



laugh at you, say you are too young, just go... (Male, 15).

Most of the times you cannot even talk about how to change it. People live in a community where they don't feel compassionate for one another; you just look for yourself (Female, 17).

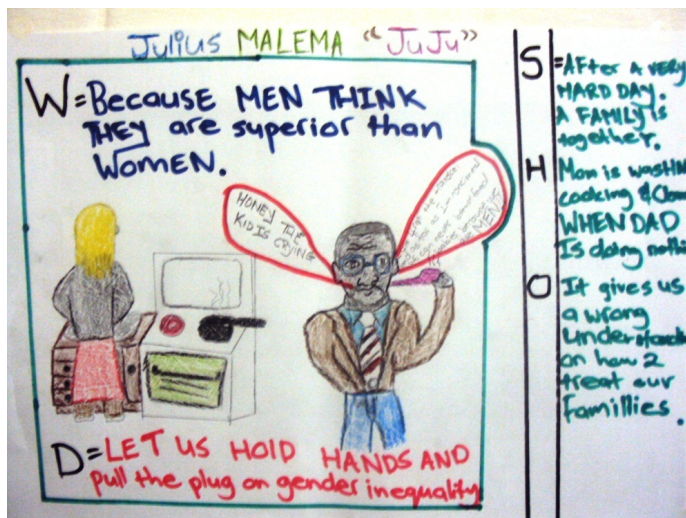


Figure 4 Idea for improving gender relations

Most of the suggestions involved “calling a community meeting”, “talking to parents to tell them to solve their problems”, “tell people to respect each other”, “send them for counselling”, “teach about gender violence”, “stand up to parents”, “women must learn to be independent” and so on, but in the light of the subordinate position of the children in the community, it is unlikely that any of these suggestions would actually make any difference, even if they could be implemented. They do not take into consideration the entrenched cultural and structural factors that drive gender power imbalances (Sherr, Mueller & Varrall, 2009).

However, as discussion progressed and I challenged these suggestions, other ideas began to emerge, which were indicative of a slowly growing realisation that they could have agency, if they focused on internal, rather than on external change:

*You can change yourself – if girls are washing the floor, you can offer to help (Male, 17).*

*I just feel I could hit that man hitting the woman, but this is not the solution – we have to help each other, and do things that will make people happy (Male, 17).*

*I will not hit my wife or abuse the children when they have done something wrong – I will tell them (Male, 14).*

*I am going to teach my child when going to their work [that] they must wash dishes and floors and cook. I want to teach my children not to bully other children at school. I will never talk strong language in front of my children (Female, 16).*