



THE PROJECT TO END
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Community Justice Approaches
for Engaging and Mobilizing Men
for Violence Prevention and the
Advancement of Gender Equality,
Diversity, Justice, and Inclusion:
Rapid Evidence Review**

2022



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK

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Acknowledgements

Shift gratefully acknowledges the support of Women and Gender Equality Canada, which made this valuable project possible. The authors would also like to thank Winta Ghidei for sharing her guidance and knowledge on rapid research reviews. We also thank Elena Esina and Winta Abera for their ongoing organizational and project support. Finally, we would like to thank the men who are leading this work in Canada and who took the time to inform and contribute their expertise to advance this important work.

**The views of the authors do not necessarily represent the views of
Women and Gender Equality Canada or the Government of Canada.**

Suggested Citation

Akbary, H. S., Pascoe, L., Wells, L. (2022). *Community justice approaches for engaging and mobilizing men for violence prevention and the advancement of gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion: Rapid evidence review*. Calgary, AB. The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence.

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Author's Note

We, the authors, would like to take this opportunity to situate ourselves in relation to this research and flag some of the tensions we continue to navigate in trying to engage and mobilize more men in violence prevention and gender equality work. The first author is a person of colour and the other two authors are white settlers. We are all trained in the Western scientific tradition, with extensive experience working with feminist issues from an intersectional perspective. Based on our experience, we firmly believe that gender and social inequality is inextricably linked with rates of male violence against all genders and our interventions must focus on all forms of violence to stop violence before it starts.

We are also committed to advancing racial justice and are on an ongoing journey to understand and learn more about where and how we can be most useful in this work. At Shift, we have been integrating approaches that aim to call *in* rather than *out*, while also reflecting on our own practices and building creative and innovative skills, so that we can maximize our capacity to hold people accountable in ways that generate healing, recovery, repair, and prosocial change. We believe it is imperative to ask hard questions and think strategically about what is and is not working in efforts to achieve social change across anti-violence, gender equality, and justice, diversity, and inclusion fields so that we can build momentum for bigger and more impactful movements.

In completing this review, our methods and analysis used an intersectional approach which allowed us to clearly see the dearth of research on strategies to engage and mobilize men at the intersections of gender equality, violence prevention, and advancing equity, diversity, justice, and inclusion. We worked diligently to name and map the ways in which these gaps need to be addressed, but we recognize that our analysis may have shortcomings as we continue the process of learning and unlearning in relation to our own positionality and context in this work. We welcome those who want to call us *in* so that we may continue to make our work stronger, more relevant, and more impactful across a wider audience.

In solidarity,
Hamid, Laura, and Lana

Executive Summary

CallinMen: Mobilizing More Men for Violence Prevention and Gender Equality in Canada is a knowledge synthesis research project led by Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence, a primary research hub with the goal to stop violence before it starts. Shift is based out of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary (Shift/UCalgary). As part of the *CallinMen* project, nine rapid evidence reviews were conducted on evidence-informed *primary prevention* approaches to engage and mobilize men to prevent and disrupt violence and inequalities, with the goal to share these findings with those funding and working with men and male-identified people to prevent violence and advance equity. To support and advance work to engage and mobilize men, both well-known and emergent approaches that show promise in engaging and mobilizing men were identified for review. This review focuses on engaging men through the key entry point of fatherhood.

Definition: Community justice is an umbrella term that embraces a number of “crime prevention and justice activities that explicitly include the community in their processes”¹ and seek to foster community quality of life as a goal. Community justice approaches focus on community-level outcomes through immediate and long-term problem-solving, supporting victims and communities, strengthening prosocial community norms, and reconciling offenders.² Community justice includes alternative justice approaches as well as conflict resolution but focuses on these forms of justice at the community—not individual—level. These practices have long and experienced histories in Indigenous and other Black and Brown communities.

It is important to note that a clear definition for community justice, particularly as it relates to primary prevention, remains somewhat elusive, including a well-defined scope of the types of activities and practices that should be considered prevention-focused community justice approaches. Furthermore, these approaches are emergent or nonexistent within available literature sources such as academic databases; hence, future literature reviews into community justice should focus more primarily on grey literature and include additional search terms relating to community accountability, community reparative boards, and circle processes. This would help to locate more initiatives occurring in the Global North, including Canada, some of which were missed in the literature search for this review.

Other related terms used include alternative justice, transformative justice, innovative justice, reparative justice, restorative justice, conflict resolution, and mediation.

What does the evidence say?

The literature identified comprised of:

1. A reconciliation media intervention in Burundi that sought to promote active bystandership and educate the community about the evolution of violence.
2. Community-led land and property rights model in Kenya that sought to reduce women’s risk of HIV by protecting and enhancing women’s access to and ownership of land.
3. Restorative justice via reconciliation in Uganda that used local council courts as opposed to formal courts in cases of domestic violence.

4. The Creative Interventions project in the U.S., a community-based intervention to violence that sought to legitimize community accountability practices as well as build community capacity to intervene in instances of interpersonal violence.
5. An article presenting an evidence-based argument for restorative justice in higher education judicial practices in U.S. postsecondary environments.

Despite all of these interventions working to address male-perpetuated forms of violence, none of them explicitly noted the importance of engaging men or holding men accountable for the purposes of violence prevention, gender equity and justice at the community level.

Of this literature, the following common practices were identified:

- Public education for building community-level capacity to prevent violence and advance equality. In particular, compelling educational methods were noted, such as storytelling via edutainment including radio dramas to raise awareness about root causes of violence, or visual arts and short films to share community accountability stories to help legitimize and normalize these approaches. Educational resources on ways to prevent and respond to violence for the community were also noted.
- Building consensus through an ongoing process. As opposed to the individualized, conventional models in which the ultimate goal is already set by the criminal justice system, community-based interventions promote consensus building between the victim and offender as part of a broader strategy of building community resilience. This is not about a one-off judgement or punishment for offender, but about an ongoing conversation between relevant parties.
- Centering care and dignity in accountability practices. Community justice takes a *calling in approach*, meaning that in addition to inviting people into a conversation (rather than a fight), it utilizes an approach of caring, respect, and restoring dignity that recognizes that harm caused by an individual has a ripple effect in the social networks of these individuals. It is also about finding and restoring the humanity of everyone involved as a part of a longer term goal of creating a just world, rather than plucking off and discarding individuals.
- Valuing diverse and cross-sectoral collaboration. Core to community justice approaches is valuing the multiplicity of perspectives through working in collaboration with diverse individuals and groups. For example, the Creative Interventions (CI) project collaborated with four other immigrant-based domestic violence and sexual assault programs, included both survivors and individuals who have done harm themselves.

Key insights from community justice research

Community justice approaches are largely positively received by the communities in which they are implemented, and many show promise in combining justice with long-term healing and behaviour change. The research also tells us:

1. Given the immense damage that often results in criminal justice system-style punishment, particularly in communities of colour where men are at high risk of being incarcerated, community justice approaches provide a valuable alternative that focuses on individual and community-level healing and prevention.

2. Community justice approaches provide a pathway for community members to regain ownership of their own community, which is particularly important in marginalized communities, including Indigenous communities, where “outside” law enforcement has fomented distrust and fear.
3. More research is needed on evaluation of community justice approaches, including clear definition and scope of terms used.
4. Research and investment are urgently needed on community justice interventions that specifically seek to engage men, in order to prevent both male-to-male and gender-based violence.

1.0 Introduction

In 2020, Shift/UCalgary was awarded a research grant from Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) for a knowledge synthesis research project entitled *CallinMen: Mobilizing More Men for Violence Prevention and Gender Equality in Canada*. Little knowledge synthesis work has been done to date to increase understanding of what strategies and approaches meaningfully engage and mobilize men to prevent violence and advance gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion in Canada; this research fills that gap. Specifically, CallinMen advances the state of knowledge by identifying and reviewing the evidence base for key strategies and approaches that show promise in engaging and mobilizing men to prevent violence and advance gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion in Canada, and develops an evidence-informed “behaviour change toolbox” that consolidates these strategies and approaches.

