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CHARU: Hello and welcome to *In The Center*, produced by All Survivors Project. This broadcast aims to deepen and broaden dialogue by addressing conflict-related sexual violence affecting men, boys and LGBTI+ people. We bring together victims and survivors, researchers, and policy makers from around the globe to talk about their work and experiences and to explore key themes around prevention, care and support for survivors through national and international level responses. My name is Charu Hogg, and I am one of your hosts with my colleagues from All Survivors Project. Let's get started.



LARA: Welcome. Thank you so much for joining us in the first podcast, *In the Center*. This is our inaugural podcast. I'm really delighted to be here. My name is Lara Stemple. I'm the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies and International Student Programs at UCLA School of Law, where I work in teach in the areas of gender, sexuality, health, and human rights. So, I'd like to start by saying that we're so excited to have been a part of this inaugural podcast. And over a number of podcasts we'll be hearing from experts, from academics, from humanitarians. As well, it's important to note that we will be hearing from survivors themselves who have experienced conflict related sexual violence. This is a central tenet of the way that All Survivors Project works. It's critical to include those voices and the organization regularly does so in its work. Today, we have a couple of different guests and I'm delighted to introduce them to you now. So first, it's my honor to welcome Joanina Karugaba. She is a renowned expert on gender-based violence. She's been doing this work for more than 20 years at UNHCR and now as a Senior Government Liaison officer. Welcome to you, Joanina.

JOANINA: Thank you, Lara.

LARA: So good to have you next, I'd like to welcome Kyle Knight who is a Senior Researcher on Health and LGBT Rights at Human Rights Watch. Welcome to you, Kyle.

KYLE: Thank you, Lara. Thanks for having me.

LARA: My pleasure. So let's get started with you, Joanina. If you'd be so kind as to talk to us about this issue, give us an overview on the issue of sexual violence in arms conflict as it affects men, boys and LGBT+ populations.

JOANINA: Coming for me from the perspective of displacement predominantly, I will speak about the refugees that we work with. This has been an issue that we've, over a period of time, increasingly recognized as an area that we had initially ignored. As a default in the humanitarian space, we've been mobilizing and advocating that we look at sexual violence in conflict and the services we bring to it as a default. We say it's going to happen, or it happened, so just get your services ready. So, those of us who work in refugee camps, that was a Modis Operandi that we were promoting, saying, "Get services ready." But one of our blind spots was evidently that it was a woman and girls' problem. And that's how we came at it for several, several years. But in the recent past, we've really started to acknowledge and then put in services to respond to sexual violence against men and boys in conflict settings.

LARA: So, you used the term, "blind spot," and I find that interesting. Could you elaborate on that a little bit? Talk about, especially from your own perspective and just, how did you as an advocate, as an expert, come to realize this was a blind spot? And what did you do to overcome it? And how did you bring others along?

JOANINA: By default, when I entered the organization, the focus was...my first job was actually in the Syrian civil war in 2001, where sexual violence had been so rampantly, with so much impunity, against women and girls. But little was talked about the sexual violence against men and boys. And I never questioned it. I never even thought to question it. There were amputations. There was killings. There were so many things that happened, but for women and girls, it was a sexual violence. So, I never thought to interrogate what about the young boys? What about the men? Where were they when this was happening? And much as many of them said the sexual violence was committed when the husbands were watching, or when the sons were watching, we never picked on it as sexual violence. So fast forward a few years after that, we did some major piece of research for Unitarian in the Middle East for, I think covering Lebanon and Jordan and for Syrian refugees. And it really picked out the issues of sexual violence against men and boys. And after that there was no turning back. There was no turning back because it had been documented. I think earlier on we had come up with a small, I think it could be 12 pages document, where we acknowledged it happens and this is what you should do. But it was so faint that it doesn't really guide you in exactly what you should be doing. It does acknowledge and provide you some hints. So, I think after that it was quite clear in the open that what we had looked like or sidelined as torture or other forms of violence now was really in the remit of addressing gender-based violence. But the main struggle was how to actually bring it to the table of the actors and the NGO partners that we normally work with, who predominantly worked on women and girls. And initially the answer was *no*. We are focusing on women and girls who are predominantly those victimized. And we're specialized in women and girls and committed to women and girls. So, bringing in men and boys, who were always looked at as more of the perpetrators, was a difficult discussion.

LARA: Yes. Any insight that you can give us on how you are ultimately able to be successful with bringing attention to this neglected work? You know it's a tricky issue, I realize. But it would be wonderful to hear you share your insights.

