

Against the norms: designing violence prevention through engaging men

Fiadeiro, Rute*^{ab}; Bichard, Jo-Anne^b; Stevens, John^a

^a School of Design, Royal College of Art

^b Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, Royal College of Art

* rute.fiadeiro@network.rca.ac.uk

Engaging with men is an essential effort towards preventing violence in our communities. At the same time, violent behaviours are deeply embedded into our societies and construct what it means to be 'masculine' in a way that naturalises it. Getting men into a space to challenge their behaviours can therefore be a challenge. In this article, we discuss the findings from a recent study with designers designing to tackle intimate partner violence. We focus on four participants' experiences of developing design interventions to engage men in violence prevention. The findings highlight strategies that engage with men in a dialectical space of critical reflection and implementing alternative behaviours. It brings key considerations for designers to think about when counteracting the normalisation of violence (or other behaviours) and community acceptance.

Keywords: *Design outcome; Violence Prevention; Gender; Men; Engagements;*

1 Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV), characterised by a pattern of interpersonal violent behaviours between current or former intimate relationships, continues to be a deeply naturalised part of our contemporary world. As society moves further from the physical into digital spaces, so has IPV, and an increase of technology-facilitated abuse has been noticed (UN Women, 2020). IPV can no longer be thought of as an isolated incident while pathologizing individuals as perpetrators without recognising the social and structural conditions that accept it and promote it (MenEngage Alliance, 2021), leading to a majority of IPV being men's violence against women (Flood et al., 2022). By looking past the binary of perpetrator and victim, the generalisation of men as perpetrators can be overcome whereby men are considered as assets in the dismantling of these socio-structural conditions. The need to engage with men is of urgent interest, and widely recognised by activists, policy makers and

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educators in the field of gender-based violence (GBV) (Jewkes et al., 2015). These efforts have sought to encourage reflection, build knowledge and skills, and change men's attitudes and behaviours (Keddie et al., 2022).

Design's role in the field of violence prevention has been limited yet gaining traction. As we can see in this year's UN Commission Status for Women's focus theme was 'Innovation and Technology' (UN Women, 2023) - As Sama Bahous (2023), UN Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director, stated: *"Technology and innovation are indeed enablers. What they enable is up to us. Technology should liberate, it is instead aggravating violence"*. As such, designers must further acknowledge the role design can play in both materialising and naturalising structural oppression but also the potential for dismantling them (Amstel et al., 2023). We have argued elsewhere in Fiadeiro et al., (2023) that design can function as a mechanism to naturalise GBV, by materialising harmful ideologies, rather than critically engaging in them. In some cases placing the onus on women to protect themselves through women's safety apps, thereby removing any form of critical agency to create change. In this article, we aim to build on this and study designs that have countered this tendency through engagements with men.

In exploring this, the article shares a segment of a recent study from the doctoral research of the first author. We have taken this approach in order to focus on answering a particular question that may be of interest to this conference's track - [Changing] Communities: *How can we (design) engage those with potential to do harm in urgent issues (men's violence against women) of public interest?* Situated in the United Kingdom (UK), the doctoral study explores design being implemented in intimate partner violence (IPV) prevention and response programmes globally. The study, on which this article draws on, has been documenting the practice-based knowledge of 11 designers developing intervention for IPV. From this we focus on four participants who developed preventative approaches by engaging with men, and explore what is at stake when designing engagements with men for violence prevention. We believe this article may have valuable contributions for designers working in spaces of violence, but also in social transformative design practices and research.

2 Intimate partner violent behaviours: men's violence against women

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is the most common form of gender-based violence (United Nations, n.d). It includes all forms of violence and abuse experienced (not exclusively) in private spaces and people's households, and from someone known to them. This can take the shape of physical, sexual, emotional, financial, or coercive behaviour (Gender-Based Violence AoR Global Protection Cluster, 2020). While the focus is on 'individual' and 'private' violent behaviours, they have structural foundations (Flood, 2019) leading to a majority of perpetrators being men against women (Flood et al., 2022). Thus, violence acts as a mechanism in the maintenance of gendered oppression (Flood, 2019; Fiadeiro et al., 2023).

