive laws to their effective implementation, while also creating partnerships with communities through engaging men and boys so as to inspire social change (Branisa, B.; Ziegler, M. & Klasen, S., 2014)

Furthermore, the sub Saharan Africa region is governed by a male-controlled system, with rigid social and cultural norms that create and preserve power imbalances between men and women and continue to shape and influence men's decisions, behaviours and expectations related to masculinity (Madiba, 2017).

Therefore, it is imperative to engage in a discussion about how gender norms and stereotypes affect both women and men, so as to help different actors to better understand the complex ways that stiff power relations in the African society. Most importantly, it is worth it to motivate those partners to engage men and boys in reflections that transform them into “doorkeepers” to gender equality or as “potential agents” of positive change (ILO, 2018).

As African men and boys are culturally perceived as a powerful group in their communities, they can undoubtedly play a large role in changing the negative perceptions that people have on women and girls which impact their social position (Ngulube, 2018).

However, it is advisable to take cognizance that men engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa has to be done in such a strategic way that gender actors avoid any practice that is likely to isolate men and boys or stimulate backlash (Gresy, 2015).

That cautiousness is explained by the fact that in most cases, gender activists tend to blame men and boys for things they have not done or have been taught to do, instead of engaging them in a way that gives them responsibilities to challenge stereotypes. Such a tactic would help and motivate them to be at the forefront of that transformational change Africans are aspiring to.

However, despite its many advantages as described above, without buy-in from sub-Saharan African countries, engaging men in gender and development work will fail. This is proved by the fact that there is no indication whatsoever of the meaningful use of the Journey of Transformation model in almost all the African countries, except in Rwanda where that model has been embraced and is being implemented by RWAMREC in some Districts of the country, as detailed hereunder.

1.2.3. Men’s Engagement in GE and Women’s empowerment in Rwanda

Rwanda is known as the Africa's best-performer country in the Continent’s efforts to close the gender gap, after topping in the areas of political empowerment, economic participation and opportunity given to women (Oliver Cann, 2014).

The significant achievements Rwanda has registered so far are a result of the country’s political will at its highest level of leadership, translated into strong legal, institutional and policy

measures, which recognize the rights and capabilities of women and girls and value their contribution to the country socio economic development (Perrons, 2015).

Traditionally governed by a patriarchal system, where men had powers and privileges over women, Rwanda felt compelled to break some gender norms and ideologies that had created discrepancies, resistances and bad practices in social judgements, and led to outstanding imbalances between males and females, while also affecting its socio-economic and political stability (GMO, 2019).

To walk its way to the level where it is now, Rwanda chose to go the extra mile, grasp the philosophy of involving men and boys in questioning its society's structural barriers to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, and go beyond the dictates of its traditional cultural norms and values (shirley, 2016).

More so, the country embarked on a development agenda aimed at "transforming the nation into a society where gender equality and women's empowerment are considered as a solid foundation for women and men to realize their rights, potentials and ambitions and participate actively to the country's development (Pearson, 2009).

By so doing, Rwanda valued the spirit of the Journey of Transformation model, as an approach that wants people to rethink and redefine the notion of masculinity so that every citizen, men and women, boys and girls, enjoys the benefits of gender equality (Deanna, 2012).

The Journey of Transformation model was used for the first time in Brazil from 2011 by Promundo, as a result of the findings of the "International Men and Gender Equality Survey" (IMAGES). It was implemented in Rwanda from 2015 in some Districts, Bugesera being one of them (Promundo, 2019). It was grounded on the fact IMAGES revealed that in the context of income generation or livelihoods programs, couple conflicts may increase as women's income increases (Diop, 2015).

In that context, ISARO project of which the mission was to improve women's economic empowerment was implemented in Bugesera District by CARE International Rwanda. However, at the closure of the project, it was revealed that women's access to income, instead of uplifting the livelihoods, had occasioned high rates of GBV in families. Following that, RWAMREC felt

the need to adopt and implement the JOT approach, in order to engage men and boys to be agents of change, through their active participation in women's empowerment process.

To implement this program, RWAMREC organized men and boys' training and groups' educational activities, in which couples were called to reflect on rigid and harmful traditional gender norms. It was also an opportunity for them to discuss and challenge their personal attitudes and beliefs related to traditional ideas about sexual and reproductive health, division of labour and household decision-making, caring for children and sharing household tasks (Wadham, 2015).

Those trainings provided space to use the JOT training manual, while the group educational activities stimulated men to back and authorize their wives to participate in economic activities. Those sessions also encouraged men to examine and transform harmful gender attitudes that impact progress, and to acknowledge that women income generation also benefits men, women and their families (Edita, 2015).

The use of this approach by RWAMREC has resulted into the creation of Men Engage Network to implement male engagement approaches in development programs in many Districts of Rwanda, Bugesera being one of them.

However, neither RWAMREC nor Promundo nor any State/Non-State actor has ever undertaken a study to evaluate the impact of the JOT approach in Nyarugenge Sector. Also, no academically conceived study was ever conducted to examine the relevance of this strategy in the Rwandan context.

Hence, such a dynamic justifies the necessity of this study. The study will examine the effectiveness of the journey of Transformation and, depending on what transpires from desk review, may also contribute to bridging the gap in the literature on this approach.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Rwanda has made great strides in gender equality and women empowerment. Thus, the ideal is that people's vision and expectations are converged towards seeing those achievements safeguarded and promoted. For that purpose, strategies such as the JOT have been adopted to help in the realization of that objective, where men engagement in gender interventions is expected to lead to positive impacts. Also, empowering women and girls can make huge changes especially in GBV and poverty eradication, and if men and boys contribute to the removal of very many obstacles that women and girls face, they can change the world.

Unfortunately, apart from what is in the literature and what is present in the discourse of development organizations, the reality is that there is little evidence that men's engagement in gender interventions is happening at a significant pace. People are yet to know whether the strategies adopted are bringing positive impact or not.

Consequently, not being informed about the impacts is so embarrassing that different actors don't know what interventions to put their strengths in and what approach to use. If there are successes, it's good to know so that people focus on their sustainability. As of today, no one knows what the JOT has achieved.

It is in that context that the researcher chose to undertake this study on the JOT model in Bugesera District, Nyarugenge Sector, in order to provide empirical evidence on the real impact of that model in building up women, as there is no indication as to whether the JOT outcomes are really transformative.

However, considering also that this topic has not been subject of any academic research, the researcher's intent is to stimulate further research on that tool.

This will undoubtedly help policy makers and future researchers to take further action.

1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of this study is to assess the effectiveness of male engagement for gender equality and women empowerment, with a particular emphasis on the journey of transformation model as an approach to transform men into allies in empowering women. The specific objectives are the following:

- a. To identify RWAMREC's interventions in the perspective of men engagement.
- b. To assess the impact of JOT in changing men into active allies for women empowerment?
- c. To interrogate the effectiveness of the changes observed in men that benefited from the JOT training.
- d. To suggest the best ways for the men engagement approach to be more effective.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTION

- a. What were RWAMREC's interventions in the perspective of male engagement through JOT?
- b. What changes were they observed as a result of the JOT approach in Bugesera?
- c. How effective was the JOT approach in transforming men into allies in empowering women?
- d. What are the best strategies to effectively engage men in empowering women?

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As per some scholars, significance of a study entails any argument that aims at determining who benefits from the research and how that specific audience will benefit from its findings (Cuera, 2018).

Therefore, the significance of this study was described considering 3 levels:

- **At individual level:**

The researcher was attracted by the JOT model, as it helps men rethink their masculinities, get out of the confines of the traditional social norms and values and instead, become active allies for social change.

Also, the researcher chose this topic because no specific study on the JOT model has ever been carried out to inform policy makers about how that approach works, its impacts and effectiveness so that it can be supported and scaled up countrywide.

Thus, conducting this study was an opportunity for the researcher to apply the knowledge acquired at school on research methodology and techniques.

Lastly, by carrying out this study, the researcher made a contribution to her country, as she assessed the problems transpiring in one of its sectors, which affect the attainment of women's empowerment stated in the National Gender Policy and other legal instruments Rwanda is signatory to.

- **At the Academic level**

This study has not been subject to any academic research or publication. Therefore, the researcher, using an investigative and scientific research method, undertook it in Bugesera, Rwanda, in order to detect new data not captured in the existing literature on men engagement approach. The researcher's hope is that her study will eventually be used by other students and academicians, as it is likely to be published by the Centre for Gender Studies.

- **At community level (public interest)**

This study revealed many factors undermining women's empowerment process which were not known or were poorly known. Those are the social norms that have distorted gender relations between men and women over the years, and the lack of gender transformative interventions to cater for men's needs and recognize the importance of involving them in women's empowerment initiatives.

The findings of this study will certainly inform Policy makers on concrete actions to be taken to cure that mischief. Also, the researcher contributed to the identification of the problem, formulation of appropriate recommendations to deal with the issues found, because the main objective of a research is first of all to understand, explain a problem and contribute towards solving it.

1.7. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study evolved around the JOT approach and intends to examine its effectiveness in the Rwandan communities. It was carried out within the precincts of Bugesera District. Key informants Interviews and Focus groups Discussions (FGDs) were used to that effect, and the study covered a one year period, 2015-2018. Data were collected through In-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions and desk review.

The main limitations were the gaps in literature on the topic, as there is no academic publication on it yet.

Also, COVID 19 pandemic made it difficult for the researcher to undertake data collection, as many corners of the country were under a lockdown.

1.8. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS.

Key concepts used in the present study were defined in order to clarify them and avoid confusion on some expressions. Those concepts are: women's empowerment, ally, gender transformative approach, gender sensitive interventions, Journey of Transformation.

1.8.1. Women's empowerment

As per the World Bank's report (2000), the term empowerment is defined in different ways according to different sociocultural and political contexts and the topic being studied (The World Bank Group, 2001).

Some scholars define empowerment as a "process that leads to change", especially the change from a situation or a status in which an individual or groups of individuals did not have the possibility to decide upon (Kabeer N. , 2017). Empowerment implies change which consists in enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and transform those choices into desires actions and outcomes (Samman, 2016), (Edwards S. , 2017).

However, empowerment evolves around: **resources and agency** and is often defined as "*the process through which women gain the capacity for exercising strategic forms of agency in relation to their own lives and in relation to larger structures of constraint that position them as subordinated to men*" (Miles, 2016).

1.8.2. Ally

An ally is any person that actively promotes and aspires to advance the culture of inclusion through intentional, positive and conscious efforts that benefit people as a whole. To be a true ally implies lifting others up by advocating, sharing growth opportunities with others, recognizing systematic inequalities and realizing the impact of micro-aggressions, believing in underrepresented people's experiences, and most importantly – listening , supporting, self-reflecting and changing (Atcheson, 2018).

1.8.3. Gender transformative approach

According to Sultana (2010), a gender-transformative approach is an approach that entails engaging groups in critically examining, challenging and questioning gender norms and power relations in which gender gaps are grounded. It goes beyond the “symptoms” of gender inequality to address “the social norms, attitudes, behaviours, and social systems that cause them”.

Such an approach aims to move beyond individual self-improvement among women and towards transforming the power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities (Rottach E S. S., 2009).

1.8.4. Gender sensitive interventions

A gender sensitive intervention should be understood as that intervention which aims at achieving gender equality regardless of the target population development organizations work with. That definition bears in mind that gender is a vital concern in development and a way of looking at how social norms and power structures impact on the lives and opportunities available to different groups of men and women (Meyerson, 2000).

1.8.5. Journeys of transformation

According to PROMUNDO, CARE RWANDA and RWAMREC, the journey of transformation is a tool used by some actors in gender equality and women's empowerment to involve men as partners in women's economic empowerment programming by sharing care work with women. It is a methodology that emerges from the vision that, although women's economic

empowerment programming has powerful benefits on its own, it can be made even more effective at advancing gender equality when men are deliberately engaged as allies.

1.8.6. Male Champions

Male champions are those who use their authority to create a more inclusive culture, by striving for going beyond stereotypes and implicit bias on women, and make gender parity a priority in all interventions and make sure that gender equality is entrenched in all spheres. They also increase women visibility and advocate for their talents to be valued. In short, male champions advocate for women empowerment (Howson M. F., 2015).

1.9. CONCLUSION TO THE CHAPTER.

This chapter was devoted to the introduction, the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives that had to be verified, research questions, the significance of the study, scope and limitations and the definitions of concepts.

All these points helped the researcher in undertaking a thorough desk review in order to confirm or reject the assumptions enshrined in the research objectives.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The discussion presented in the previous chapter stresses the importance of looking at and analysing the JOT as an approach to engage men and boys in empowering women.

Thus, this study on the effectiveness of the JOT, as one of the approaches to engage men and boys in empowering women, is stimulated by facts and theories enshrined in the literature. However, as indicated in the introductory chapter, the JOT model is a new approach that is being used mainly by development actors, thus, it has not been written at length about.

The researcher had to undertake a deep appraisal of the concept through a lengthy desk review of the literature on men engagement approach. . Lessons and best practices arising from the literature in Western societies, Sub Saharan Africa and Rwandan contexts were central in this chapter, and a deep scrutiny of the guiding theories related to the topic being studied has been focused on.