JOANINA: I think it was a slow and painful journey. And I learned a couple of lessons. One is sometimes you can't force something. Even if you say it's a right best issue, you can't force it. But I think what has happened over time--I don't take credit for it, I don't think UNHCR alone can take credit for it...I think there are many actors...was by having some of the skeptical NGOs actually doing research. Or having some of the NGO's which were credible and recognized as having a feminist agenda actually do research on men and boys. So, there were really credible people that came to the table, like Women Refugee Commission, who came to the table, where people felt we're not at risk of losing the women and girls agenda. We're not at risk of diverting funding. I think when those people came to the table, then other agencies started to open up the space. And I think it's because...how can I... maybe you would call it part of the recognized community that focused on women and girls. Once they started actually opening up, then others become less skeptical. They were about to do research which other had been doing, and others had been talking about sexual violence about boys, men. But it just wasn't landing on the right ears or being received in the right way.

LARA: Sounds like it's a combination of not turning back based on the facts, as you first mentioned, you said once the evidence was there. Then you talked about bringing the right partners to the table. And also framing that as committed to not turning its back on women and girls. Sounds like those three elements were critical.

JOANINA: Yes.

LARA: So, thank you for that and let's turn to Kyle. Kyle, I'd love to hear you talk about the LGBT+ populations. Who are affected by this issue? What can you tell us about the problem? And if you can also talk a little bit about how attention to those groups has come about in recent years?

KYLE: Sure. So, I think the problem is. As Joanina put it that there was and has been, and in some cases continues to be a default, and it's a default to not asking questions about these populations. It's a default to having strong assumptions that these populations either don't exist or aren't experiencing sexual violence in a situation of conflict or instability. Which we know is empirically not true or it's a default to thinking that the services that do exist are accessible just because they're there. And I see a lot of the work that's taking place in recent years has been sort of a deliberate disruption of that default specifically by going in and asking questions of LGBT people in these situations, asking questions of survivors about what it was like, not just who. Experienced the horrors of wartime sexual violence, but actually more importantly, what it was like for them to seek safety, to seek support, to seek health care, and have that not work out for one reason or another.

I think what the various pieces of research over the years have done is demonstrate that there are real barriers and demonstrate that those barriers are not actually particularly unique. Right? Just like we want programs to be designed in a way that they are accessible for women and girls, we can tweak things slightly to make them more inclusive for trans people. More inclusive for men. And I think what we've seen over and over again is evidence that if you ask the right questions, you will find the facts of

what's going on. And if you make the right tweaks or if you understand the changes that need to be made by listening to the survivors about how they weren't able to access services, or they weren't able to access justice, or any of these other things, that the changes are not monumental. We're not talking about scrapping an entire system and revising it. We're talking about making it more inclusive and more accessible. And this is something everyone has an obligation to do where there is suffering—to engage with it and alleviate it. But it's also something that I think more and more people are going to see is not sort of a fundamental paradigm shift, but a relatively easy change.

If you're willing to engage, you're willing to listen and you're willing to think about how making these services accessible for this population, is actually similar for making it accessible to people who don't have documents. People who have disabilities, people with all kinds of other sort of social, political, economic barriers to accessing services. It doesn't hurt to make a service more accessible. It only ends up helping people. And I think that's the journey that we've gone on in a lot of spaces. Including in the international human rights movement in terms of taking this issue more seriously.

JOANINA: So, one of the main things is normative guidance. So, there is guidance which can be used to train humanitarian workers. Sensitize them to the issues so that they can at least acknowledge that it's happening. Number two is for them to then explore how they can integrate it into their programs. So, I think that's very critical. In terms of how humanitarians can integrate it into programming, is for example, the screening. Whether we talk about through refugee status determination or screening at border points or screening within the camp within health services. That's very critical in terms of starting to ask the questions as a service provider such that you can get some information which can help you tweak your program, but which can also help you then refer, because that's the main thing, is not every service provider is able to provide the services that men and boys would require. But at least when we start having people who are aware, and then they know what the referral processes are, who is providing which service and acknowledging that OK, we might have a service and we might not. But who would be the best place to help the survivor to the next step? I think those are the small steps that we started to embark on.

And I would say lots of progress has been made in that the other area is just really looking at and saying survivors know best. They can reach out best. And a lot of times in refugee settings, we find that the community is the staff of the organizations which are working on issues of sexual violence. So, when the community is part of them, then de facto survivors are part of the workers and the staff of the organizations in which they are working. So, I think that's been critical in the small steps we've been taking. We've been seeing that survivors know best. They are part of the process to reach other survivors and then part of the process to refer to actual services.