Violent behaviours are not isolated incidents enacted by some "bad" individuals but rather a pattern of behaviours deeply embedded into our societies (Bates, 2022). *"Because violence is defined as "masculine" within popular culture, audiences expect, acknowledge, and encourage men's violence as normal behaviour."* (Anderson, 2005, p.857). As such, men are persistently being socialised to

constitute their masculinities through aggressive behaviours in the eyes of cultural expectations (Olufemi, 2020; Bola, 2019). Yet, violence isn't an inherent part of masculinities. The pluralising language of 'masculinities' recognises its intersection with different social locations (e.g class and race) (Greig & Flood, 2020) and the potential and existence of gender transformative 'masculinities'. As such, not all men are violent, however all have a part to play to prevent it (Jewkes et al., 2015).

There are many risk and protective factors that may lead to intimate partner violence. Figure 1, is a commonly used model developed initially by Heise (1998) to understand how different factors related to attitudes, practices, social norms, resources, and gender roles can drive IPV. It demonstrates how interpersonal factors such as division of labour or communication can be further exacerbated/influenced by structural and cultural factors such as norms and women's access to employment (Prevention Collaborative, 2021). The prevalence and patterns of these factors differ around the world and depend on what it 'means' to be a man in a given context (Flood, 2014). Further emphasised by interplays of overlapping structures of oppression that can impact state provisions and exploitation (Vergès, 2022; Greig & Flood, 2020). As such, addressing IPV requires multi-layered social strategies, from helpline support (Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 2022) to training police officers to be trauma-informed (Bates, 2022). In this article we are specifically concerned with violence prevention strategies that engage men.

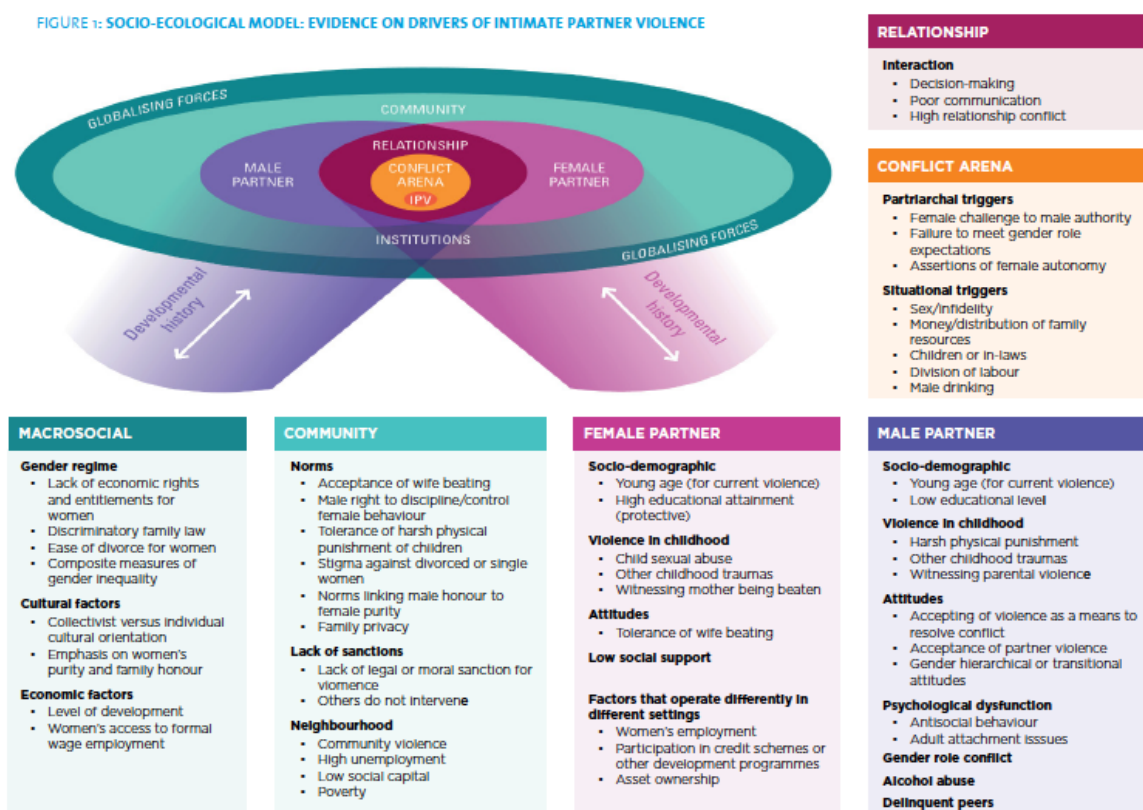


Figure 1- Socio-ecological model: risk and protective factors (Prevention Collaborative, 2021)

