

Gender, Patriarchy and Power workshop

25–28 November 2015

Venue: The Grail Centre, Kleinmond

Facilitators: Anna Davies-van Es and Astrid von Kotze

Hosted by DVV International South Africa

Purpose

The workshop's purpose was to deepen the knowledge and skills of DVV International's local partners with regard to the concepts of gender, patriarchy and power. Ultimately, the workshop sought to consciously address patriarchy through influencing personal and organisational practices.

Approach

This workshop was a three-day feminist popular education process that used a range of participatory methods. Starting with an exploration of the context of participants, the workshop developed depth of understanding around three key themes:

- Gender and patriarchy
- Power and action
- Power, strategy and our practice.

These themes were treated as interlinking and the process as iterative, building the conversation and analysis over the three days.

A copy of the workshop programme and participants are attached in **Appendices A and B** of this report. A list of resources for further reading and reference has been included in **Appendix C**.

How to use this report

This report has been written as a record of the workshop.

- Sections with purple shading show games and icebreakers.
- Sections with orange shading show exercises carried out during the workshop.
- *Sections in italics show inputs from participants attending this workshop.*
- Sections in blocks show inputs from the facilitators.

Introduction: Our context

Bingo

Individually, take an A4 piece of paper and fold in half long-ways, and then into thirds. Unfold it and you will now have six blocks. Now move around the room to find others, one by one, who share something in common with you. Write down each person's name and what you have in common and continue until you have completed your six blocks. In plenary, go around and share what your commonalities with others are.

What skill or talent do I bring to the group?

On your own, write down a skill or talent that you have that you can share with others during this workshop. Then share it with the rest of the group in plenary.

Specific objectives of the workshop

- To deepen our understanding of key concepts, particularly gender and patriarchy
- To undertake a deeper exploration of patriarchy as it plays out through invisible, hidden and visible power, and investigate how it is perpetuated by institutions in the family, community structures, religion, education, media and the state.
- To touch on the other systems of oppression that intersect with and support patriarchy.
- To create space for thinking critically about gender roles and stereotypes, and the ways they play out in our lives and work
- To reflect on our own practice and how we take on the roles and contribute towards maintaining patriarchy.
- To share key methodologies/tools for analysing power
- To expand our understanding of the current context and reflect on our current strategies to tackle negative power/injustice.

Principles of our space

Triangles and squares

Holding a long rope, stand in a circle with your eyes closed. Now form a triangle with the others in the circle without saying anything. When the facilitator says you can open your eyes, look around and see the results.

You can also repeat this process to form a square.

What did we learn from this exercise?

Group inputs

- *Communication and listening takes place at different levels: with the head, the hands and the heart.*
- *It takes patience, perseverance, trust and some courage. We have to help each other and work with each other.*
- *It's also about pushing each other a bit, about supporting and lifting each other.*



Ground rules guiding our workshop

What are the ground rules for our group?

- Trust, courage, willingness to learn and to persevere
- Communication
- Have a common purpose; collective purpose
- heart hand head/ heart mind body
- listen with ears and for feeling
- respect for one another's views
- confidentiality. Gender and patriarchy is sensitive and it's easy to step on each other's toes. What happens in this room, stays in this room
- Criticism with love
- When the facilitator's hand goes up, then everyone's hands go up and we become still.

Introduction to feminism

Video clip: The single story

Watch the TED Talks video clip by Chimamanda Adichie: 'We should all be feminists'.¹ Then share what you heard that struck you.

Work first in a buzz group with one partner to share your comments. Then share in the plenary group.

Summary

In this video, Chimamanda talks about the way in which she has grappled with the label of feminist and what it means to her. Men and women are different biologically. About 52% of the world's population are female. The higher you go, the fewer women there are.

Men literally rule the world. This made sense a thousand years ago. The physically stronger person was likely to lead. But nowadays it's the more innovative, creative intelligent person. We have evolved, but our ideas of gender have not.

We should all be angry. Gender matters everywhere in the world. We raise men with fragile egos, and we raise women to shrink themselves.

But there is space to work within. Culture is constantly changing. Culture does not make people: people make culture. Any man or a woman who says, 'Yes there is a problem, and we must fix it,' is a feminist.

Group inputs

- *Culture is just something we have created, and we can recreate it.*
- *A thread that comes through for me is about dispossession. My maternal great-grandfather died. My great-grandmother gave the land to all the sons-in-law. My grandmother was not married so she got nothing.*
- *It's interesting how we reinforce specific behaviours that send the message about how we see our power. We perpetuate gender stereotypes. The girls are always told to clean and boys to move things, and that has consequences.*
- *It made me think about instances in my own life where I am overlooked or marginalised because I am female.*
- *I went to a ceremony where all the leaders were male and those who were praying were male, but the women were in the kitchen cooking. It made me realise that the gender issue is very serious.*
- *It's funny the way Africans are relating and thinking. When the men are together, they want to look as if they are in charge. But the reality is that women are running the show.*
- *I am thinking about how men and women assume the roles that are typically expected of them by patriarchy and culture. There are contradictions within the system. How do we challenge these?*
- *The matriarch can also behave like a patriarch, either through enforcing the gender rules or through behaving in a typically male way.*
- *I learnt about the power of language through the way people are speaking about those they are married to as 'partners' rather than 'husband' or 'wife'.*
- *People are telling me what I am supposed to be doing. People are telling me I am supposed to be wearing a skirt in order to be a wife.*

1. The video clip is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc

Theme 1: Gender and patriarchy

Our bodies, our realities

Activist timeline

At some point in your past, something shifted in your head/heart/hands when you realised the world is not okay and that you want to make a change. Try to think of that moment where things shifted for you and. Think of that time when your eyes opened wider.

Write your name on a card and stick it up on the timeline showing which year that happened for you.

In plenary, listen to everyone's stories reflecting on the moment they became activists. Names on cards on a timeline showing decades.

Group inputs

1959: I was at the Catholic School and in 1959 I did my matric. The nuns read to us from Reader's Digest to share current affairs. A nun read to us about the Cuban revolution but there was something wrong with the story. I tried to get different news on the radio and was able to via Radio Moscow. It has changed me because what people tell you or what is presented in the media should be taken with a grain of salt.

1960s: I grew up in Cologne and we played in the ruins of houses that had been bombed. My political awakening happened in the 1960s when I went to student rebellion protests and it was the time of the Vietnam war. I was not even affected by the war but I made protest songs. At about age twelve, I realised one has to act with integrity. We cannot say one thing and do another thing.