This Chapter reflects the inventory or an extended list of literature comprising various documents and guiding theories related to topic being studied, and provides a deep analysis of the main empirical findings. At the same time it identifies empirical knowledge gaps emerging from scientific and academic researches on the topic if any.

Also, Scholars and other researchers' views over the same topic were assessed to inspire the present study. By so doing, important ideas expressed through key and interconnected concepts arising from the empirical review came out in a form of conceptual framework which this study is built upon. After that, inspiring theories on which this study is grounded were defined in a form of a theoretical review which is very instrumental in portraying a theoretical framework.

For that purpose, what transpires in Western societies, Sub-Saharan Africa, and in the Rwandan contexts was read through in order to get the maximum of information on men's engagement in empowering women.

2.2. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

This section reflects and outlines a larger frame of understanding of a critical analysis of various literatures on the topic under review, in the context of Western societies, Sub-Saharan Africa and Rwanda. Furthermore, it spells out the relevance of Scholars' views and their contribution to this study. In the end, this section will air out the gaps identified in the existing literature and hence justifying the necessity of this study.

2.2.1. Literature on the Journey of Transformation and men's engagement in women's empowerment in Western societies.

After an extensive survey of literature on the phenomenon being researched upon, it is apparent that the JOT, one of the strategies to engage men in gender equality and women's empowerment, has not been written about. This is a serious controversy, as that approach seems to be intrinsically important, having emerged from surveys such as the International Men and Gender Equality Survey, and other research findings on men and gender such as the research on Understanding Masculinities, etc.

As a fact, there are no specific studies worldwide that are exclusively devoted to the JoT, as a model to engage men women's empowerment. The only studies carried out so far are those on men engagement approach in general, as a political strategy and a new approach in development, of which research's findings revealed that men and boys' active involvement in the fight for gender equality and women's empowerment can lead to sustainable results (Piotr Pawlak H. S., 2012).

This situation could be explained by the fact that, as pointed out by the literature, engaging men was not initially embraced by many women worldwide, as they could not understand the rationale of such a tactic in fighting for gender equality and women's empowerment (ILO, 2015).

Instead, they showed resistance to involve men in gender and development work, on the motives that they feared that this method would weaken the feminist agenda and lead to missing the focus that is currently placed on women. More so, women also felt concerned over the rare resources allocated to women's empowerment initiatives, fearing that they would go back into the hands of men and accentuate inequities (Esplen E. , 2006).

On their side, men were very reluctant to be part of the fight for gender equality and women's empowerment, as they felt very much threatened by any measure aimed at changing the status of women, thinking that it would be contradicting the dictates of their patriarchal social norms (Sidney Ruth Schule, 2017).

This is well explained by IMAGES, a comprehensive study that has been carried out in 12 countries mostly in the global South and in some countries of the sub-Saharan Africa: Brazil, Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico, Norway, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Ukraine, study of which the findings constitute the ground for the JOT model, though not adopted by many of these (Katie, 2013).

Based on this situation, it is reputable that the JOT does not find its place in Western Societies yet, despite the fact that processes of women's empowerment normally require multifaceted and multi-layered solutions, one of them being engaging men so that they actively contribute to the realization of that global call (Samman, 2016).

This statement is strongly linked to the fact that in western societies, engaging men in the process of empowering women is stalled by societies' gender norms and stereotypes associated with patriarchy. Those norms do not give men and boys flexibility to move out the confines of their traditional masculinities, differently understood and perceived according to each and every society's beliefs and practices that, in many instances, do not favour women (Nichols, 2018).

That's why many scholars argue that engaging men and boys who have power over women and girls requires that people be strategic as to the methodology to use and the guidance given to different stakeholders, on how to support the design, funding and implementation of programs that influence men and boys in transforming gender norms and stereotypes that hinder the process of empowering women (Prime, Corine, & Racudin, 2009).

In that context, Barbara Stocking (2004), in a study on Gender Equality and Men, advised that if the world is really committed to effectively transform men into allies for women empowerment, international debates must put a special emphasis on men and boys, not as holders of privileges or perpetrators of violence, but as hidden and backers of gender equality (RUXTON, 2004).

This idea had previously been mentioned by Connelly (2000) who, in her study on Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development, is of the view that the only strategy that should be given due consideration if the world is aspiring to make progress towards women empowerment, is to help and inspire men to move out of the restrictions of gender divisions at all levels and make gender issues more visible than ever, while also striving to help every member of any society to be conversant with the benefits of gender equality.

Other scholars reinforce the idea that the benefits of including men and boys in the fight for women empowerment are evident, but require that the society adopts strategies aimed at changing the relationships between men and women. They also proposed that men should be educated on analysing the traditional male stereotypes in society and their subsequent impact on women (Kauffman M. , 2019), (Chant S. G., 2000), (Hearn, 2001).

In that respect, Cornell, 2004, cited in RUXTON (2004), in his study on the strategies for changing men's attitudes and behaviour declares: "people should consider men and boys not just as beneficiaries of women's work or holders of privilege or perpetrators of violence against women, but also as potential agents of change and allies in search of gender justice (p.8).

He challenges the fact that in many areas, only a few number of men and boys is changing their attitudes and resist the harmful constructions of masculinity, and try to support women's initiatives and opportunities to earn income outside their home, and also decry the discriminatory practices and GBV they are victims of.

Following this, Cornell (2004) is of the view that in order to eradicate men's resistance to change, strategic initiatives designed to transform them into allies must be embraced, such as using positive messages that take into consideration men's specific concerns as well as their needs. In addition to that, the Author also suggests other strategies that can be used to engage men in gender interventions, such as calling upon policy makers to come up with development policies and programs that make men be aware and appreciate how empowering women benefits them individually as well as their partners.

Furthermore, Cornell (2004) declares that men are key players in alteration of gender inequalities, and their role in women's economic empowerment cannot be overemphasized. According to him, men are the gatekeepers for production assets that are vital for the economic

advancement of women, which is a prerequisite for women's empowerment. Therefore, it is obvious that once men show their willingness to open the gates for major reforms, women empowerment will undoubtedly be achieved (Nazmunnessa & Haque, 2017).

This statement corroborates the dictates of the JOT model and therefore, the above mentioned dimension must be given the weight it deserves, because it has been ascertained that most of men and boys are still driven by the traditional interpretations of masculinities, some of which preserve and promote inequalities between men and women and thus need to be dismantled if the world is really desirous to achieve gender equality (Edwards A. , 2015) .

In the same breath, Flood (2018), in his study on “Engaging Men and Boys in Violence Prevention”, points out that violence prevention initiatives focused on men and boys are thriving rapidly across the globe, as they might be both operative and pioneering strategies for prevention of violence and other forms of harassment and abuse.

However, Flood (2018) declares that engaging men and boys in prevention work is a vital strategy to compel men to end violence against women, as it is worldwide recognized that violence against women is a men's issue, and that the way masculinities are shaped constitutes the basis of that violence.

Following that, Flood (2018) proposes a wide spectrum of preventive measures to involve men in the fight against gender based violence, such as **reaching out to men** through making any initiatives aimed at preventing violence against women more relevant to men, **showing men the magnitude of the problem** they cause, educate them face to face and through media, without forgetting to change their organizations where violence prevention efforts take place in men's workplaces and other institutions, in male dominated occupations such as police, faith leaders and the military.

Looking at the strategies proposed by the Author, there are not far from some of the tactics used by the JOT, of which the end goal is to provide space for men and boys to challenge and reject fixed gender divisions and harmful versions of masculinity attached to cultural beliefs, redefine them, so as to contribute to a world free from violence against women and girls (Mazurana, 2001) . However, the JOT does not come out clearly nor is mentioned anywhere in his book.

Kaufman (2004), in a framework for analysis and action developed in his book on “Transforming our Initiatives for Gender Equality by Addressing and Involving Men and Boys” backs the idea of involving men and boys in gender equality and empowering women as he thinks that leaving out boys and men from gender and development work gives room to failure.

However, Kaufman (2004) strongly believes that using this approach will only gain an everlasting place in the world if the interest in men and boys is not considered as a passing fashion, and if a deep appraisal of the lived realities of men and boys is undertaken to tackle the issue of patriarchy and masculinities that give them undue power and privileges. Furthermore, the author strongly believes that men are the caretakers of current gender orders and potential resistors of change and if actors’ interventions do not effectively reach them, many of their efforts will be futile.

The author argues that for men’s engagement to be successful, there is need for the gender interventions to use a soft language that does not make them feel guilty for the violent acts they committed or were socialized to do, in order to avoid backlash from their side, but a language that challenges them to take responsibility for change and value the benefits of non-violence for all.

Kaufman (2004) advises that policy-makers, human rights advocates and beneficiaries of interventions should use a positive language while engaging men, which language also reflects a sense of compassion, empathy and gives men and boys room for behavioural change(Haneke, 2009).

It would be injudicious not to mention a very recent program, HE for SHE, that attracted the support of many international organizations over the world, where the latter are devoting resources into initiatives and movements aimed at encouraging men and boys to be part of the struggle for the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Therefore, without enumerating all studies around the approach of engaging men and boys, it is ostensible that worldwide, the literature reveals that many authors have devoted their time to deeply investigate the effectiveness of men’s engagement strategy and the different ways to make it work. However, they did not examine the JOT as a stand-alone model, but implicitly touched upon it as part and parcel of the broad approaches to engage men and boys.

Following this, it is perceived that the problems highlighted above prevail in many parts of the world, but it is also imperious to shade light on the dispute lying behind the assumption as to whether the African Continent is spared, especially with its complex culture that is shaped by different countries' norms and stereotypes.

2.2.2. Literature on the Journey of Transformation and men engagement in women's empowerment in Sub Saharan Africa

According to Murunga (2020), Africa is a continent with large amounts of **cultural** diversity, where most of its countries are characterized by a wide gender gap, due to the cultural norms, values and stereotypes that lead to unequal power relations between men and women (Points A. , 2007).

In addition to that, those rigid norms and values associated with a strict interpretation of masculinities in Africa are a source of different forms of GBV, leading to the infringement of women's rights such as land ownership, right to undertake economic activities, right to their body, right to do unpaid care work, etc (Promundo I. &, 2011).

In such a context, Africa is a terrain where the JOT model would have helped in addressing any barrier to change, as it seeks to embrace Gender **transformative programs** that pursue to transform gender roles, socio-economic and political systems and other power dynamics that perpetuate gender inequality and disempower women (Gupta, 2007).

Unfortunately, it is not the case. Therefore, considering that the approach has only been piloted recently, its outcomes in Africa have not been documented yet.

Thus, No specific academic study on the JOT in Africa has ever been carried out, apart from reports produced by international organizations which, most of the times, do not provide accurate and credible data, or reliable information.

The only study that was conducted is the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) from which the JOT originated, carried out in Western Societies and on the African Continent, under the auspices and coordination of Instituto PROMUNDO and the International Centre for Research on Women (Fleming & MCCleary-Sills, 2013).

However Scholars, activists and many actors working in gender and development issues wrote books, articles and reports stressing the urgent need for men engagement in empowering women. They attempt to encourage African men to stand back and critically look over the perceptions they have about themselves but also about women and girls, so that, out of that aggressive self-questioning, they deeply analyse what needs to change and how they can actively contribute to that process of change that leads to gender justice and women's empowerment (GLinski, Schwenke, & O'Brien Milne, 2018).

Rwanda, one of the African countries, is also on the same path of engaging men and boys in women's empowerment, and though it is registering significant strides in that global agenda, the literature shows that the country still has a long way to go for greater achievements.

2.2.3. Literature review on the Journey of Transformation and men engagement in GE and women's empowerment in Rwanda.

Rwanda developed a strong partnership with both State and non-State actors, such as the Rwanda Men Resource Center (RWAMREC), which was founded in response to increased rates of GBV in post-conflict Rwanda. That local organization resolved to devote time and resources in working on gender transformative undertakings, aimed at changing men into allies and champions in gender equality and women's empowerment (Bizimungu J. , 2019).

Using a grassroots approach, RWAMREC was the only actor to implement the JOT approach in Rwanda and therefore, not many studies on that subject have been carried out, and RWAMREC is even yet to undertake thorough investigations on the effectiveness of that model.

Nevertheless, Patel and Wallach (2019), in a research on "Gender Equity and Male Engagement: IT ONLY WORKS WHEN EVERYONE PLAYS" conducted on behalf on the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), alluded a bit to the JOT model. They observed that by using that approach, men groups in Rwanda were tasked to rethink and redefine masculinities first before being joined by women. After that, people then engaged in couples to discuss household relational dynamics, decision making, and division of labour. Authors added that men were also sensitized on the benefits of equitable relationships in family and the need for them to participate in care work for greater relationship with family members.

In addition to that, their research's findings showed that active engagement of couples in discussions about economic decision making at household level improved couples' lives.

That being the only study on the JOT approach in Rwanda, other Scholars opted to discuss more about engaging men in empowering women, without putting a specific emphasis on the JOT as one of the strategies to engage men.