3 Engaging men in violence prevention: From individual to structural change

In recognising that most violence is perpetrated by men, that it is more frequent, severe, injury-inducing (Flood et al., 2022) many have sought to develop interventions to prevent violence through engaging men. Men too can experience IPV, either unilaterally or bilaterally, where interventions should be tailored to specific genders (Renner & Whitney, 2012). There is also violence perpetrated by same-sex relationships and amongst the trans community which may include specific forms of abuse such as identity abuse - leveraging sexism, ableism or racism to cause harm or to control an individual (Rodgers, 2021). Yet, engaging men is not only about stopping the interpersonal violence, but also recognising that men are in positions of authority in political, economic and social environments where they can promote change (Kedia & Verma, 2019). Taking the onus off those who experience IPV to solely enact change.

As multiple factors from individual to structural can influence violent behaviours, multiple strategies are needed to influence alternative behaviours. Here, engaging men through an individual and community level is the most common programmatic¹ form and have been evidenced to be effective (Dozois & Wells, 2020). These mainly aim to change men's attitudes and behaviours through individual or couples programmes in on-to-one or group sessions (Kedia & Verma, 2019). For example, 'Bandebaroo' works with parents to build their communication skills towards reducing child abuse² (Doyle et al., 2018). Yet these individual behavioural changes might not be sustainable in the long-term - *"behaviour is significantly influenced by the physical and sociocultural environments in which we're embedded – and research shows that these contextual factors can override individual attitudes, intentions, or beliefs. (For example, a man can feel that gender equality is important, but still laugh at a sexist joke when he's with his friends.)"* (Dozois & Wells, 2020, p.55). Community-level approaches target these sociocultural environments by, for example, targeting male leaders (Kedia & Verma, 2019), training bystanders (McMahon & Banyard, 2012), and developing cross-cultural awareness through edutainment (Oxfam, 2016). At the institutional and structural-level there are fewer evidenced strategies (Flood, 2019). These could look into organisational and legislation changes, and policy making. An example is 'MenCare 50/50', a campaign aiming to globally get employers and government departments to commit to maintaining or developing programmes/policy measures that work towards a fair distribution of care work (MenCare, n.d.). Overall, individual and community level programmes engage with men through fostering a dialogue in a way that **nurtures their potential to transform their own realities**. At the institutional-level this ensures measures are in place to complement this and incentivise change. Yet, while the focus is on engaging men *"It is important that programmes work with and are accountable to girls and women working in this space"* (Keddie et.al, 2023, p.254). If not, they can reinforce gender inequalities (MenEngage Alliance, 2021).

¹ "Approaches that are clinical and/or educational in nature, delivered to individual(s), comprised of a structured curriculum with pre-defined activities and tools, formally scheduled (e.g., predetermined start and end dates and times), focused primarily on individual change (such as changes in awareness, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours), and often scalable and replicable across populations and settings." (Dozois & Wells, 2020)

² a factor that increases the likelihood of becoming an abusive partner

With this in mind, little is understood on whether design practice and research is utilised when developing these interventions. If yes, how is it being implemented, what is being considered and what are the potential outcomes from a design-led approach?

4 Design and Violence Prevention

In IPV violence prevention, scholarly work from a design perspective is limited as it is an emerging field. Close to this has been recent work by Bellini (2019) exploring co-designing with perpetrators to prevent further abuse. Recently, discourses around the role technology can play in facilitating abuse has grown exponentially (UN Women), exploring how designers can prevent this through designing out abusive functions (IBM, 2019; Chayn and End Cyber Abuse, 2022). Yet, to our knowledge, most designed preventions for IPV and GBV have sought to focus on women, generally, and people experiencing abuse or recovering. For example, through collecting evidence of abuse (Sultana et al, 2021) and personal safety tools (Bivens and Hassinoff, 2018)³. In our recent article – Fiadeiro et al. (2023) -, we highlighted the political, accountability, and safety implications of designing to tackle GBV and the risks of placing the onus on women. Amongst other points we argued that design outcomes are often a reflection of the designers ideological stance rather than that of the user/situation. Thus, how designers approach questions of IPV, violence, and those who (may) enact harm is still important to analyse.