1975: When I was in Std. 6, there was a conscious group of students. The Department of Education was organising an outing and sent buses inscribed with 'Buses for Cape Coloured scholars'. We refused to get onto the buses. I later got onto the SRC at school. I was involved with the SA Council of Sports and was exposed to a range of left-thinking people. I also got involved in the civic movement in Retreat through CAFDA. My parents were also struggling as working class people. Once I got on the path, I just kept following it.

1970s: politics was never mentioned in my household. After I was opened to politics I was reprimanded for giving shelter to protesters.

In 1970s I was coming back from the Eastern Cape with my gran and I did not have papers. My gran hid me in her bag and that was how I travelled. There were riots in PE and there were meetings at our house at night. One night I was put under a mattress and someone slept on top. The police were searching for young men and so that is how I was hidden. I was made to leave my parents in PE to go to school. This theme of being hidden: where does it leave you? I was left with anger. I have been left with a desire to be active in each and every corner. I have a strong desire to assert the right to belong.



1985: When I went to school I used to have to wear the student dompas. I wondered why this was. I also remember the hippos coming to my community. I began to notice that I had to work hard as a female. Everything was in Afrikaans. I passed matric in 1985 but my educator did not work hard. 1983-1984 the educators were not there in the classroom.

1990 – 1991: I grew up in Cradock. We used to toyi toyi and everything was upside down a lot of the time. In 1991 I learnt about Mandela.

1990s: My parents died when I was still in high school. I stayed with my sister. In 1994 there was the elections and many promises. In 1995-6 I had to drop out.

2001: There were just girls at home and I was 12. I went to visit my uncle and everyone expected the girls to do all the work and the boys were playing. I went to complain to the elders but they said that is the way that things are. Even now I still challenge this issue time and time again.

2007 my father passed away. He was a breadwinner and I failed that year. My mother was the third wife of my father and the 2nd wife chased her out.

I grew up in a Coloured community. The neighbours used to fight and I would look after this boy. I told the parents that I would kill them if they hurt that boy. That's when I decided that no man would ever lay a hand on me. No one wanted to help but even if there is just a little bit of assistance that we could give, then it can make a difference.

I am the youngest of eight children. When we came together, then everyone would give their opinion. I was always told that my opinion did not count. I decided to say something, then I saw that everyone was listening to me. Activists speak up but many voices stay silent.

My cousin had to marry the leader of the Mafias and we did not want to do the same. We decided that we were not going to get involved with gangsters. Our freedom was challenged.

When I started working I was in an NGO and but it closed down and then I went into the corporate sector which I hated because of the way it is driven by profit.

Summary

Our moments are often about sadness or exclusion or being made invisible. Political moments informed our lives even where we did not fully understand them. Once your eyes are open, then it leads to action.

Language

A treasure hunt

Take one sheet of paper. Each page has 8 different terms on it. Go around the room and find people who can explain the term.

The terms we used were adrocentrism; chauvinism; feminism; gender; misogyny; patriarchy; power; sexism.

Then form groups of 3-4 people. In each group you need to have at least four languages.

For the two words assigned to your group: develop a definition for the word and translate them into three languages other than English.

Word	Meaning
Adrocentrism	Placing men at the centre, ordering things based on the centrality of the man.
Chauvinism	Arrogant discriminatory behaviour
Feminism	Justice for women
Gender	The social construction of difference between male and female. It can change (whereas sex can only be changed through hormones and surgery).
Misogyny	A hatred of women
Patriarchy	The rule of men. It's about the father, the male line.
Power	Gender was originally about the power relationship between men and women so that men do not dominate. Representation of women without a shift in power is window dressing.
Sexism	Discrimination against a person based on their gender

Discussion: Is a feminist always concerned with women's rights?

Feminists fight for the centrality of women in society. Are there different types of feminists?

Women can have the same rights as men but there can still be patriarchy. It's not just about words but also about action. Feminism is associated with change and challenge.

It's not only fighting for women's rights that makes you a feminist. It should not be about rights but about power. If you push, you will always get pushback. This can be a measure of success.

There is a strong image of feminists as women who hate men. This makes them seem bad and evokes fear in men. Where women are independent and strong, this draws attention, and is commented on by others.



Female and male images

In groups of three or four:
draw the outline of one of your group members who is lying down on the newspaper. Then turn that outline into an image of the perfect man or woman.

When you join the plenary group, your group will explain to the others why you chose to draw your perfect woman or man the way you did. i.e. What does the perfect female or male look like in these pictures?



Group inputs on female and male images

- *How do we know it's a man? No breasts; facial hair (beard); posture more assertive. What we normally associate with men is physical power. Not all men fit the representations. With women, we expect the stereotype of red lips and long hair. Once again, not all women fit this. There's a lot of money spent on looking a particular way. Not many of us would fit into the stereotypical male and female bodies we are presented with.*
- *If a woman is showing her body, is she inviting sex or expressing her freedom? We usually think she is asking for sex but it may not be so.*
- *When we look at stereotypes, there are big changes that have happened between 20 years ago and now. Gender images are not static. It's also about what we are encouraged to wear by society and what is available to us. Our concept of what is revealing and provocative shifts over time. These things do not stay the same.*
- *Why can men go down the street wearing very little but not be seen as provocative. Because of this double standard, the feminist movement has been tireless in saying, 'Don't tell me how to dress. Tell them not to rape.'*
- *There is a dichotomy: the woman as Madonna vs the woman as whore. How do women and men respond to us?*
- *We are criticised as women when we don't fit the stereotypes. For example:*
 - *I was told I was a lesbian because I never put on make-up or did all the stereotyped female things. Even when I introduced my husband to my family, then they said, 'Oh, so she is a girl.'*
 - *When I put heels on, there was surprise that I was wearing them. I was placed in a box that I was not comfortable with.*

Dividing up into randomly mixed groups

Grab a sweet from the packet and organise yourselves into groups according to the colours of the sweet wrappers.

For example:

- Orange is group 1
- Green is group 2
- Red is group 3
- Purple is group 4

Understanding patriarchy and systems of oppression

The Master's House²

In this exercise, we look at four topics or places in the world around us:

- Education: the system as it exists in SA
- Religion: church, mosque, synagogue and other places
- Media: print media, TV, radio, social networks
- Culture: including tradition and family.

We ask the question: What do these places teach us about how to be women and men, about how we should be or not be?

We then build a house using bricks describing male and female activities.

Process:

- Divide into groups of 4 or 5 people.
- Each group gets one topic to discuss for about 30 minutes.
- The group writes up its feedback on sticky notes. then gives feedback to the plenary.
- The sticky notes are organised in 'bricks' to make up the pillars of the Master's House (see illustration that follows).