Using surveys, focus group discussions and interviews, the 3 Non-governmental organizations made a pilot evaluation in Huye District, Southern Province, and found that this approach has brought progressive change in couples. Men's collaboration in household chores and care work increased, household poverty reduced, partner relations improved and women's participation in decision making was enhanced. Furthermore, conflicts among couples tremendously decreased as both men and women are now able to make decisions jointly (Sleg, Barker, Kimonyo, Ndolimana, & Banneman, 2013).

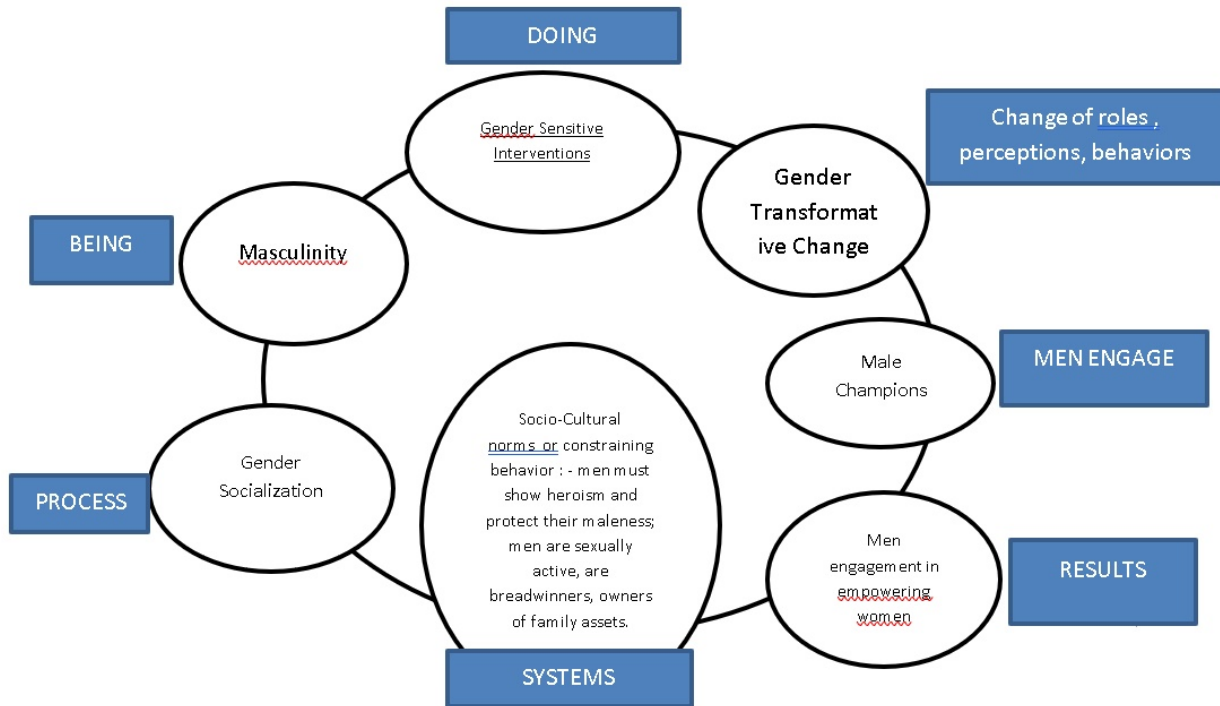
As the JOT in Rwanda has been poorly written about, this study will certainly contribute in addressing the gaps identified in the literature on the topic. It will also help us to confirm or reject the assumption that the JOT is facilitating men's approval to their wives in economic activities and men's self-reflection vis-a-vis societal rigid norms and their impacts on their wives and on themselves. But above all, this study will incite readers to interrogate the JOT model with regards to its effectiveness in empowering women in Rwanda.

Like in many other studies, a wide range of concepts that are linked to the topic have been used in this research and presented in a form of conceptual framework and thereafter, theories arising from those concepts were highlighted in a theoretical framework.

2.3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In his book on "Researching and Writing a Dissertation", Fisher (2007) defines a conceptual framework as a set of arrays of concepts and their interconnections. Therefore, this section covers the literature review of the pertinent academic topics and concepts that are interconnected with men's engagement in women's empowerment programs. These topics are: Socio-cultural norms, gender socialization, masculinity, gender sensitive interventions, gender transformative change, men engagement and male champions, women's empowerment. The graphic below shows how those notions are interconnected.

Figure1. A Conceptual Framework for approaches that are interconnected with Men engagement approach in GE and women’s empowerment.



Source: Conceptualized by the researcher

The figure above shows the interconnectedness or relationships between some approaches that are related with men engagement.

Explanations:

Socio-cultural norms such as men are breadwinners, protectors of families, tough, don't show their emotions, must protect their heroism and manhood, are sexually active, etc.. **symbolize the systems...** Those norms are mainly seen as constraining behaviours. Then men are taught those norms through gender socialization (**the process**), from which the problems of masculinity originates (**being**). But when Gender Sensitive Interventions are undertaken (**doing**), they lead to Gender Transformative change (**change in roles, perceptions and behaviours**), out of which Men Champions are born, and influence men engagement in empowering women. That is the change expected.

This means that before the introduction of the JOT, men had negative attitudes, perceptions and behaviours about women's empowerment due to social norms they had been socialized with (system and process). But when the JOT was introduced and implemented (gender sensitive intervention: doing), it resulted into a transformational change (change in roles, perceptions and behaviours).

Thus, Men Champions and Agents for Change clubs through which men undertook peer education about the benefits of women's empowerment were established, and the JOT led to the change expected.

That said, the above described concepts are in their turn leading to theories that are relevant to the present study and presented in a Theoretical Framework.

2.4. THEORITICAL REVIEW.

Fisher (2007) expands on theoretical review and defines it as a representation of assumptions arising from the review of theories inspiring a particular study. Therefore, this section outlines different theories that are relevant and interlinked to the topic being written on. It is then obvious that those theories originated from various concepts highlighted in the conceptual framework and also provide further clarifications to the topic under study.

In light of this, some concepts used in the present study lead either to a **behavioural theory** that necessitates radical changes in expectations and perceptions, but also to a **sociological theory**. In some instances, those theories may be finding their source from the Law, Social sciences and/or

psychology. This section indicates how theories that inspire this research influence the ways in which people perceive the involvement of men in empowering women and how they deal with it.

Definitions of Theories

For purposes of this study, many theories seem to be at play, but considering the main objective of the study, which is to transform men into allies in the process of empowering women, it is apparent that only two theories are relevant to this case: **The Social norms theory and the Theory of Change.**

2.4.1. Social Norms Theory:

In their simplest definition, social norms are the informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable, appropriate, and obligatory actions in a given group or society. Scholars define Social norms as one's beliefs about what others in one's group do, commonly called descriptive norms; and what they approve and disapprove of, qualified as injunctive norms (Heise, 2018).

Therefore, the Social norms theory aims to understand the environment and interpersonal influences in order to change behaviour. Moreover, peer influence and the role it plays in individual decision-making around behaviours is the primary focus of Social Norms Theory (Chung & Rimal, 2016).

According to Wayne W(2019), the Social Norms Theory states that our behaviour is influenced by misperceptions of how our peers think and act, misperception being defined as the gap between "perceived and real ". In respect to this, the Social Norms Theory suggests that correcting misperceptions of perceived norms in a way results into a decrease in the problem behavior or an increase in the desired behavior. For that purpose, it is imperative to undertake social norms interventions with a view to correcting misperceptions of norms.

In the context of this study, men in Bugesera District have for years been driven by perceived norms that women's empowerment is a threat to their manhood. Thus, the JOT model could be seen as one of the social norms interventions, as it engages men and provides space for them to critically rethink, redefine their masculinities and get rid of peer divertible perceptions and actions undermining women's empowerment initiatives.

Social norms entail societal gender norms and stereotypes and constitute the causal part of the problem that justifies the need to appeal to the theory of change.

2.4.2. Theory of Change

The theory of change is that one which requires gender transformative programs that, if well implemented, can lead to a positive change every society is aspiring to. In this context, it entails men's behavioural change vis-à-vis women empowerment. Despite the fact that there is no universally agreed upon definition of what constitutes a theory of change, many scholars define it as a decisive model of how an initiative such as a policy, a strategy, a program, or a project contributes, to the intended result (Serrat, 2017).

According to Valters (2015), a theory of change helps to cross the complexity of social change, in its turn defined as the process through which individuals and communities amend or reject customs and associated prominent ideas, values, and purposes to act differently. The theory of change is driven by a complex display of cultural, demographic, economic, environment, political, religious, scientific, and technological forces. Therefore, it is a process of reflective consideration and critical thinking that openly explores assumptions of how change happens, taking into account different philosophies, world views, contexts, sector and or group of people (Jameel, 2014).

In the context of this study, the theory of change is very important, as it compels people to define strategies to adequately engage men so that they become active agents of change in the process of empowering women. Thus, it is imperative to dissect that by responding to the following question: Why is it that people or societies appeal to the theory of change as a pathway to gender equality and women empowerment?

To answer this question, and guided by the scope of the present study, it is important to remind us that traditional social norms, beliefs and attitudes have for many years negatively affected women's rights, and consequently, women have not found their rightful place in the society (Miller & DA, 2016). Therefore, no change can neither be envisaged nor achieved if negative societal norms that give men power to the detriment of women are not challenged and rejected.

This is supported by Kauffman (2004) who states that transformational change occurs when our foundational understanding of the world around us significantly shifts.

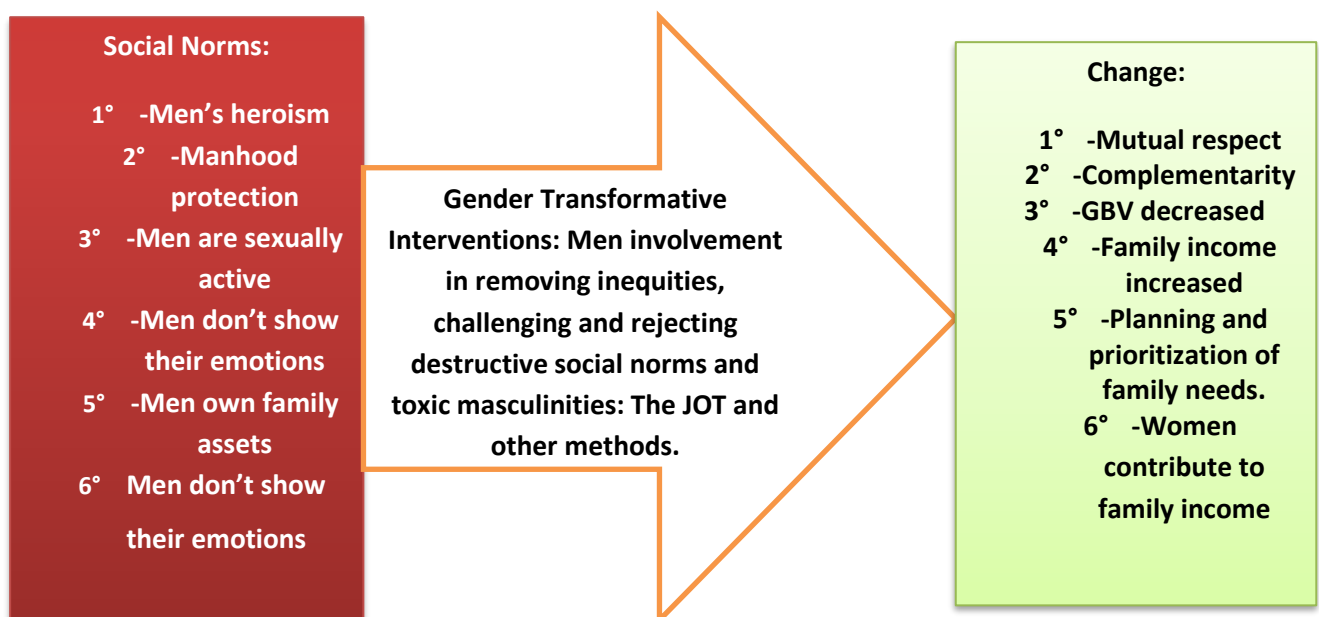
In conclusion, the two theories described above are interconnected with the topic being researched upon and the different concepts inherent to it. It is therefore important to appreciate the creativity of scholars, as they often enlighten the world on how systems of power and oppression always interact and consider the very many factors that intersect with gendered power and oppression, such as racism, class system, sexuality etc.

2.5. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Grant, C (2014) defines a theoretical framework as a carefully chosen theory or a set of selected theories or setup philosophies that are interrelated and influence a phenomenon under study. In other words, it is a delineation of theories which illuminate why the problem the researcher is investigating exists, and how to solve it. Those theories reflect assumptions that are verified, rejected or confirmed by the study findings.

In this study, the researcher was only interested in seeing the social norms challenged and rejected, and the positive change in men's behaviors, perceptions and practices achieved.

The following figure illustrates the theoretical Framework on transforming men into allies in empowering women.



Source : by the researcher

Explanations on the above figure

Social norms such as men are heroes, must protect their manhood, are sexually active, don't show their emotions, own family assets ..., are mainly seen as constraining behaviours; create frictions between men and women, boys and girls. In order to set right that undesirable situation, there is need to involve men in removing existing inequities, and this can only be done through **Gender transformative interventions**, through which men are given space to critically challenge and reject destructive social norms which hinder women's rights enjoyment. Those gender transformative interventions lead to **change**, as men accept to transcend the discriminatory social systems that cause power imbalances and become transformed into allies in women's empowerment.

