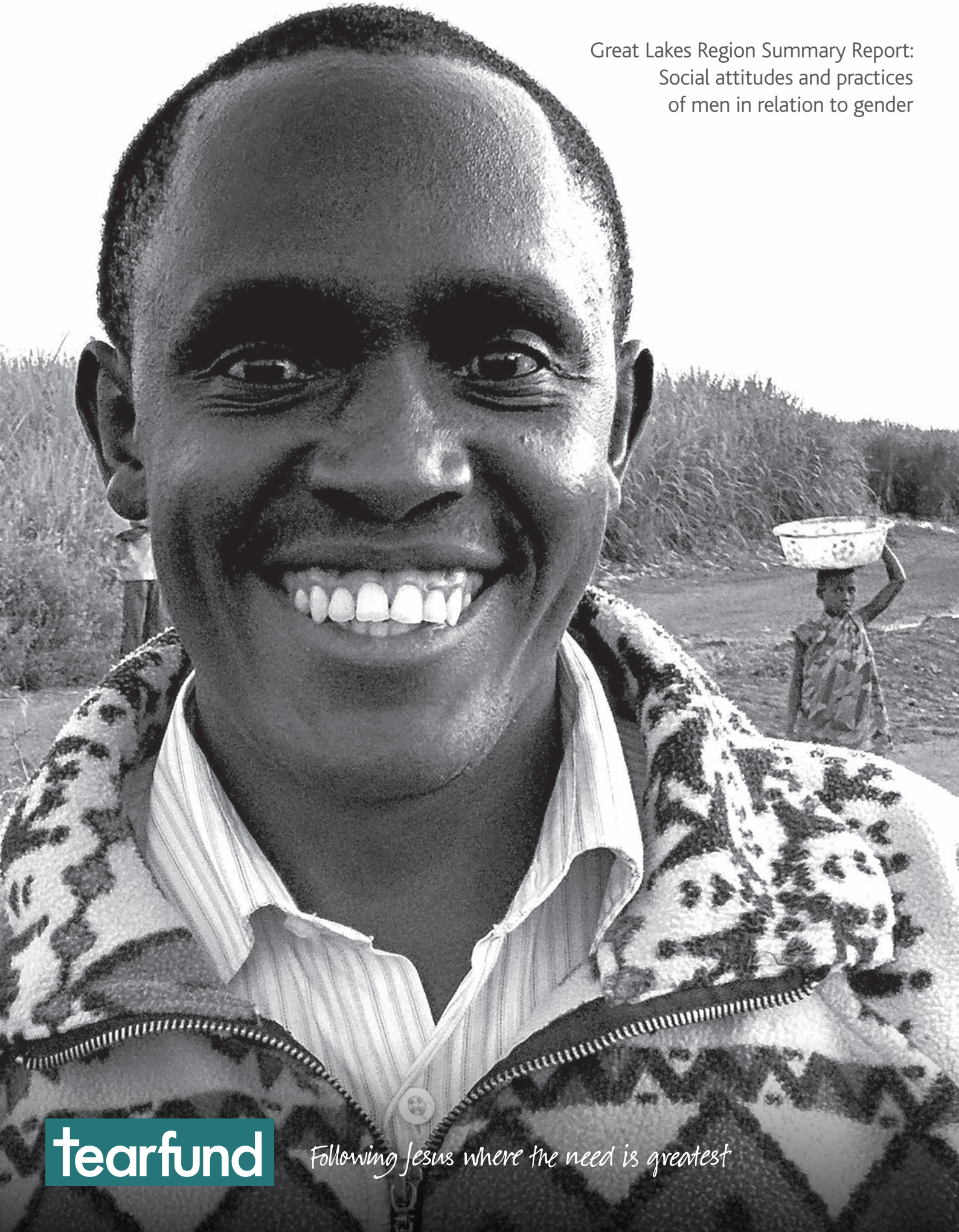


TRANSFORMING MASCULINITIES

Great Lakes Region Summary Report:
Social attitudes and practices
of men in relation to gender



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Following Jesus where the need is greatest

1. Background

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) affects people in all communities, no matter what their class, race, religion or location.¹ Although data on sexual violence is lacking in most countries, recent regional estimates for Africa show that approximately 46% of women (15 years and older) have experienced either partner or non-partner physical or sexual violence at some time in their life.² Due to these statistics, work on gender, gender equity and equality and SGBV has dramatically increased over the past few years.