2. The title of this is taken from a concept by Audre Lorde, who said, 'You cannot use the Master's tools to dismantle the Master's House.'

GENDER, PATRIARCHY AND POWER WORKSHOP

- *Why is there separation of men and women?*
 - *Women are considered unclean. There are rules that need to be followed to deal with this. They have to be cleansed before they can come into the church. This is the same for Judaism and Zionist Christian Church.*
- *Some of the religions justify their behaviour with religious text. Generally, through the interpretation of the Bible, there is demonization of Eve and women as a whole.*
- *Marriage vows: women must support men being the leaders in partnerships. The man has the status of breadwinner and the woman is expected to be in the home. The husband is considered head of home and the wife subservient.*
- *There is a strong emphasis on pain during childbirth. Seventh Day Adventists do not allow women to use any pain management during childbirth as a result.*
- *Traditionally, the marriage ceremony explicitly expects the woman to swear her obedience to her husband. During Islamic marriage, the woman is not even involved in consenting: she is not even in the room.*
- *A father is supposed to give his daughter away. The congregation was offended that I did not follow this tradition as a woman.*
- *Many brides may be child brides. They have no status. When the child leaves her parents' home, then the daughter is no longer the child of the mother.*
- *One is not supposed to question anything within a religion.*
- *Church or religion can cause personal conflict. It decrees the way one should raise children and this can contradict one's own views.*
- *There is respect and status associated with marriage which is lost if the husband dies. Widows are relegated to the back of the church when their husbands die. Some cultures say women have to wear black for an entire year. A widow can also be forced to live on her own in Indian culture. The woman is supposed to jump onto funeral pyre and get burnt to death when husband dies. The man's personhood is not affected by the death of his female partner. Culture and society says that women have value only in relation to men.*
- *Women are considered dirty when they bleed and so they are not allowed to do certain things, like cook.*
- *There are also cultures where women are stoned for adultery even when they are raped. There is an issue here with women's bodies and sexuality. The female is blamed.*
- *A 'good family' obeys the rules.*
- *Religious heads officially enforce these rules. Sometimes traditional leaders also do this.*
- *The message is that the man is the person and the woman is not. This gives us insight into why there is such high level of violence against women.*

Pillars of education

- *Girls must sit in a certain way: they must not open their legs or climb trees.*
- *Boys' schools are better resourced than girls' schools. Male sports (e.g. rugby and male soccer) are better resourced than female sports (e.g. netball, female soccer).*
- *The head boy is given the upper hand even when there is a head girl as well. The head girl must consult with the head boy before doing anything.*
- *Girls must sit in front but have to answer all the questions, even though boys are supposedly more intelligent.*
- *There are always comments excusing boys and blaming girls, like, 'Boys will be boys' and 'Those girls are loose. They are acting like boys.'*
- *Boys are expected to be stronger: they are expected to carry desks and chairs. Girls get stopped from strengthening their upper body in the playground and are given tasks like cleaning.*
- *Girls are more responsible so they get the tasks to help the teacher like doing the register. Girls are supposed to behave. Boys get to ring the bell.*
- *Boys show more respect for male rather than female teachers.*
- *Girls have to do better academically to be recognised.*
- *Text books reinforce the worst stereotypes about men and women. They are also very often racist and homophobic. Girls who do not fit the mould are not the norm in text books.*
- *There is a correlation between the subjects we can study and what we are expected to do. Engineers and doctors earn more than teachers and social workers. In every country in the world, women earn only 60–70% of what men do.*
- *Men can't do female work because people will think they are moffies. This is a derogatory and discriminatory word. The message is that, if you are not a real man, we will call you a moffie because we don't like gays.*
- *Females can either be submissive or have to behave like a man. If they act like men, they are aggressive and bitches.*

Pillars of culture

Messages we are taught:

- *Women must be superwomen:*
 - *A woman is not allowed to be tired or sick.*
 - *They must do a double shift.*
- *Women must be submissive and subservient:*
 - *The woman should speak when spoken to.*
 - *Women should not become independent.*
 - *Women should not challenge the men. They should not question.*
 - *They should not be educated.*



- *Men are macho:*
 - *Men don't show sadness or pain, only anger.*
 - *They are controlling.*
- *They make the decisions:*
 - *They are the head of householders.*
 - *Men are not accountable to anyone.*
 - *They are breadwinners. They should be providers.*

What happens if women do not live like this?

- *Sometimes men beat them. They feel they can enforce the rules ... but the rules also keep changing.*
- *Women come to understand that, 'I should not challenge my male partner and I must obey the rules, but even so, I may not be safe.'*

What is not true about men?

- *They are not always the breadwinners.*
- *Men do have feelings. They can feel frustrated because they can't show all their emotions.*

Conclusions on culture

- *By carrying on in this way in relationships, we pass these things on to the next generation. The cycle does not stop.*
- *Even in this day and age, very few men are involved in carrying an equal part on parenting.*
- *Men get a lot of positive feedback if they engage in carrying parenting roles, whereas women are criticised if they have work which takes them away from home.*
- *Lobola, isingenwa and other cultural practices all reinforce the gender roles that women are expected to play.*

Pillars of media

- *Men are shown as:*
 - *muscular*
 - *showing off*
 - *the talkers*
 - *capable.*
- *There are some shifts towards women as now capable. Men also are being targeted for cosmetics. Perhaps this is to extend the consumer pool to sell more cosmetics.*
- *Women are stereotyped as consumers of specific products, such as cleaning products, and are often referred to as 'girls' even where they are adults.*

Pillars of sex

What are these institutions saying about women having sex?

- *Sex is for male pleasure. Men are allowed to have multiple sexual partners.*
- *Are women allowed to have sex? Only if they are planning to have babies. Females are not sexual beings. They cannot initiate sex and they aren't allowed to say what they want from sex. If a female wants to have sex, she is cheating. If she doesn't want sex, she is disobedient. If women have sex outside the home, they are considered sluts.*
- *Men are not prepared to take the trouble to learn how to satisfy a woman and the women are not always willing to teach.*
- *There is also a lot of pressure on the man to have sex.*
- *Young men say, 'You can't eat pap every day.' They mean that they don't have to settle for monogamous relationships.*

This house tells us who we can have sex with. Men can have multiple sexual partners but they are also expected to engage only in heterosexual sex.

Summary

There are common messages within the different rooms of the house. Men are supposed to be dominant, and women to be submissive and obedient.

This shows us this is a system:

- It is organised.
- It is structured.
- It is made up of many parts.
- It influences all of us regardless of whether we don't agree with them or not.