2.6. CONCLUSION TO THE CHAPTER

This chapter on Literature review shades more light on the approach of men engagement in empowering women, using the Journey of Transformation approach, as it tries to describe its origin, applicability, impact. Western societies, African Continent and Rwandan context were written about. A conceptual and a theoretical fr.

Research assumptions related to the legitimacy of the effectiveness of the JoT plus different aspects enshrined in the theoretical review constitute the ground of Chapter 4 on the findings. Thus, those are elements that influenced my position vis-à-vis the role of the JOT in transcending social norms and in transforming men and boys into real gender and women empowerment allies.

However, it is imperative to describe all the tools the researcher used in order to obtain those findings. Chapter 3 on Methodology did justice to that component.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Creswell (2003) define methodology as a logical group of methods that complement one another and that have the ability to fit to deliver data and findings that will provide answers to the research questions and enrich the researcher's purpose. In the same line, Bowling (2002) defines methodology as the complete structure of the research study; the size and sample methods, the practices and techniques utilized to collect data and the process to analyse data.

Therefore, this section on Methodology depicts the methods and materials used for this research. It refers to the previous chapter as it helps to air out the study's findings which constitute the ground for the researcher to confirm or reject the assumptions formulated and arising from the literature review.

Hence, this chapter outlines the research design, the study setting, the population as well as the sampling strategies and sample size. It also elucidates the methodological considerations in terms of data collection techniques and the analytical model or procedures used to analyse those data. Moreover, it describes the positionality of the researcher and includes a discussion as to the credibility of the study, which entails a larger frame of understanding with regard to the validity and reliability of the study, as well as ethical considerations.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Burns and Grove (2001) delineate a research design as a plan for conducting a study with full control over the factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings. Thus, designing a study is an important step as it compels the researcher to plan the study in such a way that helps him/her to achieve envisioned results, hence increasing the chances of obtaining information that could be associated with the real situation (Burns, 2001).

In line with this idea, and in order to reach the overall purpose of this study, qualitative research design was mainly used. But quantitative research design was also used in data analysis. This helped the researcher to identify, analyse and describe dynamics related to the nature of

interventions undertaken within the framework of the JOT approach, and to explore the effectiveness of that strategy.

Thus, it is imperative to underscore that this research is a case study through which, as defined by Creswell (2003), “a Researcher, whose intent is to investigate a social phenomenon based on the participants standpoint, explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process or one or more individuals”.

By so doing, this exercise corroborated the arguments of Vromen (2010) who explains that: “When anyone seeks to understand or explain how and why a political institution, event, issue, or process came about, that person must ask questions that can be answered through using qualitative methods”.

Therefore, Focus Group discussions in depth interviews were used to collect qualitative data, as through the research questions, the researcher was interested in inquiring and understanding the perceptions and behaviours of men and women vis-à-vis a phenomenon (Williams, 2007).

An open-ended list of pre-formulated questions was used in the conduct of interviews, and respondents were given room to express their opinions. This investigative tactic provided an important depiction of the reality of the multifaceted gender problem, and the methodology used helped the researcher to avoid making generalizations about people’s understanding of the social phenomena being studied. It also inspired the researcher to think about some theories at play in an attempt to learn more about this little known or a poorly understood situation (Leedy, 2001).

3.3. STUDY SETTING

According to Snowdon, C (2014) study setting entails a description of the study environment including the location and experimental set up. This study was conducted in BUGESERA District, NYARUGENGE Sector. This choice was influenced by the fact that RWAMREC has been implementing the JOT in that area. But most importantly, this choice was influenced by the fact that reports local leaders revealed that high rates of GBV characterised that area. This was due the fact that when women begun to access finances through Voluntary Saving Loans scheme (VSL), their economic empowerment resulted into men’s frustration which in turn increased family conflicts instead of improving livelihoods.

Nyarugenge Sector is therefore a place where reliable information could be easily got, not only from the real beneficiaries of the program, but also from RWAMREC itself who spearheaded the implementation of the JOT approach and local leaders who supervised that noble intervention.

3.4. POPULATION

According to Eldredge, Wegel & Kroth (2014) a population is the entire group of people or objects that are of interest to the researcher, or, which meets the criteria that the researcher is interested in. In the same breath, Polit and Hungler (1999: 33) define the population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. Therefore, the target population should be understood as the entire aggregation of respondents that meet the designated set of criteria". In the case of the present research, the population encompasses couples that are direct beneficiaries of RWAMREC's interventions.

3.5. SAMPLING STRATEGIES AND SAMPLE SIZE.

As per Polit and Beck (2004), a sample is a proportion of a population which is selected to participate in a study. Sampling encompasses a process of selecting a sub-section of a population that represents the entire population in order to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest. On its side, a sampling strategy is the method used by the researcher to determine the true representatives of the target population from which the sample is drawn.

For the case in point, we must be mindful of the fact that this study has used qualitative research methods of which the aim is to raise understandings into a phenomenon rather than assume representativeness. Therefore, a purposive sampling technique finds its relevance in this research. Bowling (2002) explains that a purposeful sample is a deliberate and non-random method, which aims to sample a group of people with a specific characteristic that is relevant to the study. The eligibility criterion of the selected participants in this study was: being knowledgeable about the JOT due to one's involvement and experience in that model.

With regard to the sample size, it refers to the number of participants in a study.

As the researcher was looking for liable information, the sample size comprised 13 couples identified by local leaders as having had high levels of GBV. In addition to that, 6 key informants were selected based on their familiarity with the JOT. The selection of participants

including couples took into consideration many dynamics including the age group (between 21 to 60 years), their educational attainment, the duration of their marriage, couples occupation etc.

For the Researcher to get information about the effectiveness of the JOT, both local leaders and those from RWAMREC were also interviewed as key informants:

The selection of these key informants was based on their level of interaction with local communities, and their involvement in the supervision or implementation that community based programs. The information given by these people provided a valuable depiction of the relevant data to deliver the research objectives of this study.

3.6. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Dalton and Todor (2007) define research instruments as tools, plan and structure of any investigation conceived in the quest to obtain expected answers to research questions. In most cases, those tools comprise documents (literature review), questionnaires or interview guide and checklists.

In this study, primary data were collected through interviews and focus group discussions (data triangulation), using an interview guide developed by the researcher and a digital recorder to keep the data. This was key in enhancing the credibility of the study as the researcher, being the main instrument for data collection, also talked to people, conducted interviews and took notes.

In the same vein, secondary data were collected through desk review or document analysis.

3.7. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

In this study, data collection was done in light of its description by Flecha, A (2019) who defines it as “a systemic way of gathering information, which is relevant to the research purpose or questions”. In light of this definition, data collection techniques that were used in this research are: interviews, focus group discussions, documents.

For the researcher to get reliable data, prospective respondents were approached and invited to play a part in the study of which detailed information were given to them before their consent to participate.

By so doing, the researcher's engagement in daily lives and attitudes of the participants and key informants through interactions was given due consideration, and both records and documents on the topic were perused through.

3.7.1. In depth Interviews

According to C Boyce (2016), in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that encompasses conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their viewpoints on a particular idea, program, or situation.

For purposes of this study, in-depth interviews were relied upon due to their flexibility and the possibility to get in-depth information (Bryman, 2016). Thus, interactions with the 13 couples through one by one discussion were held, as the aim was to deeply analyse the perceptions of people vis- a- vis the JOT model and its effectiveness and the likely loopholes it presented.

The sample comprised couples (wives and husbands), Human rights activists, plus some leaders as described above.

In-depth interviews were conducted using an interview guide comprising questions inherent to the topic under study, and the researcher had to respect ethical considerations so as for the interviewees to institute their trust and their readiness to interact with her with all frankness and honesty. Thus, the researcher had to assure the respondents that the information provided was to be kept with strict confidentiality, and that the same data were being collected only for purposes of this research and not for any other reasons. This was done on the assumption that the respondents had the relevant information, understood the questions directed to them and more so, were willing to tell the truth in their answers.

3.7.2. Key Informants interviews

According to Bartee (2016), key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who are considered as experts as they are very much knowledgeable and conversant with what transpires in the community. Chinedu (2018) states that the purpose of key informant interviews is to collect information from a wide range of people, especially community leaders,

professionals, residents or others who have who have actual familiarity and first-hand knowledge about the community and its institutions.

The key informant interview leads to in-depth interviews and the intersection between them is that both methods surrender preconceived questions and instead focus on the lively flow of conversation between researcher and participants.

3.7.3. Focus group discussions

According to Sushil, Sudeep and Bipul (2016), a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) involves gathering people from similar backgrounds and experiences together to discuss a specific topic of interest. It is against this background that, guided by the fact that the JOT approach is a new model, and, in order to capture liable information from the local population where that approach was implemented, both men and women were selected and approached in FGDs.

The researcher personally conducted the FGDs in a loosely structured discussion over the JOT as her topic of interest, and it was an opportunity to ask questions in order to collect more information than those produced by individual interviews. This helped in making projections of the complex picture of the situation with regard to how people perceive the JOT.

3.7.4. Desk Review

According to Anderson (2014), documentation analysis enables the researcher to analyse any written materials that encompass information about the phenomenon a researcher wishes to study. This technique entails using secondary data obtained from literature review of books, websites reports, researches done in various research institutions, universities and high learning institutions, other publications and journals related to the topic of the research.

For the case in point, the researcher was inspired by existing literature on the JOT, mostly reports from RWAMREC but also read through other documents on social norms etc..

3.8. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Chapman (2018) defines Data Analysis as a process of inspecting, rearranging, interpreting, modifying and transforming data to extract useful and reliable information from it, which can help in transforming and turning the data into actionable insights. In this study, data analysis allowed the researcher to identify the different patterns and themes from the data and therefore

provide a good understanding of the research objectives and reach to informed and tangible conclusions.

In this study, field work helped in collecting raw data which needed to be analysed in order to single out valid fundamentals that were relevant to the research study. It was also an opportunity for the researcher to see-through various concepts and different themes arising from data collection.

3.8.1. Analysis of data

Qualitative data was recorded and their summary resulting from notes taken in the field was analysed. Specifically, the analysis was based on information provided by respondents on different issues or themes around which the discussions evolved. Thus, in order to capture the necessary ideas transpired in the discussions or interviews, it was imperative not to rely on the summary but also to consider the original statements of different respondents on the themes.

3.9. POSITION OF THE RESEARCHER

In this study, it is important to describe the correlation between the researcher and the interest that she had in the topic under study, so that the end user understands the researcher's motives in studying the phenomenon.

Following this requirement, it is imperious to mention that the researcher is a Lawyer by profession and a Human Rights activist, gender equality Advocate who always strived for the promotion, protection and observance of people's rights, with a special focus on women and children, due to their vulnerability.

When she entered the political arena, the researcher spearheaded the review process of the National Gender Policy and its implementation Strategy, both of which defining a framework for women empowerment in all spheres. More so, she initiated many legal instruments such the Law punishing Gender Based Violence as a practice which was in the past embedded in our traditional social norms. She also conducted many awareness campaigns on the necessity to involve men in all initiatives geared towards the attainment of gender equality and women's empowerment. In the same breath, guided by the government's commitment to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women, and help women to enjoy their socio-economic and

political rights, the researcher streamlined the management of a women guarantee Fund so as for women and girls to access finances for their socio-economic empowerment.

During that time, men refused to allow their wives to use family properties as collaterals required by financial institutions prior to providing loans. This situation alone led to an increased rate of GBV, and the researcher got involved in resolving such conflicts in many families.

Following this, it is undoubtedly certain that the researcher was very much interested in the JOT model, as one of the approaches that smoothen women's economic empowerment and at the same time harness family cohesion through men involvement in the eradication of GBV.

With regards to the study site, the researcher's choice was influenced by her wish to see how women's economic empowerment in Nyarugenge Sector, instead of improving livelihoods, resulted into high rates of GBV. The researcher also wanted to get inspirations from the JOT as a home grown solution in eradicating GBV and restoring peace and harmony within couples.

3.10. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY.

According to Burns & Grove (2001), validity implies that that the findings clearly reflect the phenomenon under study.

On the other hand, reliability means that if an instrument is used on a similar group of respondents in a similar context, it should produce similar results. In a nutshell, the study results must be proven repeatable and replicable. That being applicable in quantitative research, the researcher had to make sure that credibility and dependability were met. Credibility of data entail that the findings are undoubted and acceptable. This was achieved by using many tactics, such as peer review, triangulation using more than one source, recording tools,

The Dependability of the study was achieved by making sure that narrative about the methods used to collect data was well described, taking into account the context in which the study was carried out.

3.11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Creswell (2014) defines ethics as “a code of behaviour that is considered correct in a research. It is imperative to first strive to protect the respondents who are ready to open up and provide information. The researcher in this case made a clear communication to the participants

regarding their rights such as their right to consent, right to anonymity and confidentiality and their right to voluntary participation.

