



Share-Net
The Netherlands

9 October 2014,
12.30 – 17.00hr

Café Belcampo, Amsterdam

Report Annual Meeting

“Linking Research, Policy and Practice – Students and NGOs”



Introduction

After two successful meetings in 2012 and 2013 the working group ‘Linking research, policy and practice’ of Share-Net has organised a third annual meeting in 2014. Six master students from different Universities in The Netherlands were invited to present their research findings. A vibrant speed dating session took place to meet several NGOs afterwards.

This aim of this meeting was to bring together students who have finalized or will start their Master research in the field of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) including HIV/AIDS, and researchers, practitioners and policy makers working in the field of SRHR and HIV/AIDS.

Organizers

Share-Net’s Working Group
Linking Research and Practice:

- University of Amsterdam,
- Maastricht University,
- University of Nijmegen,
- University of Utrecht,
- Institute of Social Studies,
Erasmus University
Rotterdam,
- University of Groningen and
- The Royal Topical Institute



Presentations

Please find the presentations that were held during the meeting attached to this report as annexes.

Presentation 1: “First child? No a late born” A study about the social agendas concerning the lives of young adult female PCC members and the process of invisibilisation as response to their premarital pregnancy – **ANNABEL DE GROOT** (UvA) Medical Anthropology and Sociology
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Rijk van Dijk.

Abstract

In this presentation, which is based on my MAS Master thesis, I intend to shed light on the experiences and positions of (formally) unmarried pregnant young adult members (aged 18 to 30) of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches (PCCs) in Kumasi, Ghana. Data for this study were collected between February and May 2014, by means of participant observation, (semi-structured) interviews, media analyses, and focus group discussions. I describe how the young adult pregnant women, their peers, families and pastors from PCCs in Kumasi perceive these pregnancies and how these views are related to moral and social conventions concerning age, gender and sexuality in this context. ‘Invisibilization’ seems to be a common response to these pregnancies: many mothers of the unmarried pregnant women call their biological grandchild ‘a late born of their own’; pastors often choose to keep silent about these pregnancies when it occurs in their church; and their peers encourage their pregnant friends to abort the baby. These groups thereby uphold their status and benefit when the girls’ premarital sexual activity is made unseen. Further research must make clear what this means for the agency of the girls. To combat teenage pregnancy, I recommend organizations concerned with SRHR to cooperate with churches since they have access to a large crowd of young adults but they do not have the biomedical know-how and the preferred social distance youth find at NGOs.



Presentation 2: “Exchanging sex in the bush: navigating competing sexual norms among Makhuwa youth in northern Mozambique” – **HANNEKE POT** (UvA) – Medical Anthropology and Sociology
Supervisor: dr. Eileen Moyer

Abstract

Interventions aimed at improving sexual and reproductive health are often based on international discourse. They might, however, contradict with local discourses around sexuality. Understanding these local discourses is important in order to develop effective interventions. In the context of an NGO and an eco-lodge in a village in northern Mozambique, and by using ethnographic and participatory methods with a group of 13 youth, I explored how contemporary



sexual practices can be understood by relating them to tradition and recent structural changes in the area, how these changes have produced competing norms, and how youth navigate them. Formerly influenced by historical encounters, traditions were recently influenced by NGO-norms. Youth also reshape tradition by making use of opportunities that occurred due to economic and political changes. The space created by these changes has led to an increased marital age, and an early sexual debut. In a society where female virginity is a strong norm and contraceptive use is low, girl's premarital

sexual behavior becomes visible. Participatory methods can be useful in analyzing and creating an awareness of the context in which behaviors are embedded, as well as in motivating participants to play a role in developing and implementing interventions that relate to their struggles in the sexual landscape.

Presentation 3: “Problematizing Human Milk: The Case of the Food and Nutrition Security Policy of Bogota – **ANDRES SARABIA** (ISS)
 Supervisor: Dr. Wendy Harcourt, Associate Professor in Critical Development and Feminist Studies

Abstract

Breastfeeding has been the subject of social policy. Since the mid-1990s it has been part of the Food and Nutrition Security framework designed by FAO, WHO and UNICEF. It is now part of the practice of activists, NGOs and caregivers. It raises attention directly to the body of (mostly) women and infants and their interconnection. It has a history that can be traced through institutions such as the 1920s Milk Depots to 2010s Milk Banks. Local processes of incorporation and contestation of such international guidelines give rise and change the subjectivities of the actors involved.