If you step out of the house, then you are alienated, lonely and blamed. There are many mechanisms - including different forms of violence - that try to ensure that we stay in the house and continue to build. But even if we stay within the house, playing by the rules, it does not mean that we are safe from violence or that we are fulfilled.

Reflecting on patriarchy and our lives

How we build the Master’s House in our own lives

Think about the Master’s House. Ask yourself: ‘What do I do to maintain and build this house?’

On your piece of coloured paper, write down one way in which you contribute to building the house. Don’t put your name on it.

Fold it up and put it in this box.

As different people, we experience different kinds of privilege depending on our communities, backgrounds, race, culture, wealth or poverty, age and sexual orientation, and whether we are able-bodied or not. This means that the ways in which we experience the Master’s House are different.

How patriarchy is embedded in our everyday experience of the world

This is a good exercise to do where you have a mixed group of both women and men. It has been adapted from Raising Voices’ *Get Moving! Facilitator Guide*.

In the middle of room, form a line standing shoulder to shoulder. Close your eyes and respond to the following statements:

Statement	Instruction
If you were raised in the community where the people in authority were not the same sex as you are	Move one step back.
If it’s generally accepted for your sex to make sexist jokes about the other sex	Move one step forward.
If a teacher has ever promised you better results in exchange for sex	Move one step back.
If you have never been harassed by police because of your sex	Move one step forward.
If there were to be little response if your partner beat you	Move one step back.
If most lawyers, doctors and professionals are the same sex as you	Move one step forward.
If people of your sex often fear violence in their homes	Move one step back.
If people of your sex can beat a partner because he/she has been unfaithful	Move one step forward.
If you have ever denied a job because of your sex	Move one step back.

Statement	Instruction
If people of your opposite sex are often paid for sexual favours	Move one step forward.
If you have been discouraged from pursuing activities of your choice	Move one step back.
If you commonly see people of your sex in positions of leadership	Move one step forward.
If you have taken care of your partner while they were sick	Move one step back.
If you share child-rearing activities with your partner	Move one step forward.
If you have ever worried about how to dress to be safe	Move one step back.
If you have never been hooted at or whistled at	Move one step forward.

Now open your eyes. What do you notice?

Group inputs

- *The men were in front because the system makes men go forward and women go back.*
- *I was surprised that the gap was so big. The system favours us men to move forward.*



Theme 2: Power and action

Reflections on day 1 of the workshop

Collect the mess

Grab some of the mess (a pile of balled-up scrap paper) in middle of room.

You will now re-make the mess. Throw a piece of paper in the centre when you want to speak.

Group comments

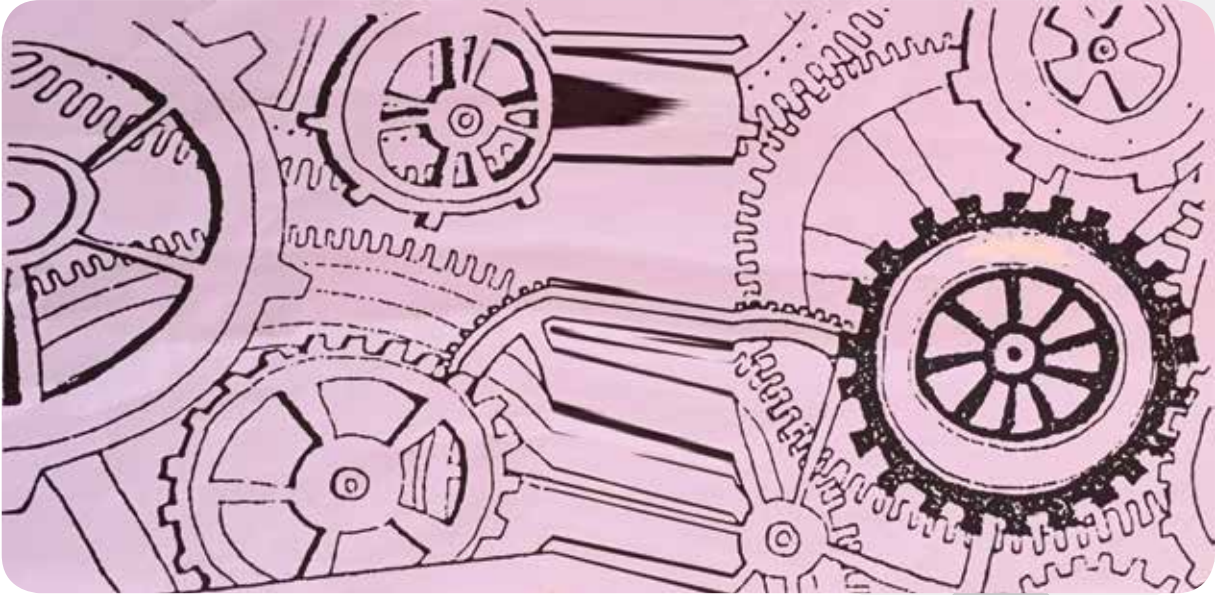
- *Women raise most children and so they are implicated. The mother is the primary caregiver and socialises boys into the world. Women co-create the master's house.*
- *My older son desperately wants a boy despite being brought up in patriarcal ways.*
- *Sometimes economic issues rule the day. We stay in relationships because of money. Religion also acts as the opiate of the masses.*
- *Are we to blame? Often we sustain it and keep it going. Sometimes we do it without even knowing what we are doing.*
- *We need to spread the word, maybe through training parents to change their mind set. It's in us and it's so normal that we don't even know we are doing this. We need to have these conversations.*
- *We live very close to these things. In my house, things were never discussed. I live in a house where my brother-in-law and sister still live under patriarchy. In the late 2000s my eyes were opened.*
- *Even if women are implicated, does this mean that individual men who perpetrate violence within this can be excused? No. We are actually very used to inflicting violence. Violence is endemic to everything. There should be a much more responsible way of relating to violence and the environment as a whole.*
- *What if we know these things but we can't speak about these things? There is an element of risk in engaging. One needs to go ahead with things carefully. Sometimes I take risks and I only realise afterwards how risky it was. We can't always take things on directly. It also does no service to anyone when one wrongs another person. It's about raising the questions as they arise.*
- *We need to think really hard to take this message to the youth. There is hunger for information and activity amongst young people.*
- *What strategies can we take with us for going forward? How can we remove the negative bricks of the Master's House and what do we replace them with?*

Wheel exercise

Using the wheel handout and on your own, write the word patriarchy in one of the wheels. Now label the smaller systems that patriarchy uses in order to operate, the cogs that hold it in place.