Therefore, in order to identify and review promising approaches to engaging and mobilizing men to prevent violence and advance gender equality, diversity, justice, and inclusion, nine rapid evidence reviewsⁱ of the academic and grey literature were conductedⁱⁱ in 2021 with the goal to share these findings with those funding and working with men and male-identified people to prevent violence and advance equity. This document reports on the findings for how community justice approaches have been used for the prevention of violence and advancement of gender equality and racial justice, with a specific interest on engaging and mobilizing men in these efforts.

It is important to note that this research project is focused on advancing *primary prevention* approaches, meaning that we are focused on identifying strategies that change the root causes of violence, discrimination, and gender inequality in order to prevent initial perpetration and victimization of violence, harassment, discrimination, and inequities.³ To achieve this, our research seeks to understand strategies and approaches that incubate and catalyze prosocial behaviours and dismantles systems of oppression in order to prevent violence, harassment, discrimination, and inequality before they begin. However, given the focus of many community justice approaches on responding to violence in addition to preventing future violence, it is important to note that this focus on primary prevention was particularly challenging for this review.

The specific research questions that guided the current rapid evidence review were:

1. What are the best practices in community justice approaches (as opposed to the criminal justice system) being used to prevent future violence, and/or advance gender equality, justice, diversity, and/or inclusion?

ⁱ A rapid evidence reviews is a process that synthesizes knowledge through the steps of a systematic review, but components of the process are simplified or excluded in order to shorten the length of time required to complete the review. The process includes identifying specific research questions, searching for, accessing the most applicable and relevant sources of evidence, and synthesizing the evidence.

ⁱⁱ Rapid evidence reviews were conducted on: bystander approach, social norms approach, nudge approach, virtual reality, gamification, data science, fatherhood, calling in, and community justice.

2. What are the key strengths, challenges, gaps, and lessons learned from using community justice approaches based on Questions 1, and how can this inform community-based work to engage and mobilize men for the purposes of violence prevention and to advance gender equality, justice, diversity, and inclusion?

1.1 What is community justice?

Community justice is an umbrella term that embraces a number of “crime prevention and justice activities that explicitly include the community in their processes”⁴ and seek to foster community quality of life as a goal. “Community” may refer to ethnic communities or communities formed around other commonalities including geography, institution, cultural group, or religious affiliation. Community justice approaches focus on community-level outcomes through immediate and long-term problem-solving, supporting victims and communities, strengthening prosocial community norms, and reconciling offenders.⁵ Community justice includes restorative/transformative/alternative principles and practices as well as conflict resolution, but focuses on these forms of justice at the community, not individual, level.

Community justice approaches are understood as *alternative* solutions to carceral policies such as arrest and prosecution. The proponents of community justice alternatives argue that community justice approaches can particularly help and provide justice to those who may not find it in the formal criminal justice system.⁶ The two widely applied community justice approaches are restorative justice and transformative justice, the backgrounds and definitions of which we turn to now.

Although restorative justice is relatively new in the West, it has long existed in local indigenous populations and sub-Saharan Africa and Asian countries.⁷ It has been executed in various contexts, including schools and workplaces, and it is adopted as an independent or complementary method to the formal legal system. Restorative justice approaches are currently utilized in more than 80 countries around the world, and we acknowledge the wisdom and experience-based insights from Indigenous and communities in the Global South, which are invaluable resources to this examination of community justice approaches. As such, we aim not to claim any of this knowledge as our own creation, but rather a synthesis of the knowledge and experiences of others who have led in this work in communities across the world.

Restorative justice was increasingly recognized by white cultures in the Global North in the 1970s because of the rising criticisms aimed at conventional methods of detention and punishment.⁸ Proponents of the restorative justice movement advocated for a method of rehabilitation and restoration for offenders, which the formal legal system failed to produce. They also demanded a system that addressed the needs and healing of victims more effectively.⁹ Restorative justice is founded on the three principles of (a) repairing harm, (b) holding offenders accountable, and (c) restoring the community, and is defined as a “process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible.”¹⁰ In practice, restorative justice approaches involve the coming together of the offender, victim, and community to discuss the harm

committed as well as the potential resolution strategies.¹¹

Transformative justice is another type of community justice approach. It has, on the other hand, grown as a community justice approach that goes a step further to proactively stop harm from occurring. Advocates of transformative justice claim that restorative justice does not do enough to address the root causes of harm, and often risks being blind to whether what is being restored was harmful and inequitable to begin with.¹² In order to address this, they argue, community justice approaches must *transform* individuals, perspectives, and communities.¹³ This is accomplished through building the community members to develop the necessary knowledge and behaviours for identifying and responding to harm appropriately.¹⁴ If transformative justice is utilized successfully, “the effect could be to transform a community from one that implicitly or explicitly permits violence to one that will prevent it.”¹⁵

Both restorative and transformative community justice approaches have certain similarities and differences. They are similar in the sense that both approaches view harm as a violation of relationships rather than of law. Hence, they are focused on repairing from harm instead of punishing crimes.¹⁶ On the other hand, what makes the two justice approaches different from each other is that while transformative justice is dedicated to transforming the relationships and social conditions that permit the occurrence of harm, restorative justice attempts to restore relationships to what existed prior to the occurrence of harm without questioning or transforming the formal legal system or assumptions of what are the best remedies for violence.¹⁷

2.0 Methods

A rapid evidence synthesis/review (RES) was conducted in November 2021. RES is “a form of knowledge synthesis that follows the systematic review process, but components of the process are simplified or omitted to produce information in a timely manner.”¹⁸ The process includes identifying specific research questions, searching for, and accessing most applicable and relevant sources of evidence, and synthesizing the evidence.

A systematic search strategy was performed using a combination of keywords. The search included three sets of keywords, the first covering community justice-related terms; the second covering violence prevention, gender equality, and inclusion, diversity, and racial justice-related terms; and then the third were terms relating to engaging men. The specific search terms were as follows: (“innovative justice” or “alternative justice” or “transformative justice” or “community justice” or “reparative justice” or “restorative justice” or “conflict resolution” or “mediation” or “reconciliation”) AND (“violence prevention” or “prevent violence” or “gender-based violence” or “gender based violence” or GBV or “family violence” or “domestic violence” or “domestic abuse” or “intimate partner violence” or IPV or “violence against women” or VAW or rape or “sexual assault” or “sexual violence” or “sexual abuse” or “sexual harassment” or “sexual misconduct” or “consent” or “gender equality” or “gender equity” or “gender justice” or “gender transformative” or bullying or discrimination or bias or prejudice or justice or diversity or equity or inclusion or racism* or “anti-racism*” or antiracism* or Indigenous or “First Nations” or Inuit or Métis) AND (men or male or masculin* or dad or father).

The search was conducted in the EBSCO academic database, which included all databases within EBSCO, including Academic Search Complete, Academic Search Elite, and CINAHL Plus with Full Text.

Inclusion criteria:

Time frame: 2010-2021

Publication language: Published in English.

Availability: Search will be limited to a full text option only.