For this, a letter of introduction highlighting her details and those of the study were attached to the questionnaire, for the participants to be informed about the purpose and clear objectives of the study. This was done in order to seek their consent. Also, prior to administering the questionnaire, the researcher introduced herself, provided details on the purpose of the study in order to alleviate the fears of the participants and institute or maintain the trust between the two parties. This helped in collecting data that responded to research standards.

3.12. CONCLUSION TO THE CHAPTER

This chapter sheds light on the methodology used in this study, how this study was designed and conducted, as it underscores the procedure to follow in choosing the study setting, the population involved in the study, the sampling strategies and size, the research instruments, data collection techniques, and data analysis procedures. It also gives details on many aspects of the researcher's personal life which define the motives and circumstances under which this topic was chosen.

Furthermore, ethical considerations that guided the researcher while doing fieldwork have also been described at length. At the completion of data collection, it was the time for data analysis and interpretation of the findings, which was done justice to under Chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter refers to the presentation, analysis and discussions of empirical findings obtained from data collected from the field. Focus group discussions and a questionnaire were used to collect primary data so as for the researcher to ensure quality of information. It is worth noting that respondents who used the questionnaire also joined in focus group discussions. This methodology made the researcher feel at ease in getting the study findings, of which the details are highlighted hereunder.

To ensure consistency, Data were screened properly and analysed following the objectives of the study and the research questions. Also, both the presentation and discussions of the findings were done justice to, in such a way that they were linked to the key concepts enshrined in this study and the literature out of which the conceptual framework was drawn.

Therefore, different factors or variables were considered in choosing participants to this study, and their profile is presented hereunder.

4.2. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.2.1. Profile of the participants

In order to choose participants that are relevant to this study, variables were established to obtain the information about the identification of respondents. For this study, the main variables considered were: age, educational level, occupational activity, professional experience, legal marital status, and social status. In this work, the social status variable was defined as the fact of being a direct or indirect beneficiary of the JOT implemented by RWAMREC. However, the researcher's focus was put on couples only, who underwent training on the JOT approach.

These considerations were very important, as they helped the researcher to profoundly apprehend the magnitude of the JOT and to collect and value a wide range of thoughts, while ensuring that all segments of the citizenry were well represented during that step, in such a way that no one is left behind.

The table below describes the profile of participants considering the factors highlighted above.

Table 1: Number of Participants according to the variables

S.N	Variables considered in choosing the Participants	Participants to the study	Number of respondents
1.	Gender	Women Men	10 16
2.	Education	Illiterate Primary School level Secondary School level and below Graduate Post graduate	14 6 5 1 0
3.	Occupation	- Small farmers, - Informal Business - Teachers, - Soldiers(Retired) - Local Leaders, - Religious leaders	14 5 3 1 2 1
4.	Age	- Between 21 and 35 - Between 35 and 45 years -Between 45 and 55 years - 55 and above 50 years	5 14 6 1
	Total		26 people

Source: Data collected by the researcher, July-August 2020.

As per table1 on the number of participants according to different factors, 13 trained couples or 26v people took part in this study.

The researcher met the main participants in couples first, then one by one through in-depth interviews. However, 6 other people comprising Community Activists, local leaders, RWAMREC leaders and staff played a role in this study as Key Informants in order to provide additional information. The choice was based on the knowledge they have about the model, by virtue of the supervisory role they had been playing in the community, or the implementing role they assumed as RWAMREC's staff members. Regarding the age of participants, that aspect

informed about the range of age of people who were chosen to participate in this study, bearing in mind that the JOT was designed for couples (men and women) aged between 21 to 60 years. Considering that element, the respondents were only adult people. As for their social status, the JOT model was mainly designed for couples, either legally married or in illegal union. However, it is also good to indicate that as a result of the JOT, couples who were not legally married have been encouraged to legalize their marriage, so as to prevent GBV related cases that often happen in such illegal unions, but also to abide by the Government Policy which recognizes and encourages unions that are permissible by the family Law.

As for the occupation criteria, that variable helped in knowing which type of occupation called people to be vested into the phenomenon under study. Thus, respondents were couples who had been trained by RWAMREC on the JOT model using a couples' curriculum approach. However, other people such as community activists, RWAMREC staff and local leaders at various levels of decentralized entities also came in, considering their familiarity with the JOT and the role they had played in the supervision of the implementation of the same model.

The table below reflects the profile of key informants and their familiarity with the JOT.

Table 2: Profile of Key Informants and their familiarity with the JOT.

V.N	Occupation	Conversant with/ knowledgeable about	Education	Gender
1.	A high ranked leader at Nyarugenge Sector	JOT and Social norms	Masters	Male
2.	RWAMREC high ranked leader	JOT	Masters	Male
3.	Military	GBV and Social norms	Primary	Male
4.	Businesswoman	Voluntary Saving Loans	Primary	Female
5.	Teacher	Family conflicts	Secondary	Female
6.	Small Farmer	Social norms	Illiterate	Female
	TOTAL			6

Source: Adapted from data collected by the researcher, July-August, 2020

According to table 2 on the Profile of Key Informants and their familiarity with the JOT, 4 key informants in this research were also direct beneficiaries of RWAMREC. Those were Male Champions or Agents for change and community activists who grasped change after undergoing JOT training, and decided to educate their peers. Other key informants were local leaders who played a big role in supervising the JOT program. Lastly a representative of RWAMREC leadership who took part in the implementation of the JOT program was also interviewed. As data collected were screened and analysed in line with the objectives of the study, findings that seemed to be interconnected were grouped into themes or sub-titles. The following were identified as relevant to the study.

4.2.2. THEMES ARISING FROM THE FINDINGS

- a. RWAMREC's interventions in the perspective of men engagement
- b. The impact of the JOT in changing men into active allies for Gender equality
- c. The effectiveness of the changes observed in men that went through training on the JOT.
- d. Suggestions for the men engagement approach to be more effective.

4.2.2.1. RWAMREC's interventions in the perspectives of men engagement.

Research questions directed to participants on this point were meant to identify RWAMREC's interventions in engaging men. Thus, on the question as to whether participants knew those interventions and could explain more about the JOT and how it works, when it started being implemented in their community and its target population, respondents enlightened the researcher on all these aspects. They stated that RWAMREC is an organisation which uses male engagement approach to promote positive masculinity and protect women's rights.

On the specific case of the JOT, participants declared that the JOT is a men engagement approach which targets couples. Its implementation started in 2015. They added that the approach originated from a project called "ISARO", of which the activities were oriented towards women's economic empowerment in Bugesera District.

Respondents said that ISARO Project introduced a scheme called Voluntary Savings Loans, which benefited many women. Through VSLs, women were given space to get together and talk about their daily life's issues such as GBV of all forms they were subjected to, poverty and other issues. Women were also provided with small loans to help them gain income to uplift their families, but their husbands were the ones to take decisions around money utilisation, and most of the time, diverted it to other purposes of their choice, without associating women.

Participants commended RWAMREC for implementing an approach targeting couples, as through their participation in the group educational activities, men were encouraged to do a self-reflection, revisit and reflect on rigid gender norms leading to GBV and other family conflicts, and to question traditional ideas about household division of labor, decision-making and sharing of household tasks. These activities also influenced men to authorize their wives' participation in the VSL groups and to support their economic empowerment.

As to the questions whether they knew anything about the motives that might have influenced RWAMREC to implement the JOT in Nyarugenge Sector, and the kind of opportunities offered by that intervention, that question generated two divergent answers.

Some respondents, especially women, stated that while VSLs were meant to empower women economically and improve livelihoods, men were not enthused by that scheme, as instead of seeing VSL into opportunities, used them to commit GBV of all forms against women. They added that men were threatened to see women access finances, thinking that such a situation would push women to progressively take over men's roles and responsibilities. Following that, high rates of GBV against women by their husbands were registered and often led to family frictions and dislocations.

Regarding the perceptions that people have on men engagement approach, participants applauded the initiative, saying that men's violent reactions towards women going to VSLs were influenced by traditional social norms and values applicable in that area, which dictated that women could never earn income, but were to remain in their homes and be financially dependants to their husbands. Women participants stated that masculinity/manhood and its definition was also one of the causes of GBV. So, for them, RWAMREC decided to implement the JOT in that area, firstly to deal with high rates of GBV but also to engage men in women's

empowerment initiatives by calling them to revisit and redefine their masculinity, plus the social norms and values which were not favourable to women's empowerment.

Another type of answer emanated from men's side.

Yves said:

“Before being trained on the JOT, we were seeing VSLs as a platform created for women to strategize against us (kwigaranzura), as their meetings through VSLs gave women room to create cocoons in which to gossip and strategizing against us. These negative thoughts on the side of men were influenced by the fact that we felt excluded from previous initiatives. However, following what we learnt in trainings, all of us expressed our commitment in supporting and promoting women empowerment process. We are committed to adopt positive masculinities and embrace change in our behaviors and actions towards our wives and to build a society free from violence”.

Regarding the opportunities offered by the JOT, participants confirmed that the JOT has brought about change in their community, as GBV tremendously reduced, and that couples are now enjoying peace, harmony and stability within their families, which improved their socio-economic status. . To illustrate some of their views, Martine (pseudonym), a woman participant, praises RWAMREC for coming up with the JOT approach, saying that training helped women to recover their rights, after they were deprived of them and instead subjected to GBV of all forms. Martine mentioned the issue of non-recognition of women's fundamental rights by their husband, and the fact that families were characterized by total disagreement between couples. She also mentioned the fact that women were excluded from the management of family assets, though they were the one to do everything such as going to do farming, harvest and sell the production, but not have a say over money utilization.

Martine's statement was so touching that Vital (pseudonym), her husband, who was present during the interview, felt frustrated by his deeds and declared that men were thinking that their wives' going to VSLs was a way to take over their roles and responsibilities, and also decried the GBV they have committed against their wives.

“I don’t know what to say. I always saw my wife going to women’s groups and voluntary savings loans. But whenever she was bringing money in the family, I was the one to decide how to use it, regardless of the purpose for which the money was given to her. We have always lived in total disagreement. No mutual respect, no planning together, no nothing. But I was influenced by my peers whose wives were also participating in women’s meetings and VSL. We thought they were planning to take over our roles and felt threatened by that. It’s only after we participated in training on the JOT that I stood back and changed my mind.. Ever since I underwent training on the JOT, I resolved to let my wife enjoy her rights, as I realized that whatever she has been doing was for the betterment of our children and me. I’m very sorry for I was extremely violent before and have been hurting my wife every day. I have changed and am committed to convince my peers to follow my path”.

Vital’s statement was also expressed by many other respondents, one by one, such as Frederic, Yves, Lambert (all pseudonyms) and their colleagues. All of them apologized to their wives, saying that men should be provided with space to do a self-assessment and amend their behaviour thereof and that trainings on the JOT should be replicated throughout the country.

Speaking about opportunities offered by the JOT, men participants said that the JOT gave men opportunity to be involved in a women empowerment initiative.

These testimonies were made at Ntungamo Village’s office, on 25th July 2020, and all respondents confirmed that the JOT was implemented in the perspective of men engagement. However, the perceptions around that approach were divergent as some of the respondents embraced change, while others remained driven by traditional social norms that have all along hindered women’s empowerment. This was the main challenge encountered while trying to involve men in gender interventions.

Nevertheless, this section shows that participants supported RWAMREC’s interventions on men engagement approach. Clear answers to the research questions directed to them corroborated the first objective of this study.

Linking those findings with the literature, men’s threat over women’s economic empowerment is also confirmed by Scholars. Newton, G. (2006) & Esplen, E (2012), in a brief on engaging men

in women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship development interventions, stated that while women entrepreneurship development is attracting too much attention from many Actors, women in many countries continue to be subjected to GBV and discrimination due to gender norms that inhibit them to release their full potential. This situation puts them at an economic drawback compared to men. Authors added that gender relations are very multifaceted that they lead most of the time to GBV, as men have a sentiment that women's economic empowerment and their better financial independence are a threat to their masculinity that gives them a special treatment.

At this stage again, two theories are at play: The Social norms theory and the Theory of change. The Social norms theory is that one that causes men to express resentment towards women's economic empowerment, because they are influenced by societal norms that dictate that men are the only breadwinners, while women must be financially dependent on men. By respecting the **social norms theory**, it makes men breach women's economic empowerment **theory of change**. This is a theory that calls people to recognize women's agency and ability to play a role in economic decision-making in order for them to fight against the exclusion they have suffered from. It also calls for finding more effective ways for women to become economically enabled and appreciate that empowering them is a great path and a strategy to stop social injustice and poverty.

The JOT is therefore seen as a tool that values the theory of change, and it would be injudicious not to analyze its impacts.

4.2.2.2. The impact of JOT in changing men into active allies in empowering women.

The second objective of this study was to assess the impact of the JOT in changing men into allies for in women's empowerment. That impact was reflected through participants' views on some key research questions addressed to them. Thus, to the question as to whether they appreciate the change brought by the JOT, they responded that the change is unquestionable, as women are now participating in different spheres of the country life, including in household decision-making, from which they were excluded before training.

To support their arguments, they identified key areas that were initially considered as men's preserve but are now accessible to women:

The table below provides clear indicators of the status of women’s empowerment process after the JOT.

Table 3: Indicators on women empowerment status through the JOT in Nyarugenge Sector.