In small groups, answer the following questions:

- What are the parts of the machine, the cogs?
- What is the glue that holds this machine together?
- What is the oil that keeps this machine running smoothly?



What are the parts of the machine, the cogs?

- Church
- The justice system
- Capitalism
- The health system
- The family
- The education system
- The United Nations
- Individual ambitions
- Inequality.

What is the glue that holds this machine together?

- Silence
- Unintentional collusion
- Going with the flow; accepting the status quo
- The threat of fear of violence as a backlash
- Culture
- Media
- Language. This is a way of keeping people quiet, especially big words that are used to confuse people and the meaningless use of words. The term 'patriarchy' is unknown in communities and so we need to find a way of explaining it, for instance, by saying 'the rule of men'.
- The economic and political system that holds things together.

What is the oil that keeps this machine running smoothly?

- Socialisation: We fear change; we follow rather than lead
- Fear of consequences
- Complacency
- Survival
- Denial.

Where does the dominant way of thinking about the world come from? It comes from the dominant class. A lot of it is Western and imperialist. It's a white, male culture.



Power

Defining power

Individually on a piece of paper, write down what you understand by power. The facilitator then groups them on the floor and facilitates a discussion.

Group comments

Control and force:

- When someone wants to make the decisions for you and you are not in agreement

Domination:

- People dominate others through money. Money is a source of power to make things they might not otherwise want to do
- Laws and power: there is an illusion that we participate in making the laws and agreeing with them. Many laws are passed without proper participation and understanding of communities. Even where there is participation, the laws can still be implemented without our consent or agreement.
- There are also unwritten laws for instance in the household. These are also *v e r y* powerful.
- Influence and power: who influences what laws are made? Money and position. You can only scratch one person's back if you already have power. There are also powerful forums such as NEDAC where business labour and government sit together. They are powerful because they are organized and have money.
- We have a limited democracy because we effectively mandate others to make decisions on our behalf.

Authority also exists in society:

- Through traditional authority, religious leaders, the power that is accorded certain individuals through religious beliefs

Power can corrupt

- *Power and ruling:*
- *Top-down decision-making*
- *Pressure is put on us to participate and perform*

The following also gives us power:

- *Charisma: presence and our voices*
- *Legitimacy. This can be manufactured under the status quo.*
- *Moral high ground: your cause is just and fair and moral and ethical.*
- *Education and knowledge:*

Everyone has some degree of power. Workers, for instance, have numbers as their power.

Discussion on power

Many negative words come up when we look at power. We experience power negatively. Women are not encouraged to have power.

But power can be positive: participating, mobilizing, decision-making for oneself. There are people who are working at the higher level who are the face of power but there are also all sorts of people below them who enforce the same decisions as leadership. We need to stay well and energized: we can't always be dismantling the master's house. We need energy to keep going and the ability to act to change the world. It's energy to make things move and to take initiative.

Power can change and transform because it is relational. It shifts all the time and no one is completely without power at any time. Because it shifts, the social justice movement has been able to gain victories at times.

There is no such thing as rich or poor except in relation to something else. 'Relational' is about this relationship of comparison and difference. Relationality also places value one position over another. Power is context specific so we can be powerful in one context and powerless in another.

Positive power

Powerful moments

Close your eyes and think about a time when you were powerful. Think about that moment, who was there and what it felt like, and what change it might have brought about. Open your eyes once you have that moment.

Find someone in the room that you can go on a walk with. Share the moment when you felt powerful. Then share your reflections in the plenary group.

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Group comments

What gave you power in that moment?

- My vision of a successful future
- Being able to mobilise people
- When I was able to change the way that other people did things
- Having my first child: I felt people would see me as a woman
- My determination and fighting spirit
- When I stood up for myself and survived
- Personal achievement in the field of education
- Achieving property
- Being a worker leader and working with others
- Public speaking and overcoming my fear of doing that
- Passion
- Being able to act against injustice
- Demonstration and doing things together.

In the moment of having power, there is also the knowledge and fear of the loss that can also accompany it.

Recognising one another as human beings allows us to build power within. Our potential to shape our own lives and the world. Not only power within, but also power with and power to.

Can you have power with if you don't have power within? It's much harder. Need to keep your power within strong because it is under threat. Sometimes the power with others can lead to power within. As an example, TAC developed a community of people who all wore T-shirts with the words, 'I am positive.' They gained power within through being part of a community of people. Also sometimes the righteousness of one's cause can also inspire one to take on acts that feel beyond us. (For more information on this, read Just Associates. 2006. 'Making Change Happen: Power -Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace').

There are different elements involved in being powerful: having the capacity to recognize injustice, believing that things can be different, and then taking action (agency).

All the time we need to be thinking about how we are acting or not acting in ways that allow the expression of everyone's humanity.

Song

My mother was a kitchen girl,
My father was a garden boy,
That's why, that's why,
I'm a socialist, I'm a socialist

That's why, that's why,
I'm a socialist, I'm a socialist
That's why, that's why,
I'm a socialist, I'm a socialist

Why did Grace die? (see *Appendix D* for a copy of this story)

Read the story 'Why did Grace die?'

In small groups, discuss why Grace died.

Then feed back to the big group, going around the room to hear all the reasons from the small groups.

Group feedback

- The socio-economic conditions in Malawi caused her to suffer all that she suffered, such as discrimination.
- The legal system did not respect her right to decide not to have more children.
- The story in the media worked together with the court to say that it's not such a big problem if you kill your wife if she removes her uterus.
- Her husband refused to allow her to use contraception. She did not have a son and so she was forced to carry on falling pregnant.
- Grace died because of patriarchy and the way it treats women within the system in Malawi. She had no power over whether she could have her uterus removed: the law and her husband decided on this. She had no say over her own body and was treated as an object.
- Culture and traditions dictate how women should behave and how they are treated.
- She was financially disabled and there was no money for her to access healthcare. She was labelled by the health profession (nurses) as being a prostitute for wanting to prevent further pregnancy.
- The rural environment limited her access to alternatives. There was no transport for her to access healthcare when she needed it.
- Grace tried to speak to people but no one wanted to assist her. Other women did not support her or assist her; in fact, they labelled her and criticised her. Her church made the decision that she could not use contraception. Her family also would not support her. She could even not communicate with her husband when she needed to. He told her he would kick her out/return her to her parents in response to her asking for help. The system prevented her from speaking up.
- The migrant labour system caused her husband to go to Johannesburg and bring back gonorrhoea. Grace would have been blamed for getting the STI even though it came from her husband.
- Other contributors were the editor who chose to publish, the community who may have written to the editor and the chief.