The city-government of Bogota, Colombia, recently adopted a food and nutrition security policy in which it frames its breastfeeding policy. The objective of this research has been to understand the possibilities that this policy offers towards gender equality. Discourse analysis of policy texts and activist networks conversations is the principal methodological tool used. It develops into a comparison between two moments inside breastfeeding policy making, making use of archival research. I frame Bogota's 1910–1930 policy reading two doctoral (M.D.) thesis from that period, contrasting it with the local policy texts of the ongoing 2007–2015 period. I take into account their relation to international policy frameworks and selected narratives from the pro-breastfeeding activism. This research shows how 19th century fears of depopulation and degeneration shaped breastfeeding policy until today. I propose to see this through three images of deficient motherhood: infanticide, vertical transmission (or milk toxicity) and breast/milk inadequacy. Breastfeeding was introduced into Bogota's government policy-making by promoting an image of women as ignorant and docile. Their bodies should be educated into the logic of efficient production that characterizes modernity. The constitution of the breast-milk substitutes market appears as a consequences of these images and shapes the understanding of resistance inside local policy. The translation and adaptation of international policies constitutes a space where active groups can put their struggles forward. Biotechnology has opened new possibilities of market and non-market understandings of breastfeeding: attention should be given to avoid reifying classist and racist divisions. Appropriation with resistance makes it possible to imagine practices nearer to gender balance.

Presentation 4: “The Invisible Citizens’ Revolution: HIV/AIDS and Citizenship in the LGBTI Community of Quito, Ecuador” – **MANDY GEISE** (UvA) – Medical Anthropology and Sociology
Supervisor: Danny de Vries

Abstract

The number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the Ecuadorian LGBTI community is disconcertingly high compared to the general population, while only a small percentage of this group has access to HIV services. I explored how LGBTI people



living with HIV/AIDS experience and challenge the way they are treated and perceived by healthcare professionals, politicians, and larger society. Recent political developments in Ecuador made it especially meaningful to see how apparent sociopolitical openings have been utilized to claim and promote inclusion in- and outside the medical setting and how this affects vulnerability to discrimination, exclusion, and HIV infection. Stigma, discrimination, and exclusion remain strong deterrents to LGBTI people identifying themselves to HIV services, impeding the HIV response. The promise of full, inclusive citizenship for all Ecuadorians regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status has not been fulfilled yet, although there are some promising advances that should be built upon by boosting state-civil society collaboration on adequately ensuring human rights. Sensitization training of healthcare professionals, policy makers, and educators is an important next step. Other recommendations include amplifying awareness and sex education campaigns amongst risk and general populations and bolstering prevention in new, appealing ways.

Presentation 5 (combined presentation): “A qualitative study on the utilisation of Maternity Waiting Homes in Kalomo, Zambia: the role of husbands in influencing women’s decisions” – **ELISA KIRCH** (Maastricht University) & “The role of maternity waiting homes in utilizing facility based delivery services in rural Southern Zambia: a qualitative study” – **MARIT VAN DER PIJL** (Maastricht University)|- Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Rob Ruiters

Abstract Elisa Kirch

Introduction: Zambia progressed slowly in improving maternal health. To bridge the geographical gap and enable fast access to health care for expectant mothers, Maternity Waiting Homes (MWHs) have been established. Women's health decision-making underlies an interwoven net of factors, including medical, social and cultural determinants. The goal of the study is to identify which role husbands play in influencing women's decision to use MWHs.

Findings: The majority of the



husbands had a positive attitude towards MWHs; some even indicated that it had become a rule for expectant mothers to wait there. The decision of using a MWH was made by the spouses together. However, the husband had the final authority. The husband's task is to provide for mother and child, including food, requirements needed, and transport. The major barriers in fulfilling this role were lack of financial resources due to poverty/unemployment and lacking transport including high transportation costs. Barriers for the use of MWHs included their poor state, lack of space, water, electricity, food, mattresses and blankets, health care staff and medicine.

Implications: This study shows that husbands play a major role in their wives decision to utilise MWHs. The dominant position and role as provider influences the utilisation of MWHs by their wives, as they are dependent on their spouses. Public health interventions and research need to take this into account and foster female empowerment to have a positive effect on the utilisation of MWHs in Zambia and other developing countries.

