UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women & UNV Asia-Pacific Regional Joint Programme for Gender-based Violence Prevention
Qualitative Research Training

Conducting life history analysis
Life history data analysis

- How do we see gender and masculinities in an interview transcript?
- Look at not just what is explicitly mentioned but the underlying gender practices that are expressed
- What people don’t say, how they say something, what they are willing to talk about, what they are unwilling to talk about
- See institutions and social groups through a narrative
Life history data analysis

- It is critical that attention is paid to language and that information is not lost or distorted in translation.
- Exaggeration, sarcasm, use of slang, traditions of narrative, etc. must be considered in interpretations of data.
- Do not suspend your usual ability to look for this in conversation when analysing research data.
- You need to form a view of what parts of data should be taken at face value and what you should be cautious about.
- Comparing the data to other things you know about their lives may help you here.
Writing up case studies

• Write up a case study as a summary within a conceptual framework.
• Use the themes you have identified as subheadings but consider the whole life.
• Under each subheading consider:
  • gender norms and attitudes.
  • practices such as gender practices, practices of hegemonic masculinity, alternative masculinity.
  • gender identities and masculinity/femininity ideals.
Suggested case study format

- Timeline narrative of individual life.
- Map gendered relationships in life course.
- Consider how masculinity is constructed in this individual’s life.
- Consider experiences of violence across the life course.
- Consider experiences of peace and peace-making.
Remember to think about:

- The historical and social contexts – contextualize findings in all chapters.
- Link, where relevant, with other forms of oppression or sites of power (race, class, sexuality).
- What are the resistances or resiliencies in men’s lives?
- What are the areas of contestations and contradictions in men’s lives?
- How does the individual interact with structural or institutional influences (such as religion)?
Thank you!

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