

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION: A RESPONSE TO A SUSTAINABLE POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY IN RWANDA.

1. BACKGROUND

Men and women often experience poverty differently because of their different social roles, responsibilities and resource management duties at the household and community level. They have different poverty reduction priorities and are affected differently by development interventions. If these differences are not sufficiently accounted for, and gender equality issues in each sector are not identified and addressed, poverty reduction interventions can reinforce poverty among women rather than reduce it.

From an efficiency point of view, there is a need for gender equality considerations in any poverty reduction strategy of which gender-based violence prevention would be an effective approach. Poverty is becoming a key issue hindering our general development, yet there are ways and positive means of alleviating it.

Looking at gender-based violence in a broader perspective, it has got so many negative impacts on the human being especially women. It affects them psychologically, physically, mentally and socially, and even financially hence affecting their well being. This implies that, if at all our women are not well; definitely they will be less productive in terms of income generation as well as developing their families and their communities in which they live and work. Greater gender equality correlates with greater poverty reduction and economic growth. Therefore gender inequalities associated with gender-based violence can impose large costs on the well being of the poor, diminish their productivity, and reduce the potential for poverty reduction and economic growth.

It is not sufficient to simply acknowledge that poor people are both women *and* men. Poverty is more complexly gendered, as men and women are often poor for different reasons, experience poverty differently, and have differing capacities to withstand and or escape poverty. Gender inequalities and gender power relations interact with other inequalities and power relations to produce these differences. Gender-based power relations mean that women experience poverty differently and more forcefully than men do and 'women are more vulnerable to chronic poverty if they are not given opportunities to express their feelings, assertiveness, and other life skills to enable them negotiate and debate on life issues especially in their families where they hold big responsibilities.

2. RATIONALE

Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC) came as a catalyst to the best solution to gender-based-violence alleviation, hence creating conducive environment in which Rwandese women and men will come to a round table and share their thoughts in a free and harmonious approach. Poverty reduction strategy is one of the RWAMREC's priorities through gender empowerment with life skills that will enable Rwandese women to navigate through all the hardships imposed by poverty as well as those from power relation that increased the rate of gender-based violence.

It is us men, who are in most cases found in gender-based violence acts; still it will be us to change this situation having acknowledged our responsibilities through the following approaches;

- If Men take a lead in positively influencing their peers through education and direct actions of fighting against peer's violence to women,
- If all men can understand the heavy implications of the current violence against women and children on social welfare and human development;
- If the current ills in our society are voiced out and appropriate repression measures to eradicate impunity are taken;
- If men can lend a helping hand to their sisters in creating a safer living environment where there is no violence of any kind,
- If positively-minded men can take lead in promoting humanly positive values geared towards gender equality and tolerance in our families and the society at large.

It is against this background that We, a group of men, determined to mobilize the whole Rwandan society in the fight against violence to women and girl-children, and take concrete actions to mitigate violence in our country; have on this day, created an organization hereby named "Rwanda Men's Resource Centre" (RWAMREC), to engage not only men as main sources of violence but also as valuable partners to women in the fight against all forms of violence against women and children in Rwanda, and this calls every man, young and adult to strive for the violence free society and peaceful future that our young generations will enjoy.

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