Literature had to meet the following criteria:

- Describes community justice approaches to preventing violence and/or advance gender equality, justice, diversity, and/or inclusion.
- Provides evidence on the impact of community justice approaches on preventing violence and/or advancing gender equality, diversity, inclusion, and/or justice, with priority on evidence that specifies how norms, culture (community-level), and/or systems changed as a result of community justice approaches.
- Focuses on primary prevention, not prevention response (e.g., rehabilitation).ⁱⁱⁱ
- Must specify gender(s) of those whom the community justice approach(es) seek to hold accountable and include at least one man.
- Literature may come from anywhere in the world; however, priority will be to literature focused on Canada or in other countries with similar economic, social and cultural similarities to Canada (such as the United States, Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Republic of Northern Ireland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Iceland).
- Articles that *do not* meet the criteria but seem relevant/valuable will be included in discussion/recommendations or where appropriate.

Literature that did not meet the following criteria were excluded:

- Literature that does not discuss a community justice approach(es).
- Literature that does not include clear rationale for or examples of using a community justice approach(es) for the purposes of achieving attitudinal, behaviors, culture, social norms, organizational, structural and/or system-level change.
- Literature that does not clearly include at least one man in those being held accountable through community justice approach(es).

ⁱⁱⁱ As noted elsewhere in this document, this proved particularly challenging, as our search results primarily came up with community justice approaches that included at least a component of responding to violence that had already transpired. As such, we did our utmost to focus in on community justice approaches which leaned more towards primary prevention than on responding to violence only. In addition, given our difficulties with overall scoping and search terms used in this review, it is likely there are other more primary prevention-focused community justice interventions that are being written about which were not identified through this review.

- Literature does not focus on violence prevention and/or advancing gender equality, justice, diversity, and/or inclusion.
- Study focuses on prevention response or rehabilitation, not primary prevention.
- Literature that focuses on community justice approaches for men under the age of 18.
- Literature that is a commentary on other article which is not included in review.
- Literature is a protocol for a community justice approach/intervention, and no publication on study findings can be located through an internet-based search.

Information was extracted in a standardized form, including the following: author, publication year, discipline (if available), type of resource/research, focus area, setting, region/country, how used, purpose of intervention, participant profile including gender disaggregation, length/duration of intervention, evidence of impact (including gender disaggregated, if available), evaluation measures, unexpected findings, and limitations.

3.0 Limitations

Although this review found some relevant examples of community justice approaches, it has limitations. For one, a clear definition for community justice, particularly as it relates to primary prevention, remains somewhat elusive, including a well-defined scope of the types of activities and practices that should be considered prevention-focused community justice approaches. Secondly, although many community-based transformative justice approaches have long histories in Indigenous and other communities of people of colour, much of this valuable knowledge has remained outside of academic sources such as peer-reviewed publications and even digitally available grey literature, due to the colonial and extractive nature of many of the sources. The authors were also in a process of learning and discovering more about community justice approaches themselves as part of the process of completing this review, and as such realized retroactively gaps in the search terms that would have captured other relevant examples, particularly more grassroots-level efforts occurring in the Global North. Specifically, additional search terms we would recommend others using would include those relating to community accountability, violence interrupters, community-based violence reduction strategy(ies), community reparative boards, and circle processes (e.g., circle practices, circles of support, prevention circles). Nevertheless, the findings from this review help to synthesize what is known about community justice approaches within the scope of the search terms used and provides insight into some of the areas where more clarity, and research, are needed.

4.0 Results

4.1 Source characteristics and summary

Of the nearly 140 publications that were identified through the literature search, through a screening process five publications met the inclusion criteria and are included in this review. These publications come from different countries, with the majority of available literature on community justice approaches coming from the Global South. Per the limitations section above, however, there are other examples from the Global North that were missed as part of the search strategy. This

includes work such as INCITE's community accountability strategies,^{iv} Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA),^v Canada's Thrive Community Support Circle,^{vi} and violence interrupter efforts in various communities.

For the literature that was identified through the literature search, the *reconciliation media intervention* is implemented in Burundi.¹⁹ The *community land and property watchdog model* is carried out in the Kakamega County and Nyanza province of Kenya.²⁰ The *restorative justice via reconciliation* is carried out in Uganda.²¹ CI's *community-based intervention project* is a U.S. based community justice program.²² The *restorative justice in higher education judicial practices* appears to focus on U.S. postsecondary environments, but does not actually specify a country as this publication is more about making the case for community justice approaches than describing a completed intervention.²³ However, because it offered insight into employing a community justice approach in a setting not often discussed within community justice literature (post-secondary institution), this publication was included.

The interventions address a diverse set of topics. Four interventions are concerned with addressing intergroup violence such as intergroup conflict and reconciliation,²⁴ interpersonal violence,²⁵ and domestic violence.²⁶ One intervention addressed women's land rights and prevention of gender-based property rights violations.²⁷ The following section provides a summary of each of the community justice interventions.

Reconciliation media intervention, Burundi (Bilali et al., 2016)²⁸

- The publication by Bilali et al. is about the use of media for conflict resolution interventions at the community level.²⁹ Its key aims are to promote active bystandership and educate the community about the evolution of violence. It is a "theory-driven, violence prevention and reconciliation intervention"³⁰ that utilizes radio dramas to provide education to Burundian radio listeners. The radio dramas are intended to "raise awareness about the role of individuals' positivity in conflict escalation and provide role models that encourage listeners to speak out and act against violence."³¹ The educational messages embedded in the radio dramas are designed based on various theoretical frameworks, including psychological theories of intergroup conflict and reconciliation as well as clinical theories of post-violence trauma healing.

Restorative justice in higher education, unspecified postsecondary environments (Clark, 2014)³²

- The publication by Clark does not cover a community justice intervention, but rather uses relevant available evidence to advocate for a community restorative justice approach as an

^{iv} <https://incite-national.org/community-accountability/>

^v <https://humanservices.vermont.gov/highlighting-promising-practice/circles-support-and-accountability-cosa-and-restorative-justice>

^{vi} <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/thrive-community-support-circle-inc/>

alternative to traditional legal justice system in higher education settings.³³ This approach is premised on the notion that crime must not be viewed as a violation of the law but a violation toward a community. In other words, when a crime takes place, not a single person but an entire community is in need of healing (i.e., retributive justice vs. restorative justice). With that in mind, the objective of the community restorative justice approach is repairing the community instead of punishing one individual due to the violation of the law. Specifically, this publication draws on the restorative justice approach to offer an alternative for enforcing disciplinary actions on college campuses or college communities when students engage in activities that violate campus rules. As Clark notes, “restorative justice presents a viable alternative to the punitive nature of the traditional system. It has been successfully incorporated into many criminal proceedings. However, higher education is still reluctant to apply restorative principles to its judicial proceedings.”³⁴ The author suggests that a community restorative justice approach has the potential to address the shortcomings of the traditional system, embrace student development, create a sense of community among students, and overcome the hegemonic male culture.

The community land and property watchdog model, Kenya (Dworkin et al, 2015)³⁵

- The publication by Dworkin et al. introduces a community-led land and property rights program that was executed in two of the most HIV-affected regions in Kenya—Kakamega Country and Kendu Bay in Nyanza Province to prevent and resolve women’s property rights violations. The authors cite previous research showing a relationship between property grabbing and asset stripping/disinheritance and women’s HIV/AIDS and violence risks in Eastern Africa, and they examine whether a community-level justice approach can offer solutions to preventing and resolving women’s property rights violations. The intervention was developed by GROOTS-Kenya, a network of community-based organizations and led by local volunteer women and men, including community health workers, traditional leaders, trained paralegals, and government stakeholders. Since 2005, the community land and property watchdog model had already been implemented in “more than 30 locations in central and western Kenya” and “managed more than 200 cases of women’s property rights violations.”³⁶ This publication presents qualitative research conducted in partnership with GROOTS-Kenya to understand key strategies used in Watch Dog Groups to secure women’s land ownership. Data comes from a sample of 50 individuals who were interviewed, including “all of the leaders ($N = 20$) involved in the development and implementation of this program and 30 women and men who mediated property rights disputes (randomly selected from an inclusive list).”³⁷ Specifically, the community justice approach examined in this publication consisted of four strategies of a structural-level HIV prevention intervention, including: (a) educating community members about women’s land rights; (b) forming funeral committees to support widows and facilitate issues related to property grabbing and disinheritance; (c) providing paralegal training on how to mediate land disputes; (d) referring unresolved cases to the formal legal system.