LARA: Well, it's such an important point because I think it does highlight the importance of having survivor voices in the podcast, which I know will come episodes. And if you could talk, Joanina, about what inclusive responses look like. And specifically, if you could address some of the unique issues for men and boys that come up when it comes to facing this difficult form of abuse, what's unique to men and boys, and how can and should inclusive responses address the uniqueness of the male experience?

JOANINA: Programming might mean that as a humanitarian committee, we have to all acknowledge. I said we've made progress, but that doesn't mean all of us acknowledge that sexual violence happens to men and boys as well. And that we can find ways of integrating it into our programming. So, I think starting with the acknowledgement that it happens, but also acknowledgement that there are ways we

can integrate it into our programming without diminishing the fact that it happens to women and girls, and without taking away resources from women and girls.

I think inclusive programming would be that we come to expect that it is a default within programming. It doesn't mean all service providers provide services for men and boys, but it is a default. Meaning: any service provider is trained to recognize it, and if they are confronted with a survivor, they know where to refer the survivor for services. I think it's taken us a while to get women and girls programming to that level that it's supposed to be a default. It's our expectation you would be criticized if you go to a camp and there is no camp for women and girls. I think that expectation should also be accorded to male survivors of sexual violence. In other words, inclusive programming would mean that the language and the implementation language, like "survivor" should be inclusive of men and boys, because for a long time, "survivor" is a picture of a woman and a girl. I think if we have to do inclusive programming, things like a survivor-centered approach has to be inclusive of all survivors. Not just women and girls. And I think that will really take us to be looking at what does inclusive programming mean.

I would also say that, maybe just as one last point in that regard, is that really looking at, and saying if we want to have inclusive programming, then we have to look at survivors as holistic human beings. At survivors as men and boys who are fathers and brothers and sons and uncles. Looking at women and girls as this woman probably had a husband who witnessed her being abused, or she witnessed the husband. So, really looking more from that context of, this is a holistic person who lives in a family and lives in a community. So, if we are healing the individual, we need to look at what's happening around them? Because I think a lot of times we worked with women. And the question was, these women were probably witnesses of their husbands being sexually abused as well. But what message were we sending if we only treated the woman and then she went home to a man whom she knew had also been sexually abused, but he is not able to find a space to deal with it?

LARA: Well, that's very well put! I was also thinking specifically about the fact that sexual victimization for men and boys is often seen as, really, an assault on one's manhood, if you will. And I think the fact that, of course, women and girls experience a great deal of stigma when confronting sexual violence. And men do as well. But in a slightly different way. I think for many of them, and I'm wondering when we think about the unique ways that men and boys suffer from this form of abuse, when they feel that they should have been able to defend themselves. They feel like their manhood has been taken from them. Sometimes they feel that their sexual orientation may have been compromised. And that the state shame and stigma around coming out as a survivor of sexual violence for many men and boys is one that often forces them to confront their very nature of their own gender identity. And I wonder if you've thought about that and to what extent those of us who are framing this issue need to take that into account. I think you implied that when you talked about the fact that, if we only talk about women and girls as survivors, we are leaving out this population. And I wonder, I sometimes think that when we promote sexual violence as something that only happens to women and girls, we're digging ourselves in even deeper. Because when it comes to addressing men and boys... because then to be a survivor is to be female. If you know what I mean.

So how do we need to be thinking about our language? How do our responses bear some responsibility for the way that this gets framed, not just as a gender issue, but as an issue that affects people in the very ways that they identify themselves?

JOANINA: I think that really doing a proper gender analysis and a gender analysis, which is not an analysis of just the women and girls, would be critical because in most of the societies, there's a very

masculine way of, “Who is the man?” and a very feminine way of “Who is the woman?” And then the two cross. And then we can't deal with it, because especially, we make the woman the victim, the most vulnerable. And if you're the man and you've been victimized, then there just hasn't been a space. Just to say that sexual violence happens in certain contexts, that a survivor, irrespective of their gender, can be vulnerable.

LARA: Thank you so much for those reflections. Kyle, I saw you nodding as Joanina was speaking, I'd love to hear you react to some of the thoughtful things she shared with us and I'd love to have you as an expert on LGBT issues, bring that population into the discussion and reflect a little if you would.