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Grace showed a lot of persistence and strength. Did she have any power at any point? Not really. In this story, there is a whole lot of visible power: these are the faces we can see; the people we can point out.

There are also people in the story who do not wield direct or visible power, but they influence the outcome – Grace's death – for example the media, in the stories they chose to publish about women's reproductive choices.

But there is also invisible power: the norms and values, as expressed by the church, the health system, the traditions and culture, the laws, the corporates e.g. the pharmaceutical companies, and the media.

This invisible power is like the base of an iceberg. If we want change, it's like cutting down a tree: we need to take out the roots as well.



Reading

Read the following publication to understand power better:

Just Associates. 2006. 'Making Change Happen: Power (Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace)'. Booklet 3 in a series called Making Change Happen. Available at http://www.justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/mch3_2011_final_0.pdf

The table below is adapted from this booklet.

Type of power	Examples
Visible power	Established rules and the enforcers of these rules e.g. laws and policies, police, army
Hidden power (negative)	Organised, informal organisation as well as those who influence e.g. media, mafia, business, gangs, companies
Invisible power	The things we can feel but can't see: rules that remain unwritten but that everyone knows and that there is no official law around. Often cultural or religious. Who benefits from invisible power? Those in powerful positions and men. Why is it kept invisible? So that it can't be challenged.

Summary

Antonio Gramsci (The Prison Notebooks) asked a question: 'How could it be that a small group of people can dominate so many other people?'

There are two **visible methods**: through using the army and the police to carry out acts of killing people, torturing them and using tools to inflict fear; and through rules and regulations that infiltrate all the institutions e.g. under apartheid.

There are also **invisible methods**. These involve teaching people to own the system through labelling themselves. This is the most brutal way of making people small. People believe that they don't deserve and then they act in that way. Examples are: 'I'm only a woman', 'Boys don't cry', 'It's not my way to challenge him' and 'I have to do that because I am a girl.'

Body sculptures

- Line up from shortest to tallest. Now divide into groups of about four people.
- In your group, make a body sculpture. This will say something about the relationship between visible, invisible and hidden power.
- Present your body sculpture to the others in the workshop.
- The plenary group will make comments about what they see in your sculpture. You will then explain what you are trying to represent and how you could change the sculpture to improve the picture you are presenting.



Conclusion of body sculptures exercise

To change the relationship, there needs to be an attitude change. You especially need to be able to convince those who are benefiting from the current position to change. You also need to identify all the forms of negative power at play: focusing on visible power only will not lead to structural change.

Theme 3: Power, strategy and our practice

Recap of Day 2

- Facilitators prepare and hand out an equal number of cards with pictures of an eye, an ear and a heart.
- Those with an eye think about what they saw the previous day; those with an ear think about what they heard; those with a heart think about what they felt.
- Go around the group hearing from each person about all the things we heard, saw and felt.

What we saw:

- We can show different things using our bodies.
- I saw that we all got the same message but interpreted it differently. So that is why people can be in the same situation but experience it differently.
- I could see that people everywhere are struggling with the same things.

What we heard

- Power can be visible, invisible or hidden. I struggled to understand this.
- We always talk about things being normal. But they are not normal: it's just the way we have learnt to do them.

What we felt

- How do you mend the Master's House? I felt helpless and powerless.
- I felt sad reading the story of Grace. I felt sad that, as women, we can't always stand up for our rights.
- I felt ashamed. I have been part of the problem. It has come back to hit me hard.
- I felt how much patriarchy has damaged the nation. We need to make a stand.

Rebuilding our confidence

If we are constantly undermining ourselves, no wonder we lack confidence.

Find three different people in the group and say something really nice to each one of them.

What did it feel like?

- Smiles.
- Feeling a bit embarrassed and shy.
- It was good to hear people recognising what I know about myself.
- By saying hello, it's a way of recognising people's existence: "I see you."

Being sand, not oil

Now that we feel good about ourselves, let's look at what we can do to bring the system down.

If you add sand to a machine, it clogs the machine up and prevents it from functioning. So how can we be the sand in the works of the world rather than the oil that helps the world to run smoothly?

What do people do to be the sand? Think of an example and a strategy.

Group inputs

- *One needs to be a strong person with principles. We need to ask, 'Will I really stand with you? Not just be loyal to you but also speak up?'*
- *Challenge yourself. What are your principles and what are you really trying to make visible? Think about your values and what you believe in. Name them by using courage to speak up.*
- *Look for ways to make 'disruptive innovations' to change the world. Find ways to go against the grain through your work.*
- *We can stand up and do something for ourselves. We can mobilise people. Education as one of the ways we can mobilise children.*
- *Make connections. Witness other women's lives by making the space for them to speak. We have each other: use that to create agency.*
- *Make things visible by asking questions and presenting people's lived experience back to them.*



Addressing negative power

In this exercise the group works on understanding and trying to change the power imbalance around a specific issue.

- The issue we looked at was violence against women.
- Group members were given the table headings and asked to fill in the columns in their groups, then share in plenary.

Violence against women	Actors and what they say/do	Current strategies	Gaps
Visible power	<p>Government makes the laws. Currently we have good laws because activism of the women's movement's was carried over into formulation of laws in the 1990s. The laws are there – they are quite good – but they are not consistently applied or implemented. They only focus on the 16 Days of Activism.</p> <p>The Department of Women and Children and disabled people are quite invisible. The Department of Justice does not do well: any women faces layers of abuse; police who don't manage reporting well; court takes forever; cases are often dropped; documents go missing.</p> <p>UN agreements and conventions: Beijing in 1995 was the birthplace of CEDAW. Twenty-year review: progress on some things and very little on others</p>	<p>Changing the laws: Advocacy: Rape Crisis, shelters Specialist legal help: Women's Law Clinic Network of organisations monitoring violence against women: Shukumisa</p>	<p>Changing the way the laws are implemented</p>
Hidden power	<p>Police; employers; corporations; media; religious institutions; economic system; medical and health professionals who have to implement regulations; business.</p>	<p>GroundUp and other alternative media</p>	
Invisible power	<p>Cultural practices; labour practices; partners; family; friends; religious leaders; communities; ideology. Civil society organisations are assumed to be progressive but they are not always. They can also be negative and lack critical thinking.</p>	<p>Service provision: Shelters like Saartjie Baartman: survivors of domestic violence Women's circles: education; skills for economic Do we build the Master's House if we train women in cooking or sewing? Not really: it just helps them to survive the system better. What about engaging in disruptive innovation? Women in Delft go out with their pots and make a noise, also blowing whistles, and then they go to the house where abuse is happening. Women being able to generate an income does start to crack the system. PEP and the other partners here at this workshop Mosaic: domestic violence Also Triangle; Gender Dynamics; SWEAT; Sonke Gender Justice; Men's Trust</p>	<p>Popular education work addressing invisible power</p>

Closing reflections

Think about how you will report what you learnt in this workshop to others. Then rehearse what you will say with one other person.