An example to designs approach to crime⁴/violence is the Design Against Crime Research Centre (DACRC) at University of Arts London, founded in 1999. DACRC began by focusing on how design products could be a target of crime (e.g. stolen) or misused for crime (e.g. tool for harm). They aimed to make products less distinctive targets for offenders (e.g. securing bags to front of chair) or shielding the product from misuse (e.g. single-use syringes) (Ekblom, 2005). This form of crime prevention looked at removing peoples violent agency by designing out ways of people using objects for ‘criminal’ behaviour. However, DACRC soon recognised that *“making objects harder to steal is not enough and what is needed is to address deeper issues”* (Gamman, 2022, 4:30 in Tolvanen & Toivonen, 2022). Indeed, it is the interconnected structural factors in people’s lives/society that lead to violence.

Recently, DAC shifted their approach to exploring how to mutually develop safer cities through ‘pro-social’ approaches. Moving focus from the objects to community engagement to co-design these. *“Many crime prevention practitioners agree that secure design should not look “criminal” and the need for engagement is about understanding that desirable neighbourhoods are often those where people feel safe, because they look safe and foster and facilitate strong community support mechanisms.”* (Gammam and Thorpe, 2020, p.4). Focusing on environmental (or situational) design e.g. community negotiation of street art (Gammam and Thorpe, 2020). This form of crime prevention instead looks at fostering people's agency to take responsibility over social issues.

³ See also: Eisenhut et al. (2020); Maxwell et al. (2020); White & McMillan (2020).

⁴ A note on IPV and crime. As of 2023 physical, sexual and coercive control (only in effect in 2015) are considered punitive crimes in the UK, however emotional and financial are not. In 49 countries there is no specific law against domestic violence (WorldBank, 2017). It is then useful to not see IPV through a crime lens.

There are similarities between DACRC's recent approach and engaging with men through the focus on humanising people rather than criminalising them. However, unlike the focus on changing products or environments, engaging with men is about fostering men's agency to recognise the role they can play in preventing violence and promoting alternative behaviours and attitudes through the design of products and environments for engagements.

5 Designers practice-based knowledges of engaging men

5.1 Methodology

In exploring how design could be leveraged to *engage those with potential to do harm in urgent issues (men's violence against women) of public interest*, we will draw on a study conducted by the first author in their ongoing doctoral research. The study aimed to explore the following sub-research question: How are designers engaging within IPV contexts? Here, the research was interested in understanding the **designers' experiences** of developing designs for IPV, and therefore took a semi-structured interview approach relying on the participants' memories and reflections to revisit their experiences. As such, relying on the designers perception of design and its role. 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted with practitioners globally, who were identified through internet searches for interventions and networking events. Interventions were identified through recognising design-led approaches (e.g. articles on using design thinking in IPV and identifying 'commonly' designed products such as apps and websites). Thus, most participants were trained designers, while others were innovators and project managers who have experience implementing a design process. Projects included awareness and recovery approaches for people experiencing abuse, recovery approaches for perpetrators and prevention with men and children.

The semi-structured interviews took place between March to December 2022, they were roughly 45 mins, delivered over Zoom, and recorded. These utilised an open approach (Robson & McCartan, 2016) of asking participants about their project background, design process, design outcomes, strengths and barriers, their personal experiences and perceptions of conducting the work. As these interviews were spaced out across many different months, each interview was informed by the analysis of the previous, becoming a cyclical process of refining the analysis and the interviews. As such, the data analysis was divided into two parts, with the first six interviews being analysed through a grounded theory where codes (what is happening in the data) were noted as they emerged. Following the readings, the following five interviews used these themes to guide the conversations and perform a subsequent thematic data analysis (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Following the call for papers, we saw potential to answer a particular question of concern to the track [Changing] Communities. As a result, we focused on four participants' interviews who work(ed) on preventing violence by engaging men. We revisited the data analysis and focused on findings that focused on designed outcomes as it was related closely to the *"how to engage"* question. For continuity, the same ID codes are used and listed below, Table 1. It is important to note that B_3 and B_4 were interviewed together as they worked on the same project. Limitations include the size of the sample, project variety, and discussion on projects that are yet to be evaluated. However this is due to the limited number of designers in this field, and the further segmentation of a larger study.