CI's STOP and community-based intervention projects (Kim, 2010)³⁸

- The publication by Kim is a report on two projects implemented by a community accountability organization called Creative Intentions (CI). The first is a community-based intervention to address gender-based violence. CI collaborated with four other primarily immigrant-based domestic violence and sexual assault programs in the San Francisco Bay area of California and the intervention is managed by a diverse set of people including community citizens, an evaluator, and people who identified as survivors and as well as those who had done harm themselves and “were actively practicing accountability through their personal and work lives.”³⁹ This project also relies on the role of “facilitators” who are “trusted individuals from one’s community”⁴⁰ and are “familiar with the parties involved in the situation of violence and understand the dynamics of violence in its cultural context.”⁴¹ The second project is called STOP, or the StoryTelling and Organizing Project, a project which “collects and documents community accountability stories, presenting them as alternative sources of knowledge to inform communities about what people did, how they carried out interventions, and the lessons they provided.”⁴²

The restorative justice via reconciliation, Uganda (Polavarapu, 2019)⁴³

- The publication by Polavarapu is about the use of reconciliation as a restorative justice mechanism for responding to and preventing domestic violence disputes in Uganda.⁴⁴ In addition to the formal courts, restorative justice via reconciliation is endorsed by the Ugandan law for the handling of domestic violence cases. However, the restorative justice via reconciliation intervention is enforced through local council courts, as opposed to formal courts (e.g., magistrate courts and Family and Children Courts). These local council courts are “rooted in the community, where community members and court members usually hail from the same tribe, speak the same language, and understand the same customary law.”⁴⁵ The restorative justice via reconciliation model encourages the participation of community and family members and the rationale behind it is community and family can play an important role as a watchdog to ensure the success and compliance of the program. The author explicitly notes that value of the Global North learning from these processes in Uganda, and that lessons from this model can be applied in the United States and other countries where women’s economic empowerment is undermined due to the lack of state support for victims of domestic violence.

4.2 How is community justice approach defined/described in the reviews?

Restorative justice was not always defined in the publications reviewed in this paper. Furthermore, there was no one clearly delineated definition of “community justice” in the available literature. Publications used different terms to refer to their respective community justice approaches, and not all publications provided definitions for the terms they used. Specifically, among the five publications reviewed here, two of them did not provide any specific definitions for the terms they

used.^{46 47} Among the rest, there is very little overlap between the definitions of the various terms used.

The publication by Kim uses the term “community accountability” defined as an innovation that “reflects everyday ways of thinking and doing that have been practiced within communities for generations.”⁴⁸ By “everyday ways of thinking,” the author maintains that community accountability relies heavily on traditional practices that can be used for violence prevention. As such, “the re-imagining and reconstruction of community accountability practices have required the excavation and reclamation of community ‘traditions,’ as well as profound transformations in our assumptions about the roots of, and remedies to, violence.”⁴⁹ The publication by Clark uses the term “restorative justice.” The author writes that restorative justice “aims to repair the harm caused by the crime while holding offenders accountable to active measures of restitution.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, restorative justice is concerned with “healing and restoring community”⁵¹ through involving the offender in the process of “listening to victims’ stories, expressing remorse, accepting responsibility, and being reinstituted back into the community.”⁵² The publication by Polavarapu uses the term “reconciliation” as a method of implementing restorative justice.⁵³ Reconciliation is often used interchangeably with “mediation” in the community justice literature. Polavarapu defines reconciliation as a process that is conducted either after the involvement of the criminal justice system or when the criminal justice system has been completely avoided to address a domestic violence matter. Restorative justice in Polavarapu’s publication refers to a community-based response which emphasizes the involvement of the community in addition to the victim and offender for addressing harm: “restorative justice commonly involves the coming together of the victim, the offender, and, in many cases, the community, to review the harm committed and come to a resolution.”⁵⁴ However, the author makes a distinction between “restorative justice” and “transformative justice.” Unlike in restorative justice which involves the “coming together” of the victim, the offender, and the community for reaching an agreement, transformative justice “seeks to go a step further and cultivate community actors who can proactively intervene in and work to stop domestic violence.”⁵⁵

5.0 Findings: Common practices in community justice approaches to prevent future violence

1. What are the best practices/strategies in community justice approaches (as opposed to the criminal justice system) being used to prevent future violence, and/or advance gender equality, justice, diversity, and/or inclusion?

This review identified four common practices that are employed as strategies across most or all of the community justice approaches: 1) educating the community; 2) building consensus between survivor and perpetrator; 3) valuing diverse and cross-sectoral collaboration; and 4) centering care and dignity in accountability. This section discusses each strategy. These are listed as “common” practices rather than “best” or “promising” practices due to the limited evidence available in the literature identified—most of the identified publications don’t include community-level outcomes,

and other relevant literature was erroneously missed as a result of the limited scope of search terms.

5.1 Common practice: Public education to build community-level capacity

One of the common strategies employed in the community justice approaches is education and/or awareness building for members of the community. Three of the five publications reviewed here included community education or awareness building on women's rights and conflict resolution as an important component of their respective interventions.^{56 57 58}

For example, one of the main intervention goals of the violence prevention and intergroup reconciliation intervention, or *reconciliation media intervention* based in Burundi is "to raise awareness about the roots and evolution of violence as well as to encourage behaviors' that prevent violence."⁵⁹ The intervention attempts to meet this objective through broadcasting radio dramas in the Great Lakes region of Africa, including Burundi. Radio dramas are a form of edutainment, and in this case aim to provide educational messages that are based on "psychological research and theories of intergroup conflict and reconciliation"⁶⁰ and "clinical theories about trauma healing after mass violence."⁶¹ Since the radio dramas are broadcasted across various countries in the region, the theoretical approach adopted for design of dramas remains the same, but the implementation process is country-specific. "Local staff and partners adapt the educational content to the local context and design the fictional setting of the conflict, in line with the nature of inter-community relations in each country."⁶² To ensure that the messaging of radio dramas fit a given context, the organization that is in charge of this intervention program—NGO Radio La Benevolencija—also provides training to its local staff in Burundi to make sure the educational content is consistent with the needs of the listeners. As reported by the authors, "accurate communication of the educational messages is ensured by training the local staff on the educational material, reviewing all scripts to ensure the fidelity of the intervention and eliciting feedback from listeners."⁶³

Kenya's *community land and property watchdog model*, which was a community-led land and property rights program, and in this study was examined to understand how it could be implemented as a structural-level HIV prevention program—that is, by resolving property rights violations, it could help reduce women's HIV risk. This intervention offered individual and community level rights-based education on land rights in an effort to educate the community members about women's land rights. The rationale behind this rights-based education effort was that community members lack adequate knowledge about land rights and providing such education would contribute to building women's capacity to realize their land rights. In addition to providing individual-level education about women's land rights, the intervention program also provided education on women's land rights at the community level through bimonthly *barazas* (community meetings). The topics covered in the community meetings touch on "issues related to women's right to land, how to prevent land loss, and what to do if a property rights violation occurred."⁶⁴ Similar to the *Burundi reconciliation media intervention*, the members and traditional leaders involved in this intervention program receive training in paralegalism which allows them to mediate "land disputes together directly with the in-laws and family members who were involved in property

rights cases.”⁶⁵

The U.S.-based *StoryTelling and Organizing Project (STOP)*, which is run by Creative Interventions (CI)—the establishment managing the *community-based intervention project*⁶⁶—provides community education through storytelling on cases of sexual assault and violence. Through collecting, documenting, and sharing stories, STOP has become a “vehicle for organizing communities to generate action and stories that build upon each other and strengthen their capacity to challenge interpersonal and state violence.”⁶⁷ One of the stories that the author points to is of Liz who recounts how she had dealt with a case of sexual assault that had occurred after a drumming workshop at a Korean cultural workshop in the summer of 2006 in Oakland, California. Liz was the president of the Oakland cultural center at the time of the assault and chose to respond to violence in the center through community justice effort and accountability. Kim writes:

Liz’s story inspired others to imagine what a community justice effort could look like and showed that communities could overcome traditions of silent acceptance of gender-based violence, form a public response, and demand institutional change...This story inspired others to move beyond rhetoric and imagine what one community’s effort could look like. Communities could transcend silent acceptance and build upon connections across diaspora to offer solidarity and the concrete lessons of other organizations. This is one story among many that fueled the second project of CI.⁶⁸

Circulated through STOP, Liz’s story was described as an inspirational example of community-based education.^{vii} Furthermore, CI has also provided community-based education through the *community-based intervention project*.⁶⁹ CI’s *community-based intervention project* relies heavily on distributing informational content on sexual violence. One of its educational objectives is provide educational resources in the form of audio, text, and web to survivors, friends, family, co-workers, community members and even those who have done harm.

All the interventions mentioned above have similar important characteristics. Storytelling appears to be an excellent method of building community-level capacity through public education. The intervention model of *STOP* provides an excellent example of storytelling that can be applied perhaps to every sociocultural context, particularly given the rise of internet access across the world. However, the *Burundi reconciliation media intervention* might not be as easily translatable to Global North contexts due to the decline in the use of radio as a source of entertainment and information. However, the *Burundi reconciliation media intervention* shows the importance of incorporating context-specific strategies in community-level educational interventions. Additionally, all three intervention models show that community justice approaches can use public educational initiatives as a potentially strong method of changing community-level norms. Although the three intervention models are somewhat distinct from each other in terms of topic and strategy, their core objective is to change community-level norms as part of the process of encouraging prosocial

^{vii} This story – entitled “Kicking Ass” – is available on the website of the StoryTelling and Organizing Project (STOP) at <https://www.creative-interventions.org/kicking-ass-liz/>.

behaviour at the individual level. However, it is imperative to note that these interventions focus on education and awareness-raising rather than explicit behaviour or norms change, and given the weak association between knowledge and shifts in behaviour as well as the gap between one's intent to change behaviour and actual behaviour change,^{70 71 72} community justice approaches would benefit from explicitly aiming to address behaviour and norm-change as part of their educational strategies.

5.2 Common practice: Building consensus between the survivor(s) and perpetrator(s)

Working towards an agreement between the survivor(s) and offender(s) is another fundamental strategy adopted by some of the community-based intervention programs reviewed here. As opposed to the individualized, conventional models in which the ultimate goal is already set by the criminal justice system—i.e., a precise form of punishment for the offender—community-based interventions promote consensus building between the survivor(s) and offender(s) as part of a broader strategy of building community resilience.

The U.S.-based publication on *restorative justice in higher education judicial practices* offers two practical strategies for reaching an agreeable sanction between survivors and offenders: (1) participation; (2) follow-up to restorative conversations. With respect to the first strategy (participation), Clark notes that victim participation must always be voluntary because the victim is an already vulnerable individual and officials must not add any more anxiety/harm to them by making participation mandatory. For the offender(s), on the other hand, “the judicial officer maximizes voluntary participation.”⁷³ For example, the offender is “given a choice between suspension and cooperation with the restorative system.”⁷⁴ Furthermore, Clark recommends four requirements for an effective participation:

First, if either the victim or the offender decline participation, then the judiciary resorts to traditional sanctions. Furthermore, if the roles between victim and offender are blurred, it is unwise to pursue restorative justice. A third requirement is that if there is any likelihood the victim will be re-victimized, then this approach is ill-advised. Lastly, it is wise to avoid the process if the offenders will merely face retaliation. Restorative justice is about healing and restoring community. With it being a potentially delicate process, care is necessary to ensure the experience is beneficial and healing for all parties.⁷⁵

The second consensus-building strategy—follow-up to restorative conversations—Clark argues that the outcome of “an effective meeting is a restorative agreement between all parties.”⁷⁶ In the context of postsecondary environments, Clark suggests that the agreement include the following elements: fines, apology letters, and conditional enrollment for the following semester. Fines are often an essential part of the agreements, but they should not be “arbitrary” and must, rather, depend on the monetary cost of harm.⁷⁷ Clark unfortunately does not specify where the funds go, or for what purpose they should be used. Clark does argue that apology letters should *always* be an essential part of the agreement, which should contain acknowledgement of responsibility, explanation of how the behavior was harmful, expression of remorse, commitment to make

amends, and commitment to make future behaviour socially responsible. The author acknowledges that incorporating all of these elements may be difficult; however, argues that “it is necessary that the agreement includes all of these elements.”⁷⁸ No specific evidence is provided for this argument, however. Moreover, Clark argues that, as part of this process, the offending student(s) should not be allowed to register for the following semester unless all the agreement’s obligations have been satisfied.

In CI’s U.S.-based *community-based intervention project*, goal setting is an important initial procedure of the intervention because it shapes the group consensus later in the process. This intervention project attempts to accomplish this in two ways. First, “it fully opened up the process of goal setting to explore a full range of options that may be known in advance.”⁷⁹ Second, this intervention’s approach allows for “a process that could build group consensus through the collective negotiation of goals.”⁸⁰ Hence, the initial process of goal setting is directly intertwined with the possibility of reaching group consensus because the former opens up the opportunity to explore the options for successful intervention, and the latter ensures that rather than the survivor’s goals being the only drivers of the intervention, the focus is on building consensus around a collectively agreed upon set of goals.

In the *Uganda restorative justice via reconciliation* model, consensus between the parties is obtained through the involvement of local council courts, the offender(s), survivor(s), and often additional family members. Local council courts are located at villages, towns, divisions, and sub-county levels, resembling a traditional form of justice. Community members and court members participating in local council courts usually come from the same tribal and linguistic backgrounds and they have a good understanding of their community’s customary laws. Importantly, local council courts require that two of their five sitting committee members be female, and either the role of chairperson or vice-chairperson is designated to one female member.⁸¹

The local council courts play a major role in facilitating an agreement because the members are regarded as “the most respected members of the community.”⁸² Local council courts are required to process cases of domestic violence on urgent basis and hear the cases within 48 hours of filing, and if the members agree to address a case of physical domestic violence through reconciliation, their job is to ensure that the survivor is heard, the offender recognizes the harm and offers an apology, and an agreement is made between the two parties. One of the council members quoted in the publication, for example, laid out the procedure as follows: “the parties are asked questions, all present discuss what happened, an apology is usually offered, and an agreement is made between the primary parties and witnessed by the third parties.”⁸³

It must be borne in mind, however, that the way the reconciliation is carried out across communities varies, depending on the local council’s own distinct procedure as well as the local community norms. Regardless, working towards a mutually agreeable healing strategy between survivors and offenders is a fundamental practice in this community-based approach. Agreements between the offender and survivor may manifest in a range of outcomes, following the orders of local council courts, including: “declaration, caution, apology, counseling, community service, fine, compensation, reconciliation, restitution, or attachment and sale.”⁸⁴ Fines are collected by the

court, but magistrate courts have in the past ordered that the victim of violence be the recipient of fine rather than the court itself. Perpetrators of violence involved in criminal cases may also face prison time of up to two years in addition to fines.⁸⁵

5.3 Common practice: Valuing diverse and cross-sectoral collaboration

Another best practice in community justice approaches is valuing the multiplicity of perspectives through working in collaboration with diverse individuals and groups. Three out of the five community justice approaches included some sort of explicit collaboration between multiple parties and/or sectors in their community justice approaches, which offers them the opportunity to incorporate multiple perspectives in their violence prevention and resolution interventions and expand the potential opportunity for healing across the community. In other words, the process of violence prevention/resolution is not based on the decision-making of only one group of stakeholders or institution in these community justice interventions.