KYLE: Yeah, I think what we're really talking about is a major upstream cause of all of this, and that's sort of the patriarchy that we all live in. I don't think anyone anywhere in the world has an uncomplicated relationship with the patriarchy. They just might not know it because it benefits them politically or so on and so forth. But going upstream and saying, “Crash the patriarchy” is not a particularly pragmatic or implementable recommendation, even though it would solve a lot of the problems that we're discussing for men.

LARA: But it's so much fun to say that! I usually don't say, “Crash the patriarchy.” I use a different word, but I think I know what you mean, haha.

KYLE: Haha. You know, just say, “Burn it down,” in a controlled burn. But ultimately, if we're going to be pragmatic about this and look at downstream, implementable things that can happen, it is about creating realistic spaces for vulnerability for expanding that definition of “survivor” and what that means in context for LGBT people. Is very local and very context specific. I mean, I've interviewed gay male survivors who will tell me that I'm the first person they've ever use the word “gay” with to describe themselves, right? In part because they grew up in a restrictive environment where saying that would have put them in danger. In part because the sexual violence they experienced complicated their relationship with their own identity and their own sexual attraction. And in part because when they saw support or services after the violation, they weren't...they felt they weren't able to label themselves as such and still get any services for support, right?

So, it's this whole matrix of suffering that people are in because they don't feel like they are able to identify themselves in a particular way, or in some cases, it goes deeper than that. It's not just a tactical subduing of how they're gonna label themselves. It's actually how they feel about it. And it complicates their own relationships with the way that they've lived their lives. And so, yeah, we can talk about the upstream things that we all want to do. And that definitely needs to happen. And we will continue to contribute to with advocacy. But when it comes to programming, we do have to think really pragmatically about what we're doing to allow people to survive in the lives that they're going to have to live. Displacement lasts a long time. Trauma lasts a long time. These are not one-off interventions. This is not just about throwing up a rainbow flag and a clinic and saying, “Gosh, now all the LGBT survivors will come in and know that they can talk to this doctor.” Absolutely not. It is a much more nuanced and long term intervention that is needed to create these spaces, especially where these issues are so fraught.

And I think the other thing that is really critical for us as researchers or as people working on programming is to remember that, in order to talk about suffering, we don't have to rank it. We don't have to say that one group is suffering more than the other. And in fact that undermines the whole

mission. Right? We know there are overlapping causes for this. We know that the male perpetrators of sexual violence against women, like Joanina said, are using the same sort of motivations or privilege to enact sexual violence on male survivors, right? We know that it's the same issues underlying these things. We can have the conversation in that register even if we have to use labels. But yes, I open up a report and I see that it includes data on LGBT survivors, and I think that's excellent. Is it absolutely necessary that it does that in order to reflect the reality of what's happening? No, a report could talk about sort of patriarchal, political, biases that are driving sexual violence. But at this moment in time, yeah, we can talk about different populations with the different labels that we use. Just know that what knits it altogether is this sort of unifying horror that people face and these politics of an assumed sort of masculinity that may just dominate everything. And that has all of the downstream effects that we've talked about today. It's absolutely awful, but I really think it's heartening to see a move away from trying to rank suffering, and actually towards discussing, yeah, these are overlapping issues. Here are the things that need to be changed at a policy level, at a pragmatic level, in order to create spaces for even the individual survivors to recognize that these are overlapping issues.

LARA: So thank you for that Kyle. And, of course, I agree with you that. It's important to recognize that there's common cause here, whether we're talking about toxic masculinity norms, the patriarchy, and so on, and that commonality is important to acknowledge. But I'm gonna also at the same time push back on that a little bit and talk about populations. Before I do that, it's important to acknowledge that when we are shining on or spotlighting on. LGBT+ populations on one hand, and then on the other hand, talking about men and boys and women and girls, we're not at all implying in any way that the population of LGBT+ persons isn't made up of women and girls, and boys and men, and non-binary persons. Of course, that's the case. So we're just shining the spotlight if you will, to look at that position from different angles. So, I wanna make that important note before turning it over to Joanina. So I would like to think about this movement, as needing to be both gender inclusive, meaning leaving no one behind. And also being gender sensitive, meaning paying attention to the particular needs of different populations. So, Joanina, if you could talk about that and how we make sure that we are being gender sensitive in approaches as well. I'd love to hear your thoughts on that.