ID Code	Role	Approach
B_3	Designer	Couple Programme
B_4	Designer	Couple Programme
B_5	Head Designer	Couple Programme
B_11	Designer and Researcher	Community Building

Table 1. List of Participants

5.2 Project descriptions: Developing a dialogue

Due to the low number of design projects in this area we have decided to redact some project specific information for anonymity. All projects mentioned here were developed in Global South contexts.

5.2.1 Messaging group for men to work on relationships:

B_3 and **B_4**'s project was at a piloting stage when the first author spoke to them. The programme aimed to reach heterosexual men in long-term relationships who had temperament issues to manage their emotions and direct their outlets to other places than their partner. To do this, they created a messaging group with a facilitator promoting content and conversation for men to have (1) at home with their partners, and (2) with other men in the group. The programme was developed in partnership with multiple non-profit organisations (NGO) and the country's government. It was the adaptation of a previous programme developed in a different country. At the time of writing this article, the programme is undergoing evaluation.

5.2.2 Couples counselling through community infrastructures:

B_5 has many years of field experience in this topic, therefore the conversation focused not only around a project on couples counselling through existing community infrastructures, but also general views on the state of design in this area. The project of focus, developed by a NGO, provided a guide for community leaders to support heterosexual couples counselling (with their own guide too) through positive behaviours in relationships content that touched on various topics such as sexual pleasure. The project has been implemented and evidenced to reduce IPV and shift power within relationships.

5.2.3 Contextual and collective curriculum for engaging men:

B_11 worked in a design agency and partnered with NGOs to develop programme concepts that were co-created with the community in humanitarian settings. The aim wasn't to exclusively address IPV, but rather acknowledged that GBV was deeply embedded in the communities they worked in and was related to other gender issues that are linked to harmful masculinities. Therefore they included it in their research/project approaches. In our conversations they spoke about developing curricula which engaged men in sensitive topics, regarding how they relate to women through a contextual and collective approach. This curriculum included: (1) contextualising what different words meant for the community (e.g. consent and respect) into a dictionary for engagement; (2) dramatic groups/role playing where they played out gendered scenarios; (3) Men's groups exercises, e.g fetching water, to be implemented in the community. It is less known if they have been implemented since.

While these accounts are centred on the designers' perspectives, these programmes were collectively built with sex experts, couples counsellors, gender experts and more. The designer's role here was to facilitate all these voices and make ideas tangible.

5.3 Findings

5.3.1 Working against normalised practices

During the design process, designers noticed that men did not see themselves as part of the 'urgent issues' - that some men didn't self-identify as violent, others underrepresented the violence in their lives or put the onus on women. As such, men did not see the personal relevance or responsibility to change and improve their relationships. Designers highlighted that this was (re)enforced by the fact that these behaviours are *"acceptable in a lot of cultures"* (B_5). As such, men in these cultures continue to reproduce these behaviours, fearing that altering them might lead to exclusion and being seen as "weak" (B_11).

However, this did not mean that all men wanted to preserve these behaviours. B_11 noted what they called a 'dual ignorance' in men where *"most people don't agree with having that behaviour. But because everyone else does, and no one is taking the first steps to change, they keep doing so."* (B_11). As such while the violence might be interpersonal it can be (re)enforced by the community in a way that can both stifle change but also push for it.

With this in mind, when working against many social norms, designers highlighted that to create opportunities for men's involvement they had to understand and develop interventions focused on *"what they desire out of an experience or else no one's going to show up."* (B_5). As such, design for men's desirability, attendance and retention was primary to their work, to ensure sustainability of the programme. This meant that each project had to be tailored to men in their given context, which B_5 highlighted requires designers to not only consider their users 'needs' but also most importantly their 'values'. That is, the conscious choice to act in a certain manner in order to meet their needs, thus guiding their decisions. Designers were developing 'hyper'-contextual interventions, where throughout the design process they engaged with men to understand **what it means to be a man in a given context**. For example, B_3 and B_4 who adapted a programme which was developed in another country, had to completely redesign the approach because of the cultural differences between countries. Thus, in their case, moving away from religion towards focusing on family and children – which was of great importance in their community.