For example, CI's *community-based intervention project* is a collaboration with four other immigrant-based domestic violence and sexual assault programs. CI's team members are diverse, consisting of seven regular members and one evaluator (an experienced anti-violence advocate), all of whom are people of colour. The team members work together with over 100 individuals engaged in violence intervention work. More importantly, and unlike the conventional violence intervention teams that never include individuals who have done harm themselves the CI's team includes both individuals who have extensive experience working with victims of gender-based violence as well as those who themselves have previously done harm.

The *restorative justice via reconciliation* in Uganda encourages the participation of community members, traditional members, and family members of women at the local council courts. Both women and their advocates demand the presence of traditional and community leaders because their support and backing can strengthen the conflict resolution process. Moreover, the presence of women and ordinary community members can motivate them to "become invested in the success of the outcome"⁸⁶ and "act as watchdogs to ensure compliance."⁸⁷

Similarly, the *Kenya community land and property watchdog model* is run through the collaboration of volunteer men and women from a diverse set of sectors, including "community health workers, traditional leaders, trained paralegals, and government stakeholders."⁸⁸ Altogether, the above four community justice approaches prioritize collective and collaborative action alongside building consensus between those harmed and those who harmed, rather than focusing on an individualized way of dealing with justice issues, which is often promoted in the criminal justice system.

5.4 Common practice: Centering care and dignity in accountability

In The Little Book of Restorative Justice for Colleges and Universities, Karp (2013) commenced his treatise by describing 'The Story of Spirit Horse' (p. 3). In the narrative, he described an actual situation in which a Skidmore College student, where Dr. Karp served as Associate Dean of Student Affairs, stole a statue, 'Spirit Horse', from a local antique shop. Although the

crime easily fit into local law enforcement's judicial processes, the campus procedure was to initiate its own disciplinary action. Dr. Karp advocated for restorative justice proceedings. The restorative process began with the story-telling phase. Through the shopkeeper's, the art director's, and the statue's artist's stories, the perpetrator was surprised to learn of the impact of his behavior. As a result of his deepened understanding, the student agreed to perform deeds that reflected genuine remorse and a commitment to regain trust of the community. Impressed with Skidmore's handling of the situation, the local district attorney did not pursue the matter and removed the occurrence from the student's permanent record. This situation is a poignant example of the far-reaching impact of restorative justice in higher education. —Clark, 2014⁸⁹

Community justice approaches are premised on the idea of compassionate accountability, which aims to foster care, respect, and dignity in dealing with harm.⁹⁰ Proponents of community justice approaches argue that harm impacts not just one individual but people, relationships, and communities at large. This is because, they argue, harm has a ripple effect in the social networks of individuals, and creating a just world requires addressing the needs of individuals *in relationship to* others, and their communities.⁹¹ While the formal legal system tends to emphasize punishment as the only model of accountability and justice (e.g., restraining orders, arrests, and enhanced criminal penalties), which may well be necessary for serious crimes, community justice approaches are founded on the philosophy that justice is served best if the offender is held responsible for their actions *in addition to* being held accountable to their community through a process of learning, reflection, and accountability-focused action.⁹² In doing so, the hope is that the root causes of violence will be addressed so that violence is prevented in the future, rather than doling out more harm for harm done.

The formal legal system also has the propensity to dehumanize, or reduce the humanity of, offenders through its systems of punishment, including the various civil rights those convicted of crimes are denied. This does not come without costs. For example, when harm is done, survivors often ask “How can I be sure it will not happen again?”⁹³ With formal legal proceedings, the answer might sound something like: “the person/people who committed harm is locked away and, in removing them from society and stripping them of many of their rights as citizens, they will feel shame and remorse and therefore learn not repeat the transgression.” In many situations, this is not only short-sighted (i.e., What if they do not feel remorse? What if the experience of being incarcerated leads to more, not less, violent attitudes and behaviours? Or what if the legal proceeding fail to find the person guilty of a crime committed?) but also assumes that banishing or punishing individual people will address problems which are far more systematic. This critique has most poignantly been made as part of identifying what is known as carceral feminism,^{viii} in which the prosecution, policing, and imprisonment of individuals is seen as the key way to respond to gender-based violence, without recognizing the ways in which this commitment to “law and order” further dehumanizes individuals through its further entrenchment of sexism, racism, and other ‘isms.’⁹⁴ And because it is increasingly recognized that the systems of law and order were built by

^{viii} The term “carceral feminism” was coined by U.S. sociologist Elizabeth Bernstein.

and designed to serve those in power (namely, white settlers), this focus on incarceration and punishment is particularly damaging to Indigenous communities and other communities of colour.

In addition, some survivors find that punishment served to their perpetrator through the formal legal system does not result in the extent of healing that they anticipated—or worse yet, if the person was not convicted—and there remains unprocessed grief, including working through the loss of trust, faith in humanity, and one’s own safety and security.⁹⁵ Community justice approaches have the capacity to aid in this healing process, including by giving the survivor and offender opportunities to see each other as fellow humans, and for the survivor to directly contribute to and witness the offender making amends and potentially positively changing their behaviour as a result of community justice processes. For all of these reasons, community justice approaches center the humanity and dignity of all involved, and focus on ways that healing can occur, rather than just on how punishment should be served. One of the ways that community justice approaches do this is by encouraging that “offenders are an active part of a process of listening to victims’ stories, expressing remorse, accepting responsibility, and being reinstituted back into the community.”⁹⁶ In this case, the underlying objective of community justice is to heal communities instead of punishing and treating the offender as individuals who need to be discarded and, hence, isolated from the rest of the society.

For example, Creative Interventions (CI) – the establishment that implemented the *community-based intervention project* and *STOP* – believed that community accountability practices must rely “less upon coercion and punishment and more on compassionate engagement.”⁹⁷ This is why CI’s accountability process included people who had done harm themselves in the past, as a practice of active accountability. Their *community-based intervention project* “valued and openly discussed the inclusion of intervention team members who identified as having done harm and were actively practicing accountability through their personal and work lives.”⁹⁸ When dealing with sexual assault matters, their community-based responses were principled on the idea that community-led processes must shift from punishment to accountability and, in doing so, positive changes in behaviour.

This idea was also promoted through the stories which CI published through *STOP*. For example, the story of Liz about the case of sexual assault perpetrated by a drumming teacher shows that instead of sending the teacher to jail, the Oakland Cultural Center’s chose a community-based response that focused on transforming the behaviour of the perpetrator and healing their community members (members of the center and other affiliated drumming groups).⁹⁹ They offered the victim to go to counselling and therapy and ask for any form of support that would help her at the time.¹⁰⁰ In addition, and based on the consent of the victim, they took a series of accountability measures, including having the perpetrator seek feminist therapy and terminate him from his role temporarily:

What followed was a set of sexual assault awareness workshops for center members and members of other affiliated drumming groups. An immediate telephone call to the head of the Korean drumming institution elicited the leader's profound shock and unconditional apology. Then a letter with a list of demands was sent. The Oakland organization demanded that the Korean institution establish sexual assault awareness trainings for its entire

membership, which ranged from college students to elder farmers in the village, and commit to sending at least one woman teacher in future exchanges to the United States. They requested that the teacher step down from his leadership position for an initial period of six months and attend feminist therapy sessions that directly addressed the assault. The traditional relationship of deference to esteemed teachers and the teaching institution shifted as the Oakland organization challenged the familiar practice of sexual harassment and violation.¹⁰¹

As Liz recounted, the Oakland Cultural Center could have called the police to have the perpetrator arrested and dealt with through the formal legal system. However, their community accountability process served the interest of all parties—the victim, the perpetrator, and the community. Instead of focusing on punishing the perpetrator, their community-led response focused on the collective healing of the community as well as building longer term preventive strategies to prevent future transgressions.