JOANINA: I think that essentially, if we look, if we come at it from the perspective of, we have the mantra of a survivor-centered approach, then it will be the survivors who dictate the way we do our programming. And by essence, there will always be times and spaces where it is necessary to have specific groups in focus, that we won't have to mix them because they will have very specific needs. That if you have a self-help group, the group, by essence, may determine that we want to be mentioned, or we don't want to be a mixed group. Or they may be at a stage in their life where they feel they can have a mixed group. But I think we should always look at it as the mix, if they are really survivor centered, would be targeted at meeting their very specific needs of different groups of survivors. So, while some services may be provided by similar service providers, it doesn't mean that maybe the men and girls, or men and boys, or women and girls want to meet in the same space. So, I think it's for sure that we will always continue to have very specific services targeting specific groups, but we shall also increasingly have the same service providers providing multiple services. And in essence, something which Kyle said is that we shouldn't be, like, comparing groups, because that's where I think the initial struggle between the men and the boys survivors, and the women and girls survivors, came was: it started being a comparative issue. *Oh, but there are more women and girls.* So, the issue is not who is

more and who is less. The point is, any survivor should be entitled to receive services and to be supported to receive the highest possible health service available.

LARA: Right, thank you for that. I'd like to talk about both gender which means leave no one behind. But also gender sensitivity, which means that you might need responses that are specific to different populations, including responses that are specific to women and girls, to men and boys, and to LGBT+ populations.

If we work on one population, it means that another population is left behind. Could you address that? How in your own work have you overcome the challenge that naturally comes up? There is this tendency issues have, to sometimes conflict with one another instead of coming together collaboratively. So, what insight do you have for us about how we move past and us versus them approach to these issues?

JOANINA: The biggest challenges is, it's a resource issue. We don't have enough resources. We don't have enough actors working on the area of sexual violence. So it always becomes like, if this group gets some, it's taking away from the other. So, if we could come to it with sufficient resources. And practically, there are so few instances where resources were made available. New resources where it was like, OK, you are doing this already, but we will give you additional resources to do some research on this particular area...then it allowed for that area to grow. The work on sexual violence against men and boys allowed for that area of work to grow.

The second thing is, also for allowing new actors to come into the space. I think GBV work has...people who have struggled so hard over the years developed the expertise as NGO, and really developed some credibility of diplomatic guidance. Just being able to bring in other actors into the space so that we're not like saying, "This slot? Do some more work. You have a lot we know you don't have enough resources, but we need you to do more." It's just, allow some space for new actors to come. Because we've seen that sometimes they are not new actors. They are just national actors who've been doing great work. But we weren't aware allowing them to come into the GBV community and share with us their resources, learn from the GBV community of women and girls, but also for them to share with us what they've been doing, what works, what didn't work. I think it's a very powerful wave of really cross fertilization and making the community stronger from a rights-based perspective.

LARA: I'm so glad that you mentioned the resource issues because I kind of find that frustrating as well. You know, we already have a shortage of funding for gender-based violence work on behalf of women and girls. And the idea that those of us who want to see men and boys and LGBT+ populations included would ever want to take funding away from that work and take resources away from that work and give it to other people is so untrue. And I think what we have to be united about it. That's a very clear demand that resources be allocated for new populations in ways that do not undermine or hurt services for women and girls. I think it's something that we can all agree on. And it would help, I think, to take some of the us versus them concerns away because that's a real one, right? I mean, funding limitations are quite real.

There is no such thing as a limit on compassion or a limit on the human rights. We have plenty of those for all people, or we should. And we can all agree, I think, that those are areas that are easy and right to expand upon. But when it comes to funding, it is limited. So, the messaging I think has to be really clear and resonant on this point in particular. Because it just isn't fair to, as you said, Joanina, to those who

have been working so long and so hard and doing such a good job to just have new demands dumped on them without any resources to address it. So, I feel really strongly about this.

Kyle, would you like to get in on this conversation? What can you tell us about resources? About how we make sure that there is adequate attention to LGBT+ populations without burdening our already underfunded service providers?