Indicators of women empowerment status	Before JOT	After the JOT	Population: Women	% after JOT
Participation in decision making at different levels	3 (23%)	10	13	76%
Access to financial services, Business creation and employment	2 (15%)	13	13	100%
Enjoying their rights, and free from GBV	3 (23%)	10	13	76%
Taking decision about sex, SRH, and relationship	0 (0%)	8	13	61%
Participating in political affairs	1 (7%)	7	13	53%
Owning income generating activities	3 (23%)	11	13	84%
Earning money and decide how to spend/ invest	0 (0%)	11	13	84%

Source: Data collected by the researcher, July- Aug. 2020.

From the above table on Indicators on the status of women’s empowerment after the JOT, it is observed that women’s participation in decision-making at different levels increased from 23% before the JOT to 76% after training on the JOT, women’s access to financial services , business creation and access to employment went up from 15% before the JOT to 100% after the JOT, women started enjoying their rights and becoming free from GBV from 23% before the JOT to 76% after the JOT, the percentage of women’s participation in political affairs increased from 7% before the JOT to 53% after the JOT, while the percentage of women running income generating activities raised from 23% before the JOT to 84% after the JOT, and the percentage of women earning money and are able to decide how to spend or invest it has shifted from 0% before the JOT to 84%.

On the same day of July 25th), at the same NTUNGAMO Village office, around 10.43 am, Japhet, a primary school teacher said:

“As a beneficiary, I thank RWAMREC for providing us with these informative and inspiring trainings on the JOT. I have benefited a lot, and am committed to be an agent for change, so as to bring other men on board. I wish all Rwandan men were also trained so that we are all given chance to redefine our social norms, reject toxic masculinities and be friendly to our wives. We promise not to turn back, but to practice the knowledge we acquired during these 17 weeks.

To our wives who have suffered in many ways, please forgive us. We have changed and the positive change on us is unquestionable.”

Through the Journey of Transformation we have been advised to promote peace and harmony, mutual respect and complementarity within our respective families. That is our moto. On our side as men, we don't feel frustrated to people's perceptions and attitudes towards some of us who have embraced change after being trained on the JOT. Mind you, we are seen as having betrayed our peers, especially those men who didn't attend trainings. Outsiders see us as losers, as we are accused of having lost our masculinities and maleness (Twabayeye inganzwa, dusigaye twitwa imbwa mu bandi bagabo). However, the JOT program has been such effective that we don't mind being seen that way. The most important thing is that we have embraced change and are committed to preserve and protect it. I implore our women partners to also stand firm and categorical so that we walk the talk together and make a difference. I wish the JOT is scaled up within the whole country so that all men take on that transformational change and become allies in empowering women”.

On the issue of perceptions, Japhet, a primary school teacher thanked RWAMREC for helping them to become agents of change and giving them chance to redefine the social norms, reject toxic masculinities and be friendly to their wives. On behalf of men, he promised not to turn back, but to practice the knowledge he acquired during these 17 weeks. He alluded to how the society perceives them and said that they are seen as having betrayed their peers, especially those men who didn't attend trainings. Outsiders see them as losers, and accuse them of having lost

their masculinities and maleness. He said” (*Twabayeye inganzwa, dusigaye twitwa imbwa mu bandi bagabo*). However, the JOT program has been such effective that we don't mind being seen that way. The most important thing is that we have embraced change and are committed to preserve and protect it”.

On the impact of male engagement approach through the JOT, participants singled out few variables, around which their testimonies evolved: Those are: Mutual respect, Planning and working together, Sharing roles and responsibility, GBV and IPV decreased, peace and harmony within families, improved living conditions, Balanced power relations, and men openness on their power.

Richard, a leader of one Cell, speaking about the change brought about by the JOT thanked RWAMREC for the training, but came back to one important issue. He said:

“On my side, leave alone the fact that men allowed and supported women's participation in all spheres, there is something else I thank men and RWAMREC for, and we owe that to the JOT. Men disclosed and for the first time, they got the courage to denounce the power and privileges they hold. We were all chocked but also very happy for that step. When you want to treat a zit you press it (Iyo ushaka kuvura ikibyimba uragikanda). I urge men to keep this spirit up”.

In the researcher's analysis, the indicators highlighted by participants are a clear proof that the JOT has positively impacted couples' lives. The researcher appreciated the ES statement that the JOT influenced men to disclose and denounce the powers and privileges they hold. That was a big milestone on men's side that needs to be supported.

Linking these findings to the literature, Sapna Kadio, A (2019) talking about the biggest challenge in engaging men in women's empowerment interventions, declared that men never want to mention the powers and privileges they hold, yet that's where GBV and inequalities originate from. She added that men want to talk about violence, but when it comes to question the privileges and norms that give them power and prerogative to inflict violence, it creates anxiety. However, having provided space to men to decry the honours they hold, renounce on them and pave a way for women to exercise their rights is one of the strengths of the JOT.

Flood, M(2007) , speaking on how men engagement in women’s empowerment helps in deconstructing harmful masculinities that are rooted in the social norms says “any measure that could help in breaking into the core of why men hold destructive thoughts around sexuality should be supported”. Considering Flood’s call, it would be unfair not to indicate that the JOT constituted an important framework to deconstruct negative masculinities inherent to sexuality, through which women couldn’t enjoy their sexual and reproductive health rights. This was men’s pledge, as through training, they committed to adopt positive masculinities and embrace change in their behaviors and actions towards women empowerment process and to build a gender just society free from violence including sexual violence. Therefore, the third objective of the study has been achieved.

On a positive note, out of the study findings and the literature mentioned above, it is observed that the JOT model is a flagship program for change, which preaches and endeavours to abide by the theory of change.

However, despite its positive impacts on the lives of people, it would be injudicious not to question the effectiveness of the changes in men that underwent trainings. Such an exercise would allow the people to confirm whether the program has led to everlasting positive effects or not.

4.2.2.3. The effectiveness of the changes observed in men that benefited from the JOT training.

4.2.2.3.1 General views on effectiveness

Questioning the sustainability of the change observed in men who went through training on the JOT model was yet another objective of this study. In the researcher’s thinking, if the change registered on the side of men has lasted with the closure of the project, then the JOT would have failed. However, beneficiaries of the JOT provided well-articulated and convincing answers to different research questions on this point.

Men participants to the study, while responding to the research question on how they used the knowledge they gained from the training, confirmed that they have adopted change and decided to become “Male Champions or Agents for change”, who, at the termination of the program,

stood firm and decided not to turn back, but to abide by the outcomes of the JOT sessions and influence change in their peers.

When asked to describe the new attitudes of men in Nyarugenge Sector after training, participants, both men and women responded that they saw considerable changes in men's behaviours, perceptions and actions, as they resolved to get along with their wives, plan and make decisions together, restore peace and harmony in their families, not use violence like before the JOT, help their wives in households chores and care for children as well. They also decided to support women participation in economic activities and to allow them to earn income outside the homes, and above all to recognize women's valuable contributions to the wellbeing of their families.

The effectiveness of the JOT can also be tracked through different measures that the District and Sector's leadership put in place to guarantee sustainability of the outcomes.

4.2.2.3.2: Measures for sustainability of the JOT outcomes

To ensure sustainability of the JOT outcomes, Nyarugenge Sector Leaders decided to take strong measures to protect and preserve the JOT end results. These approaches were used to make sure that the process of change is continuous and channelled to other community members' especially men. Men who were coached and trained on the JOT grouped themselves into Men Engage Clubs in order to help their peers to also become agents for change. Those measures are:

- **Campaign and mass mobilization sessions, Peer education or Group education session, Community Activism visits, Agents for Change visits, Working with the National Women Council and the National Youth Council** in order to mobilize beneficiaries of the JOT model on not to behave contrary to what they had been taught, but also to influence change in other people who couldn't benefit from the JOT

All this reinforce the idea that the JOT training has been effective and have everlasting positive impacts on men's behaviours. Also, all participants stated that this was a big milestone that needed to be safeguarded.

These findings transpired from raw data collected from the field and are in tandem with objective 3 of the present study.

Engagement of men and boys is therefore central in transforming the cultural, social, economic, political and religious systems plus the power dynamics that perpetuate gender inequality and in addressing the barriers to change.

Out of the respondents' appraisal, the information provided by key informants in this study and the findings highlighted in this chapter, it would be fair to conclude that the JOT presented promising realisations and therefore needs to be supported and scaled up.

However, few weaknesses of the JOT model have been mentioned by some of the participants and key informants the researcher interacted with.

4.2.2.3.3. Weaknesses of the JOT model

Participants mentioned about the Factors that weaken the JOT: Area of the Project implementation, plus Citizen's priority and partnership with local leaders.

On the issue of the area of the intervention, the statement of Richard (pseudonym), a high ranked leader of Nyarugenge Sector and one of the key informants tells us more. He said:

“While I salute RWAMREC for implementing this model, it's high time for them to see how to expand this approach in cities, as we all know that family conflicts are mongering families in cities. To me, the JOT may have positive impacts in Nyarugenge Sector because it's a rural area, where people attend meetings whenever they are called upon, and are more compliant with programs that can help them uplift their livelihoods. However, that cannot apply in urban areas, due to many reasons: First of all, people in cities don't have time for 17 weeks trainings, but also the JOT's success requires that people disclose. Yet, it is not the case for “Abasilimu” living in urban areas who don't want anybody to know what's happens behind the closed doors. I would advise that RWAMREC uses another tactic to influence change in urban families as well, because the problems here are also found in cities”.

Regarding the aspect of building partnership with local leaders and consider citizen prioritization, the leader said:

“First of all, in the event that local leaders are hostile to the promotion of women's rights, or are not willing to eradicate GBV women are subjected to, or do not show their

readiness to tackle issues of toxic masculinities and help men and boys to deconstruct the rigid norms and stereotypes, then they cannot accept that the JOT be implemented there. This is a model that requires leaders' support and eagerness to incite their people to change and be supportive to women empowerment initiatives. If not, that model can be fruitless".

On the issue of citizen priorities and partnership with local leaders, RWAMREC's one high ranked official, another Key informant I interviewed said:

*"We tried to implement the JOT in some urban areas where GBV and women's rights violations have been identified: Rwezamenyo in Nyarugenge District, Kibagabaga in Gasabo District and Nyamata in Bugesera District but did not succeed. The main obstacle was to identify beneficiaries. Not only people don't have time for trainings, as they are busy working for their families, but also women rights are neither an issue nor a top priority for them. Also, even though beneficiaries are there, the problem is that they wouldn't disclose what they go through. But Above all, the JOT can only be effective if people show interest in it and build partnership around it, so as to make it work. It is not the case in urban areas, as most of local leaders are not attracted by such a program within the administrative entities they are heading. They want projects that bring money and directly improve their citizens' lives. One time, we were thinking of implementing the JOT model in Kibagabaga, but when we approached a local leader, he told us:" **We want schools, hospitals, roads and other facilities that can improve people's lives. We want developmental programs and concrete actions, not words**". So, any attempt to work with people who don't express their interest in our program can inhibit our objectives and weakens our interventions". I hope that one day people in cities will understand that stable, peaceful and harmonious families are a strong foundation to development"..*

4.3. APPROACHES TO EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE MEN IN EMPOWERING WOMEN.

The fourth objective of this research was to suggest effective approaches to engage men in empowering women. Research questions on this point were clear and straight forward. The spirit behind this objective was to inquire from the respondents on any potential, successful and very productive approach to engage men in women's empowerment that they may recommend.

Therefore, regarding the questions as to what do participants think that men engagement initiatives should start from, or what they would do to make men engagement approach more effective or improve the way men are engaged in gender equality and women's empowerment, those questions created divergent views.

Some participants, men and women suggested that the most reliable approach to effectively engage men in any gender intervention is **"To work with Men"**. They also highlighted both the benefits and challenges of working with men. Others advanced the idea of adopting adequate policy.

4.3.1 Working with Men

This participant's argument was supported by the fact that, according to them, working with men is one of the best approaches to build men and boys meaningful engagement in women empowerment process. They attributed the success of the JOT approach to the fact that it considered men as beneficiaries as well.

Men participants said that engaging men is a great strategy as it may alone weaken the position of their peers who are still protecting men's power and privileges but rebuff women the right to enjoy their fundamental human rights.

Lambert, Joseph and Frederic (pseudonyms), all primary school teachers, declared that it is undeniable that involvement of men in the fight against GBV and in other gender interventions is only guaranteed when people or organizations resolve to partner with them, as excluding men from gender work makes them feel side lined and discouraged to challenge existing stereotypes.

They added that excluding men can also create and deepen resentment towards the multiple efforts for women's advancement. The explanation given was that teaching women about their rights would be futile if they cannot make use or enjoy them at home where men commit violence of all forms against women. Other men participants in this study came out clear and confirmed that the best way to engage men in gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives is to work with them, give them space to express their opinions and needs and mobilize them to be part of the empowerment journey.

To the question as to what advice they would give another organization if it is likely to undertake an intervention which includes men, both participants, through the questionnaire and in Focus group discussions came back to the need to involve men right from the design of the project or program, instead of involving them at the implementation stage of it.

After a thorough analysis of the findings the researcher found that two elements arose from the raw data. Some participants supported the idea of working with men, while others expressed different challenges of that approach.