6.0 Findings: Strengths, lessons learned, gaps, and challenges

2. What are the key strengths, challenges, gaps, and lessons learned from using community justice based on Questions 1, and how can this inform community-based work to engage and mobilize men for the purposes of violence prevention and to advance gender equality, justice, diversity, and inclusion?

6.1 Key strengths and lessons learned

The approaches identified in this review demonstrate community justice approaches can be a promising alternative to the formal legal system through more systematically addressing the harms done to and needs of communities. One of the strengths of transformative justice is that it focuses on repairing harm and healing at the community level, including but not limited to the offender and the victim/survivor, through accountability. More importantly, as indicated by Clark, “there are situations in which the offender and even the victim are unnecessarily harmed by the practice [of punishment]”¹⁰² in the criminal justice system. Restorative justice is focused on healing and recovery rather than determining punishment and, therefore, its success is not measured by the extent of punishment. The system of punishment enforced through the formal legal system has proven to be unfruitful. Prisons and courts are overcrowded across the world, as is the case in Uganda,¹⁰³ yet the frequency of serious crimes is on the rise and many criminals are repeat offenders.¹⁰⁴ Instead, restorative justice focuses on the impact of crime in a broader context by assessing the needs and obligations of the victim, offender, and community. Through restorative conversations, the community understands why a certain crime happened and ideally how to contribute to preventing it in the future; the offender is held accountable; and the victim is heard and, to the extent possible, is assured that it will not happen again.¹⁰⁵

Furthermore, community justice approaches can have a wider outreach and impact. They are not individualistic in nature as is the case in the formal legal system. For example, the individuals involved in the *Kenya community land and property watchdog model* indicated that women in the

community were vulnerable to property rights violations, which the legal system failed to address, because they did not have adequate knowledge about land rights.¹⁰⁶ Instead of the formal legal system dealing with land rights violations on a case-by-case basis, the watchdog model has been able to address this gap by educating large numbers of women about what to do in order to prevent land loss. The watchdog model's community justice approach, therefore, has been fruitful at building capacity across the community, as evidenced by the fact that the cases handled at the community level have had more successful outcomes for women, compared to the ones handled by the formal legal system.¹⁰⁷ Another example is the use of radio dramas broadcasted in Burundi as part of the *reconciliation media intervention*. It has had a successful listener rate of 65 percent having not only "psychological outcomes that are directly targeted by the program but also more general attitudes that are relevant to conflict and violence."¹⁰⁸

Another strength of community justice approach can be characterized as its ability to create a sense of responsibility not only to the individual victim/survivor, but also a larger community. This can be seen most notably through the diverse set of stakeholders and cross-sectoral collaboration which often characterize community justice approaches. This strength is also highly significant in reintegrating offenders back to the community because the formal legal system fails to help offenders understand how their criminal behaviors harm people, relationships, and the community at large (not just an individual—i.e., the victim/survivor). This point has been very well explained by Clark who argues that university campuses typically use removal of a student as a measure of addressing harm instead of engaging the student in dialogue to understand the impact of his/her behavior on the community. As Clark explains, university sanctions typically limit students' involvement and access to campus life through progressive removal—probation, suspension, and expulsion. The intention of restorative justice, however, is to engage the offenders in the community through conversing with community members, accepting the impact of their actions, and making things right to the community.¹⁰⁹

CI's *community-based intervention project* offers a great example of the ability of community justice approaches to provide a pathway for reintegrating offenders into the community. While one of the core objectives of the project is ensuring accountability, its team includes individuals who have done harm and practice accountability themselves. "The project valued and openly discussed the inclusion of intervention team members who identified as having done harm and were actively practicing accountability through their personal and work lives."¹¹⁰ What this shows is that community justice programs are not only capable of holding offenders accountable to ensure that the victim's and community's concerns have been met, they are also focused on reintegration and rehabilitation of offenders through creating a sense of responsibility to the community. This sets in stark contrast with the formal legal approach in which offenders feel alienated during the course of punishment and excluded from the community upon release.

6.2 Challenges and gaps

The strengths noted above show that community justice approaches do have the potential to complement the formal legal system. All the community justice approaches reviewed in this paper demonstrate a optimism about the future of community justice approaches in the field of violence

prevention and resolution and gender equality. However, community justice still has areas that need further growth and improvement. This section discusses some of the gaps and challenges in the publications identified for this review.

First, most of the approaches identified in this review come from the Global South countries.^{111 112} It is important to reiterate that there is some literature and certainly some community justice approaches that are taking place in the Global North that were inadvertently omitted in this review, particularly those in Indigenous and other marginalized communities for whom publishing their work and findings in academic literature justifiably holds little appeal.¹¹³ Nonetheless, of the papers reviewed here, only two out of five papers were from the Global North (U.S.), and while one of them was a pilot study,¹¹⁴ the other discussed community justice at the theoretical level without reporting an example of a community-level approach.¹¹⁵ While it is understandable that community justice alternatives are more common in Global South countries due to the prevalence of customary norms embedded in social structures which differ from those of Global North countries,¹¹⁶ this shortcoming flags a need for more of this work in Global North countries, including Canada.

While Global North and Global South countries may have different social structures, and the sense of community may not be as prevalent in the Global North due its more individualistic culture, both regions suffer from the same issue—i.e., state failure for prevention of gender-based violence and inequality. As noted in the publication by Polavarapu,¹¹⁷ the model of *restorative justice via reconciliation* in Uganda can be a useful case study for Western countries to utilize their existing communities for providing support and justice to women. Similar to Uganda, for example, the author argues that the U.S. is vulnerable to both customary norms that permit domestic violence and lack of state support to address the needs of victims of domestic violence. Given these similarities, therefore, the reconciliation model in Uganda can be applied to utilize community networks to fill in the gaps left by the U.S. state. Moreover, Global North countries may learn from the development of community justice programming in the Global South as an opportunity for overcoming the challenges that Western individualist cultures currently pose for tackling gender inequality and create a space for promoting community-oriented conversations and collective focused goals for addressing violence prevention.

Second, none of the community justice approaches reviewed here specifically speak about the importance of engaging men or holding men accountable for the purposes of violence prevention, gender equity and justice at the community level. This is important to note as an opportunity missed because community justice approaches perceive offenders as an active contributor to a solution, or reconciliation—rather than only as a “problem” to be banished—and given that the majority of perpetrators of violence are male and this reframe (of seeing men as part of the solution instead of only part of the problem) is a key strategy for engaging men, it follows that community justice approaches should explicitly engage men, including male offenders, as part of the solution. The only publication that touches on this topic is by Clark,¹¹⁸ which argues that the *restorative justice in higher education judicial practices* can tackle the problem of hegemonic male culture on university campuses, but it does not mention the importance of engaging men for this purpose. Additionally, explicit and encouraged positive male involvement can make community justice approaches more accessible to communities where men are in positions of authority (e.g.,

community leadership, local council/court leadership, etc.).