KYLE: Yeah, I mean, the way I'd like to think about it kind of contradicts what I said earlier, where when we think about unifying upstream causes and how, really some of the kind of politics behind this violence is overlapping and that's this: it's for donors that are already supporting work on SGBV. Whether it be the response work or research, or for research institutions that are working on gender-based violence, if they're thinking about what's the extra resources we have to deploy to do a project that's inclusive of men and boys or LGBT people. It's not like when we see a campaign that says *save the rainforest*. We read it as *to hell with all the other types of forests*, right? We read it as, *we are foregrounding this particular crisis*, this particular type of problem. And it doesn't mean you can't be a good environmentalist at large, if you focus on one particular issue. So it's not about running away from something because it's labeled very specifically. It's about understanding the value add that it has. Another parallel I can think about is this. I can remember, gosh, probably over a decade ago when my colleagues at Human Rights Watch were really trying to focus on the impacts of conflict on schools. So, attacks on schools, military occupations of schools. And I remember reviewing a report. We were with a colleague and seeing a photograph of someone being interviewed that one of our colleagues had interviewed. And there was a school behind them that had been gutted by a fire, right? Clearly it had been a target in the conflict. This was a major issue, and we know the schools are targeted for different reasons and so on and so forth. And there was no mention of it in the report. It was just in the background of a photograph. And when we asked our colleague, "Well, what about the school?" He said, "I just didn't know to ask. I just didn't know to go and ask where's the school principal? Why was the school targeted? Was it a military station there?" And now you see that there's a global campaign and a huge commitment from governments to not have militaries occupy schools and you can see this uptick in a political attention to it and a commitment to a policy level. That really just started with asking the right questions. So I think there are low resource ways to do this and some of it is just asking the right questions. Having a comprehensive and more integrative research approach. And then I think there's some attitudinal shift where we need to not have people on the funding side of things. See a project on men and boys, or see a project on LGBT people as too focused or distracting from the broader cause. We're kind of all on the same team here, and the more that people can understand that, and the more they can understand that investing in a sub issue or investing in some meticulous research on a sub issue isn't distracting or extracting resources from the broader problem and the broader sort of movement to solve the problem. The better it's going to be in the long term to have those investments up front.

LARA: Well, I love the rainforest analogy that you used. And it seems like the point you're making is that the funding needs to be additive, and that's what seems to be critical to me. Is that the moment you start talking about taking funding away from women and girls, which I don't think anyone is talking about, I would love to know if they are, because I would tell them to be quiet. Haha.

KYLE: I have never heard anyone say that, haha.

LARA: But that's the fear, right? Because when your funding is already below where it needs to be, there can be a fear. And even if it's not literally taking funding away from women and girls, it can be the expectation to do more work and to serve more people without additional funding...can be seen as burdensome and it can perpetuate the us versus them problem. So, it does, in my opinion, those of us who are concerned about new populations need to be quite clear on the fact that those demands need to be additively funded.

Joanina, would you like to talk about that any further? I know this is building on something that you commented on, but I would imagine you have a lot of thoughts about finding those resources.

JOANINA: Yes, I do, because I think I have to be humble enough to acknowledge that we've had instances where, in our own programming, we've made those mistakes where we've gone up to an NGO and said, "You know, what? The headquarters have said this is an issue which we have ignored. Now you've been doing GBV for women and girls. You also have to do it for the men and boys. First off, just put it in the document. That budget stays the same. Get done with the job." So, we've had, I mean, I'm putting it very crudely. But we do acknowledge that sometimes the communication with the NGOs that we work with has been less than adequate. If we are asking them to do more. With less resources, so I think we have we acknowledged we've made some of those mistakes and it's something that we need to put right?

I think we need new donors to come to the table as well because I think what's happened is we know that donors that fund us for GBV work and gender work, and we hound them and hound them and hound them. So, I think the other donors who fund, but without specific measure. So, I think we need new donors to come to the table and acknowledge that they can't just give us blanket funding. They also have to have their own gender inclusive policies. And then I think in terms of our messaging, is really to frame it in the context of saying the work for women and girls is gender transformative. But so is the true work on addressing sexual violence against men and boys. That for them to truly heal, the work has to be gender transformative. It's not about a band aid, it's not short term. It's the long term. And I think Kyle had really spoken about that. That these are not quick fixes.

LARA: Well, I really loved what you had to say about gender, transformative attitudes and understandings, and the way that that's important with women and girls and also for men and boys. Can you say a little bit more about that? In what ways does work with male survivors need to be about transforming ideas about gender? Or questioning toxic masculinity, norms, and so forth?