5.3.2 Involving men: getting the message across

Due to the aforementioned factors, reaching men requires tailored approaches which come with carefully crafted messages. Rather than focusing on communicating to men that the programmes are aimed to reduce violence which may be *"ostracising and patronising"* for those who participate, programmes personalise messages by focusing on the *"positive implications"* (B_5) of the work. Couples programmes included: *"this will improve your relationship; this will make your home more peaceful; this will benefit your kids in the following ways"* (B_5) or *"healing a relationship in only 30*

days” (B_4). Communication therefore avoided reflecting cultural assumptions of violence - i.e. B_3 and B_4 avoided using images of ‘couples fighting’ in their marketing. When developing these programmes designers paid close attention to the ideologies they wanted to communicate to their users (men) and how they may appeal to their values. At the same time, these did not reduce the importance of tackling violence and still *“create this awareness to the communities that like this is real, and there are certain behaviours that you shouldn't have, without really saying that this is completely wrong.”* (B_11).

Besides crafting tailored messages, leveraging existing spaces where men gather and reproduce norms was an opportunity to get men involved. In B_5's case they found that:

“The bible is responsible for a lot of harmful patriarchal norms. (...) Changing how that biblical interpretation happens, what people believe and then how they act in their home. Because someone's going to listen to their faith leader. They're not going to listen to an NGO, right? So making sure that these programs are delivered by the right people.” (B_5)

As such working with existing community infrastructures, which often themselves have harmful institutional ideologies, can develop multi-layered social change as people feel familiarity with institutions at the core of their community.

In a similar approach, B_3 and B_4 leveraged existing messaging tools in their community to deliver the programme. Men, likely having it accessible on their phones and accustomed to using it, could engage with it at their convenience. Social media was also a tool utilised for outreach. As such leveraging these online platforms offered a low-cost and habitual space to engage with men.

Men were not obliged to participate in any of the circumstances. However, by targeting issues men were already concerned with and hosting these in community hubs created desirable/low-effort engagements – where they felt they could participate. Through leveraging existing systems, technologies and situations in men's life, design's **meet men where they are in their lives rather than where designers want them to be.**

5.3.3 How engagements were designed: prevention through practising alternative behaviours

The IPV programmatic industry for many years has focused on engaging men through curriculum-based training. Here, men (who might have received monetary incentives) would be engaged through a set of education-based lessons with the aim of changing their mindset towards women (Dozois and Wells, 2020). This required funding highly skilled staff to run the lessons and a **high engagement** from participants (men). As highlighted by B_5, there was a gap *“to move into programs that were more aligned with what men were willing to take part in”*.

Instead designers brought about a different approach of developing low-cost interventions with minimal commitment required, and therefore developed **low-engagement** design projects that focused on men's behaviours. All designers interviewed discussed how they aimed to instead change men's behaviours rather than their mindsets.

B_3 and B_4 through providing a messaging group that had a facilitator integrated into it, aimed to foster alternative behaviours in men by prompting men to do, for example, daily verbal exercises with their partners. In addition, the facilitator would send content to prompt conversations between men in the group to discuss learnings from exercises and various other issues of interest. These dialogues, exercises and shared experiences, made it possible to question social behaviours and deconstruct social norms collectively. Leading to the creation of alternative behaviours tailored to the individual. The designed programme focused on men's desirability and retention and offered a spectrum of engagement, where men could choose their level of engagement, and the times which suited them the most.

Alike the previous project, B_5's programme was also facilitated, in this case by a community leader, to help guide the couples through exercises and content. Here, couples would learn to improve their communication skills with each other and foster alternative behaviours from cooking to sexual pleasure. In addition, a physical guide (the designed product) was able to shift the dynamics in the relationship:

"women traditionally sit on the floor and men sit in chairs, they rarely sit together. And we said, we are giving you one couple's guide. And that immediately meant that women needed to sit at the same level as their husband, and they needed to sit together. So it's not just a product, it was also changing the physical dynamics and experience of equality in the actual space, on a daily basis. What we heard from couples is this changed the way, "not just in how I behave, but the way I move. All of a sudden, I was moving with my partner. We were sitting at the same level"." (B_5)

Comparatively, B_11 provided a curriculum-based programme for men to explore cultural norms and constructions of masculinity. Unlike the other two projects, the focus was on mobilising men in general to make change in their community. This was achieved by doing exercises, role playing and developing a dictionary. Working together became central to the programme, especially given that men would have to work against community pressure:

"What if, instead of you doing this alone, you do it in groups with your friends, and then the other men can't say anything. So the group itself feels much stronger to protect or to defend why they are doing that (positive behaviours) than if they are doing alone. So part of the program is thinking of the tasks that you think that are easy to change. Then start doing it together in a group, and when you feel comfortable enough you can start doing it yourself knowing how to defend yourself." (B_11)

Overall, each project aimed to engage men through different approaches that were contextually sound to the communities they were working with, and that related to 'what it means to be a man' (B_4) in any given context. They focused on creating a dialectical space where men could, through engaging with their partners, other men and content, rethink their attitudes and implement personal positive behaviours. Although these programmes focused on interpersonal behaviour, with minimal behavioural impact, they had scalable potential to reach a wide range of people. Rather than taking a 'lesson'-based approach of teaching men to change their mindsets. The design approach brought about desirable strategies, dynamic shifting spaces, and engaging forms of countering regressive norms. In all these projects, through focusing on interpersonal skills there was some form of collectivising men, and/or their community leaders and women in their relationships. It is evident that

collectives *not* individuals are key to creating positive masculinities which can prevent violence in communities.

5.3.4 How men engaged in the programmes

When piloting the programme B_3 and B_4 noticed that men were indeed wanting to talk with one another and about these issues that they often don't have a chance to discuss, and the men valued the opportunity to build connections with one another:

"we offer them like the option to use a pseudonym or being confidential and they (men) didn't take it like they actually wanted to get to know other men, they want to be heard (...) the one thing that always comes up is that they want more closeness and more proximity out of the program" (B_4).

There is a lack of spaces where men can connect and build nurturing relationships with one another, due to harmful notions of masculinities (Bola, 2019). These spaces of engagement have a dual purpose, while engaging men in practising positive behaviours in the household they also provide a space for them to connect and talk with other men going through similar issues. Yet, this comes with its limitations: having a scalable model means this proximity to other men may be hard to deliver (B_4). Equally, when designing the engagement B_3 and B_4 highlighted that there was a balance *"between creating a space where men can be vulnerable but also setting boundaries within the group"* (B_3). However, the designers observed that, when men did cross boundaries and make sexist remarks, other men would challenge them, showing that the space could nurture peer mentorship.

As such, designers we're able to observe while developing and implementing their projects changes in perceptions as a result of practising new behaviours. For example:

"Men were saying: every time I want to have sex and my partner rejects me I actually feel really insecure and I think she's cheating on me. Now, after seeing this content in the program I actually know that she's not rejecting me but rather it's because she's had a bad day at work." (B_3)

These changes in perception were also visible in B_11's programmes. In role play exercises, with men enacting actions such as washing the dishes, B_11 noticed men making comments and judging each other throughout the process. Afterwards when prompted to reflect on how men felt they realised that *"this is actually not good. Why do I need to judge if I'm a man trying to help my wife fetch water? Like whatever?"* (B_11). Finding value in deconstructing the behaviours they enacted in their day to day. Another approach taken was developing a dictionary. This was developed after B_11's team discovered the phrase 'you need to respect women' didn't translate as intended through the lens of their cultural norms. When asked to draw what respect was, they drew a woman seated on the floor serving them, noting that *"this is respect: my woman needs to feed me and serve me food. And this is the ultimate respect that I'm expecting from her. So if she doesn't do this, there's a reason for punishment"* (B_11). By working through these topics related to gender justice such as consent and respect together, they'd deconstruct their cultural meanings and reconstruct it in a gender transformative way. Through this reflective practice, men were redefining their understanding of masculinities.

Finally, B_3 noted that during their piloting *“a lot of men that participate have real tough issues. So we’ve had men that have DM (direct message) the facilitators saying ‘hey I’m having suicidal thoughts’.”* (B_3). It is examples like this that highlight how paramount it is to ensure safety is still at the core of the work when working on topics of IPV. Here, men themselves could equally be experiencing violence, or other mental health needs that are often closely linked to violence.