Abstract Marit van der Pijl

Introduction: Delays in seeking medical help play a major role in the maternal mortality in Zambia. To tackle the issue of distance, constructing a maternity waiting home (MWH) is an intervention that provides women a place to stay near facility based delivery services (FBDS) in the last period of pregnancy. This qualitative study investigates the role of MWHs in FBDS in Kalomo, Zambia.

Methods: 32 in-depth interviews (IDI) were conducted. Respondents were women between 15 and 45 of age who gave birth within the last year. Respondent's perspectives on FBDS and MWHs were explored and the decision making process for utilizing the MWHs and barriers in MWHs were investigated.

Results: Most respondents were positive about the FBDS. All respondents liked the idea of the MWH as it helps to overcome the distance from home to the health care facility. However, most respondents did not utilize this service due to the lack of transport and delaying the utilization of MWHs. Husbands appeared to be the most important decision makers in utilizing the MWHs. Long distance and the risks of complications were often the reason to decide to utilize the MWHs. The most important facilities needed at the MWHs were beds, mattresses, food and water.

Discussion: This study suggests that the MWHs are useful in the utilization of FBDS. However, public health interventions should be established to make the MWHs a beneficial intervention. Further research is needed to investigate if MWHs contribute to maternal and neonatal health outcomes.

Presentation 6: “From Tearoom to Chatroom – online male prostitution in Utrecht” – **ROBIN SMEETS** (Utrecht University) Master Global Criminology– Law Faculty Universiteit Utrecht

Supervisor: Tim Boekhout van Solinge, Willem Pompe Instituut Utrecht

Abstract

Online male sex work entails all different kinds of (young) men offering their services online to mostly older men looking for sexual favours from young boys. The question this thesis will answer is *What is the extent of online male prostitution in Utrecht and what type of men offer sexual services for compensation?* Doing online research towards male prostitution and interviewing them face to face offers a range of new insights concerning sexuality, in communication and interaction between boys and clients, the boys’ backgrounds and the importance of secrecy in this deviant hidden world.

This research shows that sexuality is fluid, adaptive and used as a means towards economic benefits. The Internet has led to major changes in the world of male sex work, offering a platform and a wide range of opportunities for men and boys seeking to exchange sexual favours, for numerous reasons. Those reasons will be analysed in order to achieve a more complete picture of this so far hidden and secret world of online male prostitution.



Speed dating

During the speed dates, NGOs were able to tell a bit more about their organization and answer questions from students. Beforehand, organisations were asked to answer some questions around their research needs and gaps they are perceiving. On the basis of this input, Share-Net made a NGO research factsheet¹ for Master students who are still deciding on a topic for their Master’s thesis research. This factsheet contains research questions, gaps and needs of Dutch NGOs in the field of SRHR, and can serve as inspiration to the students. Hopefully, next year, students who have taken up the research questions from the *NGO research factsheet* will be able to present their findings at the annual

¹ See annex

meeting 'Linking research, policy and practice – Linking students and NGOs' of 2015. The factsheet can also be useful for NGOs themselves to have an insight in what common needs and gaps are.

Questions were:

1. What are relevant research questions, gaps and needs you and/or your organization have in the field of SRHR?
 - a. Topics
 - b. Countries/areas?
 - c. Population of interest, e.g. young people, MSM, etc.
 - d. Type of research, e.g. qualitative/quantitative, literature study, participatory action research, case study/meta-analysis
 - e. What type of recommendations are you looking for, e.g. how to improve the implementation of sexuality education for out-of-school youth
2. Do you expect any opportunities for internships at your organisation? If so, what/when?
 - a. Also possible to refer to the vacancy section of your organisation's website only.



Organisations present for the speed dating session:

- ❖ Oxfam Novib
- ❖ CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality
- ❖ Simavi
- ❖ RutgersWPF
- ❖ ResultsinHealth
- ❖ Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ❖ KIT / Share-Net

Organisations that gave their input to the research fact sheet, but weren't present:

- ❖ i+solutions
- ❖ TNO
- ❖ STOP AIDS NOW!
- ❖ ICCO / Prisma
- ❖ dance4life



For any questions or suggestions related to this meeting and/or this report, please contact Karen 't Hooft or Meike Stieglis at info@share-net.nl