Third, some of the interventions identified in this review have not been tested and others have shortcomings in terms of evaluation, particularly in relation to the focus of this review. While two out of five publications did not report data at all,^{119 120} the other three have shortcomings. For example, the evaluation for the *Burundi reconciliation media intervention* reported by Bilali et al¹²¹ reports promising results about differences in the attitudes of listeners and non-listeners of radio dramas in terms of ingroup superiority, outgroup blame, and ingroup responsibility, but the study fails to compare and contrast the attitudes of male listeners with male non-listeners. This type of analysis would have offered knowledge about the impact of media-based community justice programs on men's intergroup tendencies, which we argue would have been particularly valuable. Similarly, the evaluation for the *Kenya community land and property watchdog model* by Dworkin et al¹²² includes men in its sample, but this evaluation has two shortcomings: (1) it does not compare women's input with those of men; and (2) the results of the evaluation shed light only on the strategies that the individuals involved in the intervention use to help women secure their land rights. It does not give us any insight into the "impact" of the intervention at the individual or community level on the intervention's target audience. Also, the evaluation on the *Uganda restorative justice via reconciliation* by Polavarapu¹²³ uses in-depth qualitative data from interviews with professionals and individuals who were either litigants or parties to a reconciliation, but the results do not reveal much about the effect of reconciliation on community norms or on men's tendency for engagement, specifically. Furthermore, these community justice approaches leave much to be desired around making explicit the assumptions in intervention design and associated evaluation measures looking at the relationship between awareness-raising and actual behaviour and/or norms change. While community education around issues contributing to violence is important, much more is needed overall in terms of understanding how and where increased knowledge and awareness results in attitude and/or behaviour and/or social norms change, including as it relates to community justice approaches.¹²⁴

Fourth, an important challenge in implementing community justice approaches is that various parties such as the justice system, gender equality advocates, and even international organizations often show resistance and pushback to the idea of community justice because they have a fear that community justice programs contribute to women's vulnerabilities, and/or do not "do enough" to hold perpetrators accountable. This challenge has been more prevalent in Uganda than other countries as noted in the publication on *restorative justice via reconciliation* by Polavarapu¹²⁵ and this fear is twofold. First, it has been argued that restorative justice programs may push women to agree to a resolution that is in favor of their abusers instead of allowing them to freely share their concerns and desires. Second, community justice programs rely on traditional resolution mechanisms and, hence, impose traditional norms that have historically subordinated women.^{ix} More research and input from community justice experts is needed to more fully understand these

^{ix} Similar concerns were raised in Canada when Muslim communities requested that Islamic law be used in family arbitration and mediation cases in Ontario (see <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/global-groups-unite-against-islamic-arbitration-in-ontario-1.536908>)

tensions.

Finally, community justice approaches are considered an “alternative” resolution strategy to the criminal justice system. However, in practice, most of the approaches reviewed in this paper to some degree rely on the criminal justice system which suggests that the criminal justice system is so embedded in the “cultural water” we “swim” in that these approaches find it challenging to reimagine a form of justice without the involvement of the criminal justice system. This is particularly the case when the types of crimes committed are so serious that a community-based response might not be sufficient to address them.

For example, the publication by Clark¹²⁶ offers a strong critique of the criminal justice system to build the stage for introducing the *restorative justice in higher education judicial practices as an alternative*. In doing so, the author argues that the formal legal system is alienating to participating parties because it involves the offenders only as passive recipients of the criminal law, and survivors have a limited and often sidelined role, in addition to facing an incredibly stressful and upsetting experience themselves within formal legal proceedings. Clark writes, “the traditional system of justice prevails at most college campuses is adversarial. Because of its nature, participating students often feel alienated and resentful. Restorative justice presents a viable alternative to the punitive nature of the traditional system.”¹²⁷ However, the author does not completely dismiss the practical advantage of the criminal justice system for the small percentage of “heinous” crimes: “The success of restorative justice notwithstanding, some crimes are so heinous that nothing but punishment is in order. Some offenders are lacking in any moral character. Prison or suspension is, truly, the only option. The restorative justice community does not deny that.”¹²⁸

The publication by Polavarapu¹²⁹ argues that despite its drawbacks, the *Uganda restorative justice via reconciliation* model offers a legitimate alternative to the criminal justice system in Uganda and thus must always be recognized as alternative. “Ultimately, because reconciliation offers a more legitimate way in the eyes of the community to get at many of the factors contributing to women’s vulnerability to domestic violence, it should continue to be offered as an alternative.”¹³⁰ Later, however, the author also acknowledges that the criminal justice system must be reserved for when women are treated unfairly by reconciliation as a community-based approach: “State criminal justice alternatives must also be maintained for women who are failed by reconciliation or for whom reconciliation is not an acceptable form of justice. The use of reconciliation as a community-based alternative or addition to prosecution should be pursued, evaluated, and improved upon.”¹³¹

Finally, while the publication by Dworkin et al¹³² does not claim the *Kenya community land and property watchdog model* as an “alternative” per se, one of the strategies that came up from the interview data included in this publication suggests that the formal legal system is pursued if the parties involved cannot reach an agreement for a resolution.¹³³ The community-based intervention has had a 50% success rate. The remaining 50% of cases are referred to the formal court system. However, members of the intervention indicated that the cases referred to the formal court system had far fewer successful results, compared with the community level intervention.¹³⁴

7.0 Recommendations

How can this research inform the use of community justice approaches to engage and mobilize men in male-oriented settings for the purposes of violence prevention and to advance gender equality, justice, diversity, and inclusion?

Although documented community justice approaches are still sparse and there remains ample opportunities to build on the available evidence, particularly in the Global North, the ability of community justice approaches to ensure justice where the formal legal system fails are promising. Despite shortcomings and challenges, community justice approaches highlighted in this review offer significant contributions to future violence prevention efforts. This section provides a summary of the areas in which research and policy effort are needed to address the shortcomings and challenges in community justice interventions:

- Research is needed on community justice interventions that explicitly engage men, both for male-to-male violence as well as for gender-based violence. As noted earlier, none of the community justice approaches reviewed here specifically speak about the importance of engaging men or holding men accountable for the purposes of violence prevention, gender equity and justice at the community level. The only publication that touches on this topic is by Clark.¹³⁵ The rest of the publications talk about engaging men without explicitly mentioning the distinct role of men in their interventions. This is a key opportunity missed and more should be done to build a shared community of knowledge and practice between community justice practitioners and those working to engage and mobilize men for violence prevention and gender equality.
- A more cohesive definition of community justice is needed. Lack of a cohesive definition of community justice poses challenges in identifying and evaluating best practices of community justice approaches.
- More research is needed on community justice interventions from Global North countries. Although the interventions from the Global South offer insight into the ways in which community justice interventions are designed and executed, contextualizing these interventions for Global North countries will not be without challenges because Global South countries have different social norms and structures and tend to have much stronger community networks and established practices.
- Interventions that can be applied in the Canadian context should be funded and implemented. For example, CI's *community-based intervention project* from the U.S. is an excellent example to adopt for both holding men who have done harm accountable and turning them into male allies whose personal experiences can contribute to efforts for preventing violence and addressing the needs of their communities.
- While community education around issues contributing to violence is imperative, much more research and piloting is needed to understand how and where community education and awareness-raising in community justice approaches result in attitude and/or behaviour and/or social norms change, and where this can be improved.

- Research and investment in community justice interventions that can work hand in hand with the Canadian criminal justice system is urgently needed. This can be especially effective in healing the relationship between the formal legal system and communities with underprivileged and racialized populations.
- More research is needed on how and why centering dignity and care within community justice approaches may be more effective at primary prevention and long-term behaviour change than punitive efforts. Life cycle analysis-style research that looks at what can be prevented through this approach, how much money is saved by not incarcerating people could provide insights, for example.
- More research on innovative approaches to achieve community justice is needed, and the innovative promising approaches that are happening should be documented and shared more robustly. This includes case studies as well as more robust evaluations of community justice approaches that are happening in communities. New innovative approaches to community justice that focus on primary prevention should also be piloted and tested.

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