5.3.5 Engaging men doesn’t mean the focus is on men

The focus of many of these projects and of this article is ‘Engaging Men’ yet in (hetero) relationships and in society men are rarely apart from women. *“And what we’ve been finding out is, you always need to engage both men and women, and they can’t only engage the person that suffers for it”* (B_11). B_3 and B_4, while designing their engagement, realised that while the programme focused on men *“partners are indirectly very much involved in the program. Something we’ve noticed is that a lot of the dropouts are because their partners don’t want to engage with the exercises.”* (B_3). This may also be because men are trying to hold onto a relationship that is already broken, *“by the time the program happens you have a partner that has no interest in restoring, men can go in with kind of false expectations that they can still make the relationship work”* (B_3). This can create safety concerns, where B_5 noted that often they found men would only participate to get their partner back - *“you realise your program is being used as harmful bait.”*. Therefore it is vital that **safety** is addressed - *“It’s not, if violence occurs during your program, it’s when violence occurs during your program and what resources you can provide women to mitigate it as much as possible.”* (B_5).

Reflecting on the dropout rate of men due to partners, B_3 highlighted that there is a need to think about *“what’s the parallel stream for the women - what should we be talking to them about, what should they be discussing as women. As they go through this process.”*. While the programmes may be designed at an individual-level they can be more effective when considering women and the wider community.

6 Discussion: further work

The findings showcased how a few programmes approached engaging men and what they learnt. The themes discussed are worth exploring further when designing for social transformation. Here, rather than designing campaigns to build awareness or nudges through products and systems, these interventions focused on engaging men on the applicable changes they can make to their personal lives. Concerned with incentivising men to critically reflect, rethink and implement alternative behaviours through exercises and content. Through this, they promoted connectivity with other men and with their partners, where change is a mutual process. Which meant that each programme had to be different and contextually situated in a way that made it meaningful and personal but also culturally relevant. It was about **meeting men where they are in their lives rather than where designers want them to be.**

While designing, the designers came up against the normalisation of aggressive behaviours and a dismissal of men’s role to make change. In these cases, ensuring that the products are desirable and fit with men’s needs and values, can make the products more engaging and thus impactful. Communication and outreach is of extreme importance in this work, where a carefully crafted

message is required. Instead of criminalising those who (might) commit harm, and by default name them violent, focusing on the positive implications will draw more men in. Especially given that in these contexts men will not identify themselves as violent.

No man is forced into any of these programmes. In a way it requires men to already recognise that they want to change something for them to be willing to engage. Yet, community pressure can stifle behaviour change, and collectivising individuals can help overcome this. Further research should seek to understand how to engage men who are 'hard to reach'. Moreover, most couples programmes focused on heterosexual couples and more should explore LGBTQIA+ community-led interventions. Moreover, there are concerns that focusing most interventions on the domesticated part of men's life will fail to help them see all women as people with human rights. While these minimal impacts are important, these alone will not achieve the field's overall goals. Further interventions and research should look at engaging men in regards to actions needed to take place in every part of men's lives from the workplaces to how they inhabit the public spaces to start creating acts of structural change.

Overall a takeaway for studies working with people who 'have potential to do harm' that (1) focusing on the positive implications, (2) the contextual meaning of what it means to be a person in a given time, and (3) building dialogues and process' between people can lead to more willingness to engage with topics that counter their norms. Thus, more research in applying these principles to other areas could better visualise social transformative research and practice.

7 Conclusion:

The article highlighted an upcoming area of design concern: engaging men. More widely engaging those who (might) inflict harmful behaviours. It highlighted the need to think of men as agents capable of creatively transforming their lived realities. Rather than communicating and focusing on the intentions behind the designs (reducing violence), they focus on the contextual factors (constructs of masculinities), and their values and desires (e.g. improving relationships) to bring men into spaces for social change. This demonstrates the need for designers to be attuned to the structural relations in people's lives, how their behaviours are shaped and monitored by societies. Although this article was limited to a few projects and how they developed the programme outcome, a better analysis of the role of design working in this area is required to better visualise what is required when working here. The doctoral research is therefore mapping the system behind design engagements to improve understanding of what it means to engage in IPV contexts.

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About the Authors:

Rute Fiadeiro: Ph.D. Candidate, Royal College of Art, School of Design. She is interested in working at the intersection of topics such as gender, policy, violence, and feminism, through design from a structural position.

Jo-Anne Bichard: Professor of Accessible Design at The Helen Hamlyn Center for Design, Royal College of Art. As a design anthropologist her research involves multi and interdisciplinary collaboration and ethnographic engagement in the inclusive design process.

John Stevens: Senior Tutor in Global Innovation Design MA/M.Sc. at the Royal College of Art. He researches design's application to social, cross-cultural, and humanitarian innovation - as products, interactions, and systems.

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