Group inputs

- It's the first time I have really understood power in relation to gender. There are strategies we can use to challenge the power. There are plenty of tools we can use.
- We have different understandings and take different things from this workshop.
- We feel confident that we understand patriarchy and can explain it.
- There is sometimes a fear when we talk about what we have learnt. What will I do? I leave my file on the table for my family to see. I will leave it until my husband asks me.
- I am thinking about how to speak about it when I get home. It's not easy. Saying it, we reinforce it but it also allows for us to make a commitment to what we will do differently.
- I write down my daily reflections. I will translate what I have learnt here into my own words.



Last ritual

- At the end of doing the Master's House, the group wrote down their role in maintaining the Masters House. Ask them to think now about where they are now compared with what they wrote. If members of the group are willing to share, please ask them to do so.
- Once everyone has shared, then hand out the contributions they wrote about how they contribute to the Master's House (without opening them) Instruct the group to rip up the contributions to the Master's House and throw them into the dustbin.

Group inputs

- *Some of the fear has dispersed. Before I was very conscious of what people would say. Now I feel I am not going to be scared to talk about this and sharing.*
- *In my life, I have applied a lot of what I have learnt from my mother. Now I can see where those messages come from.*
- *It's made me think I need to examine very closely what I have internalised and how I have acted. I am in a good position to take the message across but first I need to look at myself.*
- *At home I am the last borne. Before the family does anything, my sisters call me for approval (because I am male). I see this is not a normal thing. I hope to challenge the status quo.*
- *I have learnt not to be so judgemental.*
- *I am feeling empowered to reflect on my personal practices in order to shift the invisible power so that it is visible. By asking questions, we can make the invisible visible.*

Appendix A: Workshop programme

Gender, Patriarchy and Power workshop

November 2015

Hosted by DVV International Southern Africa

Overall objective:

Deepen the knowledge and skills of DVV International local partners in regard to the concepts of gender, patriarchy and power in order to reflect our personal and organisational practices to address patriarchy.

Specific objectives:

Deepen our understanding of 'gender' and patriarchy' and the ways they play out in our lives and work;
Share key methodologies/tools for analysing power;

Expand our understanding of the current context and reflect on our current strategies to tackle negative power/injustice.

Reflect on the implications of a 'feminist approach' for ourselves and our work.

Approach

This workshop will be a three-day feminist popular education process, facilitated by Anna Davies-van Es and Astrid von Kotze, using a range of participatory methods. Whilst the programme has a number of key blocks/themes articulated below, we see these as interlinking and the process as iterative – building the conversation and analysis over the three days. Shifts in the content and methodology will be made as necessary through the process, in consultation with key DVV staff.

Day 0: Our context

16:30 – 17:00

Welcome and introductions

Welcome by DVV

Introduction to the facilitators

Quick review of programme and the approach

17:00 – 18:00

Film and discussion

TEDtalk on feminism by C Ngozi-Adichie

Day 1: Gender and patriarchy

Aims

- Connect with each other and set the frame for the workshop.
- Deepen our understanding of key concepts and think critically about gender roles and stereotypes.
- To undertake a deeper exploration of patriarchy as it plays out through invisible, hidden and visible power, and investigate how it is perpetuated by institutions in the family, community structures, religion, education, media and the state.
- Reflect on our own practice and how we take on the roles and contribute towards maintaining patriarchy.
- Touch on the other systems of oppression, that intersect with and support patriarchy.

8:30 – 9:30	<p><i>Setting the Frame, getting to know each other and principles for the space</i> Human bingo Activist map – reflecting on the moment I became an activist. Collective agreement on principles</p>
9:30 – 10:15	<p><i>Key concepts</i> The language of ‘gender’ and ‘patriarchy’ (group work exercise)</p>
10:15 - 10:30	<i>Tea</i>
11:15 - 11:30	<p><i>Energiser/well-being practice</i> What keeps us well, safe and connected as activists?</p>
11:30 - 12:30	<p><i>Our bodies, our realities</i> Images exercises: surfacing stereotypes female/male</p>
12:30 - 13:00	<p><i>Understanding patriarchy and systems of oppression</i> The Master’s House – patriarchy and its implications. Exploring patriarchy and how it plays out in the key institutions of our society.</p>
13:00 - 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>
14:00 – 15:30	<i>Understanding patriarchy and systems of oppression contd.</i>
15:30-15:45	<i>Tea</i>
15:45 – 16:30	<p><i>Reflecting on patriarchy and our lives</i> How do we build the Master’s House? Personal reflections on the role we play</p>
16:30 – 17:00	<p><i>Systems of oppression</i> How do other systems of oppression operate with patriarchy?</p>

Day 2: Power and action

Aims

- Develop a shared definition of power – highlighting its dynamism, and that it is relational; that there are multiple sources and ways of using power. Part of our challenge as activists is to fully understand power over and how it operates in our contexts and lives.
- Reflect on the different forms of transformative power and our experience of it.
- Develop an understanding of the 3 faces of negative power as applied to specific contexts.
- Sharpen our analysis of our contexts in relation to visible, hidden and invisible power.
- Imagine alternatives and what power could look like in a new world.

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8:30 - 9:00	Synthesis Reflecting on the Master's house
9:00 – 9:30	Defining power When you hear the word power ...
9:30 – 10:30	Sources of power Transformative power and its uses
10:30 - 10:45	Tea
10:45 – 12:30	The faces of negative power (power over) Story analysis and mapping of negative power
12:30 – 13:00	Energiser/well-being practice
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:00	Visions of power for Sculptures of transforming negative power
15:00-15:15	Tea
15:45 – 16:30	Reflecting on power and patriarchy

Day 3: Power, strategy and our practice

Aims

- Analyse how our current work tackles power over;
- Reflect on our practice and how our thinking has shifting during the workshop.
- Think about what a feminist approach and analysis of power means for our work going forward.