However, linking these answers with the literature, Rachel Pierotti (2016) says that there is no universally acceptable method on working with men, as such a tactic varies according to the context the interventions is being implemented. She however supports the idea of working with men, as they are the ones to make women's initiatives fail or lead to very few impacts.

Also , Newton, G(2018) stated that working with men to support women's empowerment is very key and does not weaken the status of men, but it is instead a great opportunity to recognize and value their contribution in that journey.

4.3.2. Benefits of working with men in gender and women's empowerment interventions.

Based on what they experienced after the JOT, key informants identified many benefits of working with men, the most important being that men feel part and parcel of the target population of gender interventions and contribute to the realization of their set objectives. In the case in point, women's empowerment becomes effective, and GBV decreases as men become

part of the struggle. Such a situation brings peace and stability within families and development comes henceforth.

For the couples respondents, the following table highlights few but unpretentious benefits of working with men.

Table 4: Benefits of working with men

	Benefits of working with men	Number of respondents	Participants answers to statements	Percentage
1	Men become allies in women's empowerment.	26	20	76.9%
2	Family conflicts significantly decrease	26	25	96.1%
3	Socio- economic development improves	26	25	96.1%
4	Increased observance and promotion of women's rights	26	24	92.3%
5	Decrease of GBV cases	26	25	96.1%

Source: Primary data, July-August 2020

Table 4 on the benefits of working with men shows that out of 26 respondents, 76.9% of them stated that working with men compels them to become allies in women’s empowerment, 96.1% declared that family conflicts decrease considerably, 96.1% talked about improvement of the socio-economic development, 92.3% mentioned the increased observance and promotion of women’s rights, while 96.1% applauded the decrease of GBV cases.

This research’s findings revealed that the benefits of working with men are huge as they are determinant in building a society free from violence, where men and women enjoy their rights equally and share role and responsibilities without any kind of discrimination. Also, it was observed that women participants, talking about those benefits, asserted the idea that involving men in women’s empowerment interventions is vital, as men help in planning and designing interventions that benefit them as well. But above all, they emphasized the fact getting involved in all steps of women’s empowerment activities also helps men to build confidence in women, as they cannot accuse them of betraying them anymore.

However, some participants declared that effective implementation of male engagement approach has presented some challenges, mainly linked to men’s power over, perceptions of some women and resistance of some men to the interventions.

4.3.3. Challenges of engaging men in Gender and women’s empowerment interventions

The table below describes some of the challenges encountered in engaging men in gender work.

Table 5: Challenges of men engagement approach

	Challenges	Participants' answers	Percentage
1	Men take over the benefits of those interventions	7	26.90%
2	Women lose their space	8	30.7%
3	Men show resistance to those interventions due to Social norms.	11	42.3%
	Total	26	100.0%

Source: Data collected by the researcher, July- August 2020

Looking at the findings described in table 8 on the Challenges of engaging men in gender equality and women empowerment interventions, 26.9% of participants stated that one of the challenges of involving men in gender work is that men take over the benefits of the interventions, 30.7% said that women lose their space while 42.3% declared that when men are involved in such interventions, they are not supportive to them due to the Social norms that do not recognize women’s empowerment.. That’s why some respondents advised that working with men would be futile if social norms were not tackled since they are determinant parameters for failure as far as women’s empowerment is concerned.

4.3.3.1. Social norms and values as hindrances to men engagement in gender interventions

Of all participants, 24 declared that Social norms in Nyarugenge Sector have been a challenge to women empowerment. Participants mentioned few examples of social norms, such as men must show their manliness and heroism, men are tough and breadwinners, women don’t have the right

to speak in presence of men nor can they undertake economic activities, women must stay in the confines of families and do unpaid care work. Sticking on those examples, the researcher's findings were that social norms have to be tackled as they occasioned too many cases of GBV in Nyarugenge Sector. That's why some people consider that empowerment cannot be effective if the social norms are not dealt with.

Clotilde (pseudonym), a business woman who participated to the study declared:

*“The reason why many families are poor in this area is that women were not allowed to contribute to family income, as they were **compelled** to remain at home as care givers. Another example is that in these interviews, we are seated together with men, but such a situation could not happen in the past. We are now expressing our views as women, but were not allowed to do so in the past, following a say that as “Nta nkoko kazi ibika isake ihari”, literary saying that a woman is not allowed to speak in public in presence of men. There is another say that “uruvuze umugore ruvuga umuhoro” meaning that when a woman speaks at home, that brings malediction or imprecation in the family. Those are few examples I just want to mention. . That “say” and many others were dictated by the social norms. I thank RWAMREC for the JOT, but also our husbands for having accepted to disclose and take a stand to dismantle some destructive social norms. We have realised that those norms have often been a cause of male bitterness and aggression, particularly towards other groups that are underprivileged such as women and children. I call upon RWAMREC and the government to scale up this JOT model so that it is replicated in all corners of the country.*

Departing from such a statement, the researcher found that the spirit behind the JOT was to help men challenge those destructive social norms and values in order to adopt others that are transformative. Through the JOT, RWAMREC advocated for women's empowerment, mobilized and sensitized men over its benefits, and created focal points, in this case called Male Champions or Agents for change, as a structural force that strives to tackle all factors that sustain injurious and cruel forms of masculinity.

This method was proved to be a pressing element in restoring gender relations, preventing GBV and allowing women to enjoy their rights, after it was revealed that men enjoy the patriarchy

dividend to the detriment of women in the economic, social, and sexual spheres. Following the research findings on the approaches to effectively build men's meaningful involvement in women empowerment, the researcher acknowledged that the fourth objective of the study has been achieved as well.

Also, the responses from participants and the findings of this study denote a clear intersection between respondents' views and what the literature on the topic says about men engagement in women's empowerment approach. It is in this context that Kauffmann (2019), Chant (2000) and Hearn (2001) advanced the idea that it is extremely imperious to engage men and boys in gender equality and women empowerment. But their effective participation will require that actors adopt appropriate strategies to change gender relations between men and women while also educating men to tackle the stereotypes that drive them and negatively impact women.

In the same vein, Barbara Stocking (2004) advises that if the world is committed to meaningfully transform men into allies in empowering women, it is of utmost importance to work with them, not because they are the ones to commit violence against women, but because they also have the latitude and ability to contribute to the achievement of gender equality. This statement was supported by Cornell (2004) as well, who declared that men and boys should not be considered as offenders only, but also as prospective agents of change who can contribute to the search for a gender just society which upholds the observance and promotion of women's rights. Author said that for men to be fully engaged, it is good to work with them, start conversations around powers and privileges, and keep the focus on boys and men.

However, as it is quite unfeasible to exhaust all the examples inherent to men engagement in women empowerment approach stipulated in the literature, it would be wise to indicate that one of the strategies to engage men in gender interventions is working closely with them throughout all phases of any interventions namely, the design, funding and implementation. Such an approach would also guide policy makers to adopt policies and programs that are gender aware, so that men are informed that they have a role to play but also recognize how women empowerment benefit them as well as men as their partners. At this juncture, the theory of change finds its place, as when men are involved in women empowerment initiatives, they don't make them fail, but instead make them produce positive impacts that change the lives of women.

Linking all these observations to theories, again, the social norms theory and the theory of change are at play here, as it is pragmatic that men are still governed by social norms which don't allow them to support any women's initiatives for fear of losing their authority and maleness. But once people decide to involve them in all steps of a project, they become very much supportive to women and remain committed to advocate for their empowerment. That's when the theory of change comes in.

4.2. CONCLUSION TO THE CHAPTER

This chapter was devoted to the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings arising from data collected during field work. Respondents were very open as to the strengths and few weaknesses of the Journey of Transformation model as a strategy to engage men in empowering women. Benefits and challenges of men engagement approach have been highlighted and clear and tangible strategies to uphold those benefits and find a remedy to the challenges have been identified. These considerations helped the researcher to draw tangible recommendations as to how effectively use the JOT in transforming men into allies in empowering women in Rwanda, highlighted in Chapter V of this study. The recommendations were addressed to different actors in order either to scale up the approach, but most importantly, improve the JOT model following the few loopholes it presented in Nyarugenge Sector.

CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAPTER

This chapter contains a general conclusion of the work, taking into account various aspects of the phenomenon that was written about, be they enshrined in the literature or arising from findings from the field, the analysis and the interpretation made of them. It also contains recommendations to different actors who may eventually express their interest in replicating the Journey of Transformation model or starting any other interventions that work on men engagement and their behaviour change process.

5.2. SUMMARY

This study was meant to assess the effectiveness of men's engagement in women's empowerment process. Hence, it was designed to examine the functionality and practicality of the Journey of Transformation model, as a couple curriculums and a community based approach to engage men in that exercise, and to make appropriate recommendations for a more effective involvement of men in achieving meaningful women's empowerment.

The study had 4 objectives: Identification of RWAMREC.s interventions in the perspective of men engagement, assessment of the impact of the JOT in changing men into active allies for Gender Equality, discussions over the effectiveness of the changes observed in men that benefited from the JOT and suggestions for the men engagement approach to be effective.

With regard to the identification of RWAMREC intervention in the perspective on men engagement, it was observed that RWAMREC worked hand in hand with men, with the youth through Youth clubs, with couples through the JOT, with local leaders and Institutions, and with CSOs in order to influence them to mainstream men engagement in their programs and projects.

On the impact of the JOT in changing men into active allies in empowering women, it was ascertained that the JOT brought about positive impacts in the lives of women, as they can now participate in spheres that were considered to be the preserve of men.

As for the effectiveness of the JOT, it is indicated that for the first time, men disclosed and challenged the powers and privileges they hold, and that milestone must be safeguarded.

Regarding the strategies to effectively engage men, it is wise to indicate that there is no universally recognized strategy, but working with men seems to be efficient, taking also into consideration the context in which men engagement is applied.

Being a case study through which the researcher's intent was to investigate in depth a program, based on the participants' perspective, this study used a qualitative approach to explore a phenomenon in its real life context through empirical inquiry. Primary Data were collected in Bugesera District, Nyarugenge Sector, through focus group discussion and in depth interviews, while secondary data were collected through documentation or desk review.

Participants to this study were couples who were direct beneficiaries of RWAMREC and had undergone training on the Journey of Transformation model. Out of trainings on the JOT approach, men resolved to stand back first, do a self-reflection about their rigid gender norms and stereotypes, with a view to revisiting and undoing the discriminatory social norms that have been driving them and hindering women's advancement.

The study findings indicated that engaging men using a couple curriculum approaches or the Journey of Transformation has proved to be effective where that approach was applied. The effectiveness of the JoT can be seen in beneficiaries behaviour change, but also in measures for sustainability and protection of the JOT outcomes, where the process was owned by local leaders after the closing of the Project, and organized different mass mobilization campaigns and visits in communities, to help them uphold the results of the JOT.

However, some challenges of it have also been accentuated as hampering its effectiveness. The main obstacles that were identified from the field were 4 prongs:

First, engaging men in empowering women requires that gender norms and power dynamics change in order to create a favourable context for women to develop. Yet those concepts are rooted in the social norms and values which drive societies. However, societal norms are a very sensitive topic that has to be handled in a way that spurs and suits change, and makes people understand that that change benefits everyone. Hence, the Journey of Transformation model finds its relevance here, but like any other men engagement intervention, its success depends on many factors, including the context in which that model is being operationalized.

Secondly, the accomplishments of the JOT rely mainly on the good will, understanding and support from potential beneficiaries, institutions and authorities from the place where the model is implemented, or where actors wish to apply it. If any of those variables is lacking, then the JOT cannot reach its objectives.

Thirdly, the Journey of Transformation model uses couple curriculums which cover 17 weeks, with a frequency of only one session per week. Therefore, time constraint can also be an obstacle to that model, as it is not so easy to reverse gender norms, stereotypes and power dynamics in a short span. Time constraint can also negatively affect couples' attendance in trainings, as some couples can choose to undertake other activities in lieu of the trainings.

However, it is vital to indicate that despite the challenges highlighted, the journey of Transformation approach has proved to be effective in Nyarugenge Sector where it was implemented, and should therefore be scaled up to other corners of the country, specifically where GBV and other forms of power imbalances seem to have been endorsed.

5.3. CONCLUSIONS

The study findings revealed that all the objectives were achieved, and that the JOT training proved to be a worthy tool and a pathway in transforming men into allies in empowering women for five main reasons.

First of all, the JOT training constituted a safe space for couples get together, reflect on and challenge the prevailing rigid norms and the negative impacts they had on women. Out of that exercise, men resolved to redefine their masculinities, revisit and dismantle destructive gender norms, in order to build up women and eradicate gender based violence they were subjected to.

Secondly, training on the JOT resulted into positive change on the side of men to the extent that they ended up supporting women's empowerment, authorizing them to undertake economic activities and enjoy their rights to the fullest.

Thirdly, the change registered on the side of men constituted such a big milestone that institutions and authorities decided to put in place sustainability measures to safeguard the model's outcomes.

Fourth, RWAMREC's approach to work with couples was an excellent way to engage men in women empowerment process, after it was ascertained that working with men throughout all steps of the Journey of Transformation model was a well thought of strategy, which could never give men room to make that gender intervention fail or have little impact on women's lives.