JOANINA: Essentially, it's some of the harm done to the men and boys, and why they don't come forward is essentially if that—is because they suddenly feel what defined them as men has been taken away. They are told, "You are no longer a man because you are treated as a woman." The perpetrator even says, "I will treat you as a woman." So, the whole concept of it is that they feel they've been feminized, and the perspective is that feminine is bad or is weak. So I think that's a strong message which many communities have, at least the ones I've lived in have grown up with, where feminine means weak. Feminine means inferior or under, or submissive. So, if then you're treated in that way that you think is feminine...then there's a problem. So, unless you're able to address the fact that this was abuse and it doesn't take away from you being a man, or the fact that...or that you're called feminine, is not...Being feminine is not negative. It's just you are made to be feminine. I think those are

things that discussions that need to be had, where then men can understand that being feminine is not an objective thing. And abuse is abuse.

LARA: Well that's brilliantly put. I'd love to also ask you about vulnerabilities and the ways in which men and women experience vulnerability in ways that are similar and ways that are different. Are there lessons for men about the strength that can come from vulnerability? To admit that one is vulnerable is to let go of those. You know, kind of *I'm a man, I'm tough*. Those pretenses that we all know are often fake. They're hiding vulnerability and to be vulnerable it is to be brave. Can you talk about that? But on how it applies to male survivors?

JOANINA: I think one of the struggles that a lot of the male survivors are dealing with is they've always been perceived as being strong. So, the fact that they were in a situation where they felt they were weak, that makes them feel like they cannot then resume a certain position of power. And a lot of male survivors. Like women and girls, also then try to assume or reinstate that level of power. But they run away to substance abuse and to alcohol abuse, and it's just running away from reality. But within the refugee context, that idea of what a man is supposed to do when he's not able to do it, then that really brings a lot of pressure. And the pressure sometimes results in violence. So even when we were talking about how much can we be inclusive, we have to look... when we look at domestic violence programming. Sometimes we just look at...*The man is violent. He beat his wife. He's a perpetrator. Take him to justice.* Without trying to really unpack some of the struggles that communities are going through that the man thinks he can re-establish his dominance. By having to be violent because he's trying to cover up for the abuse and the shame and the stigma that they feel.

LARA: It comes full circle and becomes a woman's issue again, right? I mean, if we're talking about men who are performing violence as a way to reclaim their masculinity that's been taken from them, that's something that we need to be concerned about if we care about violence against women and in homes. So, that's really fascinating and well put.

So, Kyle, could you talk a little bit about norms? Social norms and the way in which those impact survivors and their abilities to come forward and to heal? And specifically, I'm asking you about LGBT+ survivors.

KYLE: Yeah, I mean I think it's like you said earlier, Lara. Men and boys are in some cases LGBT and in some cases LGBT people are women and girls. These are all overlapping populations to begin with, so any norms we're gonna talk about, any context we're gonna talk about, starts with that broadest circle, right? And talking about the norms of masculinity or femininity and stereotypes that underpin everything else. And then when you talk about how these LGBT populations or communities understand themselves....I think one thing that is critical to remember and this comes out looking at sort of LGBT issues, broadly speaking. But I think in particular, when we're talking about survivors of sexual violence, is that there are still so many contexts around the world where LGBT people, it's not just that they don't... It's not that they don't necessarily believe that they're deserving of rights or of equal treatment or something like that. But it's also that they've developed very strong and sophisticated survival tactics to negate those aspects of themselves in expression or, you know, what people know. They're really good at deception to a degree as a survival strategy. So, the idea that you would walk into a clinical setting or a mental health practice or a group therapy session, even if it is affirmative, even if it is labeled the appropriate way and you're told this is safe...there's a lot of shedding of that stigma to do.

And it is not going to be a quick process. It's going to be highly individualized and dependent upon how this person was treated.

I mean, if you want a policy indicator, just look around the world at the abysmal state of comprehensive sexuality education. Look at what people are taught from school age, about what sex is about, what sexuality is. You know about what reproduction is and what it's not. And then add on top of that, that's 76 or so countries that still criminalize adult consensual same-sex conduct, some of them with the death penalty attached. And then then add on top of that whatever the family subjectively thought and how they treated that person. And then on top of that, the media environment that someone is growing in. And just imagine shedding all of these layers and then coming out as a survivor of sexual violence on top of all of that?! It's just a long and complicated process. And I think, to me, when I even walk myself through that out loud, I think, *OK, this means a need for investment*. This means a need for really good, nuanced, careful care that is allowed to, for the sake of the survivor, it is allowed to fail. It's right, it's allowed to have the survivor come in and say I'm not ready for those. For one reason or another. And then have it still be there. It's not a matter of capturing the data points and saying, well, we had one, you know, bisexual survivor who came in but then never came back. Oh, no! Stigma. And we can get at that. Like, that's not enough. We have to think more creatively and more intentionally about what are doing such that that person doesn't come back, whether it be for research or for clinical or support or anything like that. Because the layers that go into these self-perceptions and that needs to be sort of shed or addressed, or a message to get through someone to a point where they're comfortable even talking about being a survivor. It's a mince, and it's incredibly complicated and localized, and I think the people who are engaging with this, in a sort of pragmatic or practical setting to address survivors, just have an enormous amount of work to do to be able to support them, train them, allow them to acknowledge when things aren't working, and report it back so it can be fixed. This is the project in front of us.