8:30 – 9:00	Synthesis on power Reflecting on our understanding of power and patriarchy.
9:30 – 11:00	Applied power analysis How are our activities/strategies addressing the different faces of negative power or not?
11:00 – 11:15	Tea
11:15 – 12:00	Reflecting on feminist practice and strategy How do I now think about my role in the system? What are the key principles and strategies we want to adopt?
12:00 – 12:45	How do we build transformative power in our organisational practice What does a feminist approach and an analysis of power mean for organisations?
12:45 – 13:00	Wrap up
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch

Appendix B: Attendance list

	Name & Surname	Organisation/Email address/Contact number
1	Anna Davies-van Es	Facilitator annadaviesvanes@gmail.com
2	Astrid von Kotze	Facilitator astridvonkotze@gmail.com
3	Carol Kahn	carolkahn2006@yahoo.co.za 021 788 2618
4	Eleanor Hoedemaker	Sikholo eleanorhousing4all@gmail.com 074 724 7373
5	Elizabeth Kay	The Women's Circle c/o lee.kay-swartz@icg.edu.za 082 056 5075
6	Farrell Hunter	DVV International f.hunter@dvv-international.co.za 082 2 7572
7	Eunice Christians	DVV International e.christians@dvv-international.co.za 082 727 9924
8	Mara Geduld	Adult Learning Forum marageduld@yahoo.com 073 306 1135/ 078 244 7891
9	Mkululi Vava	ECARFO mjvava@mtn.blackberry.com 083 998 7069
10	Ntombizandile Mjekula	Initiative Participatory Development madaya20688@gmail.com 083 673 1681
11	Patrick Chan	Sikholo patrickchan@webafrica.org.za 082 830 9137
12	Phindile Maseko	Popular Education Programme phindilepriscamaseko@gmail.com 061 195 9346
13	Poppaea Cornelson	Adult Learning Forum fontycornelson@gmail.com 076 371 9746
14	Sarah Mofokeng	Adult Learning Forum overstrandclc40@gmail.com 079 704 4591
15	Siyabulela Ndzeke	PEP siyabulela.ndzeke@gmail.com 078 714 6802
16	Theodora Galelekile	The Women's Circle c/o solethuc@gmail.com 073 163 9722

Appendix C: Readings and video clips

bell hooks. 'Understanding patriarchy'. Available at <http://imagineborders.org/pdf/zines/UnderstandingPatriarchy.pdf>

Chimamanda Adichie. 'We should all be feminists'. TED Talks video clip. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc

Everjoice Win. 2013. 'Between Jesus, the Generals and the Invisibles: Mapping the Terrain for Feminist Movement Building & Organizing for Women's Human Rights'. Available at <http://www.justassociates.org/en/resources/between-jesus-generals-and-invisibles>

Just Associates. 2006. 'Making Change Happen: Power (Concepts for Revisioning Power for Justice, Equality and Peace)'. Booklet 3 in a series called *Making Change Happen*. Available at http://www.justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/mch3_2011_final_0.pdf

Just Associates. 'JASS 5 Day Curriculum' (extract): 'Audre Lorde and the Master's House'

Laura Bates. 17 Jan 2014. 'Everyday Sexism Project'. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhjsRjC6B8U>

In this fascinating talk, Laura Bates, founder of the award-winning EverydaySexismProject, talks about her inspiring initiative. The EverydaySexism is an ever-increasing collection of over 50,000 women's experiences of gender imbalance. The stories come from women of all ages, races and sexual orientations, disabled and non-disabled, employed and unemployed, religious and non-religious. The project has expanded into 18 countries worldwide and become internationally renowned, featuring in media from the *New York Times* to *French Glamour*, *CNN* to *Grazia South Africa*, *Cosmopolitan* to the *Times of India*.

Raising Voices. *Get Moving! Facilitator Guide*. Available from <http://raisingvoices.org/innovation/creating-methodologies/get-moving/>

Shamillah Wilson. 2011. 'Women's and Feminist Movement Building in Southern Africa'. OSISA publication. Available at http://www.osisa.org/open-debate/%5Bfield_dept-raw%5D/%5Bfield_country-raw%5D/feminist-women%E2%80%99s-movement-building



Appendix D: Why did Grace die?

Grace is a 33-year-old woman. She is married to Joe. They have three daughters aged 6 years, 4 years and 2 years. Joe works in a hotel in Johannesburg, because he could not find any jobs in Malawi. He comes home only three or four times a year, because coming more often is expensive and also he does not get a lot of time off from his job. Grace lives in the village, 300 kilometres away from the nearest town. Here, she and Joe have built a small house, and it is right next door to Joe's parents. She works in their small field, growing maize, groundnuts and also vegetables in their smaller garden. Grace is always struggling for money as Joe does not really earn a lot of money.

A month after Joe's last visit, Grace discovered she was pregnant. Grace and Joe did not use any protection or any family planning method. They are members of the Roman Catholic Church which strongly discourages use of family planning between married couples. In addition, Joe said he did not see why Grace must use any family planning since he is away most of the time. The last time when Grace delivered the youngest child, she begged the Doctor to remove her uterus to make sure she would not ever have another baby again. The Doctor told her that at age 33 the law did not allow her to have her uterus removed. He also told her that if she wanted to have her tubes tied she had to bring her husband so he could sign the permission. The nurses who had been standing around listening to Grace talking to the Doctor later came to her bed and shouted at her. "What is wrong with you? You now want to be a prostitute since your husband is away in South Africa? Why do you not want to keep your uterus? What kind of woman are you going to be with no uterus?" One of the nurses brought her a newspaper article with a story of a woman killed by her husband for removing her uterus without his knowledge. The man had been sentenced to only 6 months of community service, and the judge in the matter said; "Any normal Malawian understands why you killed your wife. Let this be a lesson to all women to always follow our culture and not these foreign ways of doing things". The Paramount Chief from the area where the dead woman came from also said, "Women must be careful not to take their rights too far". Many people wrote letters to the Editor agreeing with the Chief and the Judge. So did many religious leaders and Members of Parliament interviewed by the newspaper.

Grace tried to talk to her husband about stopping having more children. But he was very angry. He said, "My dear, if you are tired of being married to me, you can go back to your family and return my lobola!" When Grace spoke to both her Aunt, her mother and Joe's sister and Aunt all the women were absolutely shocked! How could she even think of stopping to produce children when she had not yet given Joe a son?

Grace got very very, sick when the pregnancy was 5 months. She had sores on her vagina and horribly smelly yellow coloured stuff coming out. Soon she started bleeding. She did not know who to tell. The nearest clinic was in the town, a whole day's trip away. When she asked her mother in law if she could go to the clinic, mother in law told her she must ask permission from her husband in Johannesburg. Grace sent a text message but Joe did not respond. By the time Grace was finally taken to the clinic a week after collapsing, she was too sick to even speak. The clinic took two days to find transport for Grace to be taken to the big hospital, another 350 kilometers away. Grace was pronounced dead on arrival at the big hospital. The tests showed the baby was already dead and the infection had spread all over her body.



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