Fifth, it would be unwise not to indicate that there is a clear link between the findings and the theories identified for purposes of this study. Before the JOT, men were driven by the Social norms Theory as their attitudes and practices were motivated by social norms which were not favouring women's empowerment. This trend and mischief was however cured by the JOT model which led to an outstanding behavioural change on the side of men, change translated into positive and compassionate attitudes, perceptions, practices and actions in support to women's empowerment.

To conclude, it would be unfair not to declare that the expectations the researcher had in this study have been met. All the study objectives have been achieved, the impact of the JOT outlined and confirmed, and its effectiveness established. Sustainability measures have even been identified, but many more can be developed. This being the first study on the phenomenon, the researcher would recommend that further studies on the topic be undertaken in order to influence change, and safeguard the outcomes achieved so far.

However, considering the few but very determinant loopholes that arose in the course of the JOT implementation and identified by the literature, the following recommendations are formulated, in order to allow men engagement interventions to lead to that change people are aspiring to.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In this study, the recommendations drawn are meant to recognize the valuable role and impact of the JOT, but also to provide advices for future research on the topic.

5.4.1. Recommendations on the role and Impact of the journey of transformation.

The following recommendations are directed to Policy or decisions-makers, Actors in gender interventions and beneficiaries.

To Policy makers: MIGEPROF

- To scale up the JOT model as one of the strategies to implement the National Gender Policy and the National Family Policy. Also, the JOT should inform policy review including the National Gender Policy, the National Family Policy and the GBV Policy.
- To mainstream or influence mainstreaming of the JOT in all gender programs and projects so that it helps to bring about change.
- To integrate the JOT model in the existing government channels of citizen's participation and structures such as community work Umuganda, Inshuti z'Umuryango or Friends of the family, Umugoroba w'Ababyeyi or Parent's evening dialogues and others, in order to disseminate that approach.
- To collaborate with CSOs and adopt accompanying and sustainability measures aimed at protecting the JOT outcomes and avoid a backlash.
- To stimulate the role of men in gender equality and women empowerment by removing both institutional and cultural barriers that hinder men full engagement in empowering women.

To the National Women Council and the National Youth Council

- To adapt the JOT model to some of its women empowerment programs, from the grassroots level to the National level.
- To conduct a randomized control trial to assess how the changes after many years look like.

To Stakeholders:

- Local leaders as implementers of government programs should value the JOT as a behavioural change program that touches upon the lives of people, and see it as a development strategy.
- Local Leaders should organize campaigns and mass mobilization events around the JOT model.
- RWAMREC should strive to replicate this model countrywide in order to tackle the issue of GBV and its subsequent effects on women empowerment process.
- RWAMREC and other actors in gender interventions should work hand in hand with the government to ensure that adequate accompanying measures are taken to safeguard the outcomes of the journey of transformation model, so that its impacts don't disappear with the closing of the project.
- Couples beneficiaries should play the role of trainers of the JOT so that they in their turn collaborate with the Agents for change to educate other couples.

5.4.2. Recommendations for future research on the topic

- A thorough research on the JOT model should be carried out using the context of Rwanda, so that it can inform other researchers and other actors working on changing people's perceptions, attitudes and behaviours.

Possible theme to research upon:

The following theme has always created discussions: **What is the most suitable strategy to engage men in empowering women?**

Going through the literature made me discover that men engagement approach, though recognized and applied in all parts of the world, seems to be a standalone approach, in the sense that there is no universally accepted tool or tactic to engage men in women's empowerment interventions. Many people support this idea, as the reality across the world is that each case calls for the search for best style or method that is convenient or meets the requirements of the gender roles, gender relations, power dynamics in any society, and other elements that need further scrutiny. However, one single distinctive of men engagement tactic is that it has to

allow different actors in women empowerment to consider the context in or from which they are operating, and strongly focus on how context specific problems are given context specific solutions. However, further research on men engagement approach should tell us more in order to help us determine the most suitable method of engaging men in women empowerment journey.

5.5. STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

5.5.1. STRENGTHS

The present study was conducted using a qualitative approach. This method helped the researcher to look deep and analyse attitudes and behaviours in the study setting. This study owes its strengths to the fact that it was conducted in Rwanda, a country which considers gender equality and women empowerment as a strong foundation for development. The study setting also played an important role in this study, as it was chosen based on the kind of women's rights violations that took place in that area and the response or remedy brought by different actors working in gender interventions. Thus, the researcher knew very little about the phenomenon being studied and went to field to collect valid and reliable data to support her knowledge around the journey of transformation approach.

5.5.2. LIMITATIONS

- Study limitations were encountered due to many factors, the biggest one being COVID 19 pandemic which pushed the researcher not to act according to her roadmap of activities, especially in doing fieldwork, as many areas were under lock down.
- This study is a case study which was conducted in Bugesera District, Nyarugenge Sector during a challenging situation occasioned by COVID 19. Hence, the sample size was only 26 participants, as the researcher had to respect the guidelines for prevention of the pandemic, which were not allowing meetings involving more than 26 people at ago. This parameter affected the whole process of data collection and impacted the findings.

- Being a case study conducted using a small group of people; it is undeniable that the study findings cannot outline any general conclusion or generalization of the Judgement.
- In-Depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions were conducted in Kinyarwanda. Therefore, translating the information or evidences provided by respondents from Kinyarwanda to English may have diluted, altered or distorted their opinions.
- Some of the interviewees are working for RWAMREC, and this may have had an impact on their answers to the questions during the interviews.
- There are no empirical findings on the Journey of Transformation as a phenomenon that was being studied. Therefore, it was not possible for the researcher to get inspirations from any existing literature on the topic. The only literature available was on “men engagement approach” in general, without single ling out the journey of transformation as one of the approaches to engage men in gender interventions.

However, the researcher perused through a wide range of literature in the search for a clear demarcation between the JOT and other approaches to engage men in empowering women. This was done in the quest to obtain relevant information and abide by the credibility and dependability criteria of the study so that it serves both the reader and other end users.

5.6. CONCLUSION TO THE CHAPTER

This being the concluding chapter, it is evident that it makes reference to different points stipulated in the study, while putting an emphasis on the research objectives and the findings inherent to them, in order to provide a full depiction of the reality around the journey of Transformation approach. Therefore, this Chapter also mentions key recommendations addressed to different actors and underscores possible topics that intersect with the phenomenon under study that needs to be further researched upon. At the end, this chapter tries to illuminate some of the strengths and limitations to the study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Full information, ethical consideration and request for consent (see appendix # 2).

II. PARTICULARS

1. Names :
2. Residence:
3. Sex:
4. Age:
5. Education:
6. Occupation:
7. Civil Status:
8. Number of Children (if applicable)
9. Religious features (if applicable)
10. Preferred language for interview
11. Mechanism used (court conciliation, family, Umugoroba w'ababyeyi)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE RESEARCH ON TRANSFORMING MEN INTO ALLIES IN EMPOWERING WOMEN IN RWANDA: The case study of the Journey of Transformation approach in BUGESERA District - NYARUGENGE Sector

Dear respondents,

I am a postgraduate student pursuing Masters in Gender Studies at the University of Rwanda, UR. I am undertaking a research thesis as partial fulfilment for the award of this degree. My research topic is "*Transforming Men into allies in empowering Women in Rwanda: The case study of the Journey of Transformation approach in Bugesera District*" and kindly request for your assistance in making my research a success.

You have been selected purposively and we want to collect information from you through interview or group focus discussion. A questionnaire has been developed addressing several factors related to effectiveness and impact of this journey of transformation approach. Based on your experience and knowledge, please provide your responses in a given statement and, on the space, provided. The questions have been simplified and therefore should not take more than 20 minutes for the interview.

I wish to assure you that the information you provide will only be used for academic purposes and will be treated with strict CONFIDENTIALITY. It is up to you to decide to take part, you are allowed to stop anytime you feel you need to without giving us a reason. Your name or personal details will not be used. We will only use the information you give us without associating them with any identifier information, such as your name. If there is need to quote you, i will use pseudonyms. I also wish to assure you that no other person will access the responses you will provide. Therefore, I want to alleviate any fears that might hinder your openness in expressing your views. This interview will not exceed fifteen minutes.

This interview will not exceed 30 minutes, and am counting on your cooperation to obtain data needed to answer the research questions.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely

NYIRAHABINEZA Valerie

Specific objectives

- e. Identify RWAMREC's interventions in the perspective of men engagement through JOT.**
- f. To assess the impact of JOT in changing men into active allies for Gender equality**
- g. To interrogate the effectiveness of the changes observed in men that benefited from the JOT training.**
- h. To make suggestions for the men engagement approach to be more effective.**

Interview guide/Questions

Objective 1: To identify RWAMREC's interventions in the perspective of men engagement through JOT.

1. What do you know about RWAMREC's interventions in your community?
 - a. What are they?
2. What is the Journey of Transformation approach?
3. Who gets involved in JOT? Why?
4. How do they work?
 - a. How often do they meet?
 - b. What do they do when they meet?
5. When did RWAMREC first implement JOT in your community?
6. What do you think has motivated RWAMREC to implement the JOT in your Community?
7. How do people from your community perceive JOT? Why?
8. What opportunities do you think JOT brought in your community?
 - a. What are the opportunities at the community level?
 - b. What are the opportunities at the individual level?
 - c. Did the JOT transform men into active actors in GE and WE?
9. What challenges do you think they are facing?
10. How are they overcoming them?

Objective 2: To assess the impact of men engagement in changing them into active allies for Gender equality and women's empowerment.

1. What do you know about Gender equality and Women's empowerment?
2. What does RWAMREC do to achieve GE &WE?
3. What were the type of interventions designed by RWAMREC to achieve GE &WE?
4. What was the situation of men before getting involved into JOT?
5. How is the situation so far?
 - a. Is there any social and economic change? If so why? If no, why?
6. What do you understand about GBV?
7. What is the status of GBV so far in your area?
 - a. Are GBV cases increasing? If yes, why?
 - b. Are GBV cases decreasing? If yes, why?
8. What did you do to address the GBV issue?
9. What is the status of women's socio-economic empowerment in this community?
10. Male engagement is a new approach that aims at promoting positive masculinity and transforming men into allies for a gender just society. Do you think RWAMREC's interventions are linked to this approach?
11. What is the impact of involving men in women empowerment promotion interventions?
 - a. What role do you think men played in those interventions?
 - b. Have they helped in preventing GBV cases?
 - c. Have they led to change you were all aspiring to?
 - d. What are the benefits of using that approach?
 - ✓ At individual level
 - ✓ At community level?

Objective 3: To interrogate the effectiveness of the changes observed in men that benefited from the JOT training

1. When did men first attend the JOT training?
 - a. Did they come voluntarily?
 - b. What was their attendance level?
 - c. Why do you think men were chosen to attend the JOT training?
2. What did you learn in the JOT training?

3. What knowledge/ messages did you get from what you have learnt?
4. How did you use the knowledge you have gained?
 - a. Did you share your knowledge with other men in your community? If yes, why? If no, why?
5. What change did you observe in men as a result of JOT training?
 - a. What are the new behaviours did men adopt after participating in the JOT training? Why?
 - b. How are men who participated in the JOT training perceived in your community?

Objective 4: To suggest strategies for the men engagement approach to be effective.

1. What do you think men engagement initiatives should start from? Why?
2. Imagine that you are given the responsibility to lead men engagement approach, what do you think would you do to make it more effective?
3. What would you suggest in order to improve the way men are engaged in GE&WE interventions now? What are the best strategies to engage them?
4. What advice would you give to another organization if you were asked how to design a GE&WE intervention which includes men?

Appendix III

CONSENT FORM

I have learnt about the information presented above, I have had the opportunity to ask any question related to this study, and received satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the publications to come from this research. Quotations will be kept anonymous.

I give permission for the interview to be recorded using audio recording equipment.

With full knowledge, I agree to participate in this study.

Participant/ Key informant

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Researcher

Name:

Signature:

Date:



CENTRE FOR GENDER STUDIES
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Centre for Gender Studies (CGS) at University of Rwanda/ College of Arts and Social Sciences offers a Master's Degree in Social Sciences specialising in Gender and Development. As part of the Master's Degree requirements, students have to carry out a field study and write a thesis on an area of their interest.

During data collection phase, students usually require the assistance from organisations relevant to their chosen area of study. We envisage these studies having a wide-range impact not only on the growth of academic knowledge in Rwanda but also, on the development of policy and practice throughout the country.

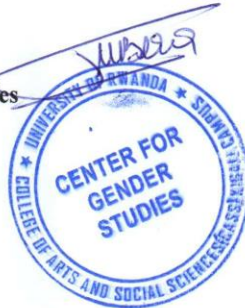
Allow me to introduce **Mrs NYIRAHABINEZA Valerie** whose thesis topic is titled "**Transforming men into allies in empowering women in Rwanda: The case study of the journey of transformation approach in Bugesera district.**". She will provide you with a proposal of her intended study and discuss with you her research needs.

If you require any other information, please contact us at cgs.rwanda@gmail.com

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dr Josephine MUKABERA
Ag Director, Centre for Gender Studies



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