LARA: What are the priority areas that need to be focused on in order to make progress on this issue for these populations moving forward? Let's start with you, Joanina.

JOANINA: So, we already spoke about the resource issue and I think if there's one thing that I would say, it's resources, because we can't get away from that. The second one is, I really think that, and it comes through in what Kyle was saying, about the multilayered issues that survivors have to go through...is the issue of disclosure. Is the gateway to access services. Including accessing just a safe space to speak. So, I think there has to be a way of or methods of providing survivors with access to services without the pressure to disclose, because the issue is, until we demystify it, we won't be able to have sensitivity within the communities. We won't be able to dispel the stigma with service providers. The stigma within their communities. We really won't be able to live no one behind.

LARA: I think addressing the staff and the people on the ground is a really good point. It's something that I noticed in early work that I had done, like with rape crisis centers in the United States. But a lot of the mostly women who work there had gone into this line of work because they wanted to work on issues as they affected women and girls. It was their calling, if you will. And many of them were survivors, themselves. So the idea that they were suddenly being asked to incorporate work for men and boys was challenging for a lot of them. And I think just acknowledging that and meeting people where they are, providing meaningful training, you know, understanding...yes, this is now gonna be part of your

job and we're gonna help you get there in ways that allow you to feel safe and satisfied in your chosen life's work. That's something that I think is often missing, so I just wanted to highlight that. So, Kyle, for you where do you see some of the main gaps? And what are the priorities moving forward?

KYLE: so I think what Joanina pointed out those are absolutely priorities and the only one I'll add to it is this. I think we can learn a lot of lessons from the crisis that the world has been going through for the last 18 months and continues to go through in a lot of places because of the egregious lack of COVID-19 vaccine distribution. I think we can look at this as a moment where the world had to pause its typical operations and go into a bit of a humanitarian mode, right? We're offering help in ways that governments we were in ways don't typically offer help, and I think we can see that there were weaknesses in the default to go back to the term. That Joanina started us with the weaknesses in the default. You know might have been. They weren't intended to be harmful, but they did cause harm because they operate on assumptions. One example of this is you saw early in the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of governments rolled out gender based quarantines right? And this was a logical way to have the population that was. Outside of their house, on any given day. It kind of made sense from an epidemiological perspective when you wanted population control and manage who was in enclosed spaces and so on and so forth, but no one thought about what this meant for transgender people, some of whom or many of whom in a lot of these environments are legally recognized according to their sex assigned at birth. and. Present in a different way, what day can they go out on? Is it the men's day? Is it the women's day? Is it neither? And we saw police abuse and we saw people too scared to leave their homes to go to the doctor and too scared to leave their homes to get food and real suffering that came just from this default that there are men and there are women. Such as society we can manage a crisis along these lines. I don't think any of these governments were doing it to harm trans people. They didn't set out, they were doing it in an emergency to try to respond to it. But going back to that default undermined the ability for these people to survive in this particular environment. So added to that as a priority, I think we just need to continue to challenge our defaults as far upstream as possible. In funding agencies in the global agencies at the United Nations that oversee and coordinate and encourage this work in the reporting mechanisms and just continue to all be a little bit more curious about what we're doing when we say gender or when we say gender-based violence. And what we're talking about. And not be afraid to expand that. And understand that when we do expand it, we actually do capture a lot more information. And we actually provide a lot more care.

LARA: A better part of it. I appreciate the language you shared and the insights that you gave us thank you very much and thank you to All Survivors Project for having us all together today.

CHARU: *That brings us to the end of this episode of "In the Centre"! Thank you very much for joining All Survivors Project. We would like to give a special thanks to our sound editor Daniel Frankhuizen. If you found this discussion useful, please subscribe to and access all our monthly forthcoming episodes. We are also on Twitter and you can check out our website allurvivorsproject.org. We would very much like to hear your thoughts and suggestions for future podcasts—all views are welcomed, so please stay in touch, and see you next time!*