There has been an increasing call to engage men and boys in understanding gender equality as an important part of addressing issues around violence.³

Evidence shows that men who experience violence or witnessed domestic violence as children are more likely to accept violence as a means of resolving conflict both in their relationships and lives.⁴

Tearfund and its partners are committed to end sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) that affects women, men, girls and boys worldwide, and the leaders of the world are finally paying attention. This report summarises detailed research during 2013-14 and a full report, 'Transforming masculinities' from three countries within the African Great Lakes Region (GLR). It focuses on the experiences of women and men, their understanding of gender equity and equality, and their beliefs around SGBV. These beliefs about the way manhood is understood and defined within the home and within communities are deeply rooted. From a faith perspective, the country studies aimed to understand in more depth the gender dynamics driving sexual and gender-based violence. The study was carried out in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda and included 1,233 people: 610 men and 623 women. The Anglican Communion and other partners within these three countries form part of Tearfund's work in engaging men and boys to help end sexual violence.

Tearfund has worked in Africa for decades around different programming themes, from responding to emergencies to proactively engaging churches to respond to the HIV and AIDS epidemic. These studies form part of a broader strategy to end sexual violence in 150 communities within 15 countries, including South Africa, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, Liberia and Tanzania. Baseline studies were carried out in Rwanda and Burundi in August to September 2013, and in DRC in January 2014. These provide a helpful foundation for this work.

Numerous studies have been carried out on this theme in the mainstream development setting, but few have been based within the Christian theological context. As the Great Lakes Region is largely Christian, it is important to recognise that faith, with its interpretations and teachings about masculine values, may influence lifestyles. Understanding and exploring any harmful values or practices will aid in transforming these, and will encourage the church to adapt, integrate and transform its response to addressing these crucial issues. The church can lead the work on transformative and positive masculinities, and promote a Christlike model as the norm for men and boys.



Men participating in community discussions regarding attitudes and behaviours within Rwandan society relating to gender roles. Photo: Eleanor Bental/Tearfund.

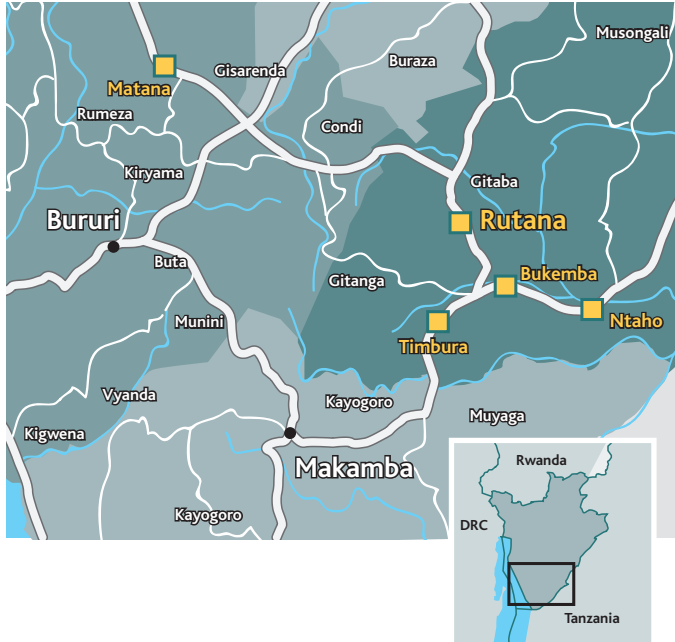
Research objectives

- To make available baseline studies of existing attitudes, knowledge and practices among both men and women around the themes of male identity, gender roles, manhood, gender relations and SGBV.¹
- To explore further and gain better understanding of the context within which acts of violence occur and why they occur.
- To provide a safe space for men and boys to express their own experiences of violence.
- To design effective programmes to engage men and boys in initiatives aiming to end SGBV.
- To challenge and equip the church to promote equitable, caring, non-violent relationships and positive masculinities.

2. Country Profiles

A brief overview of the contexts

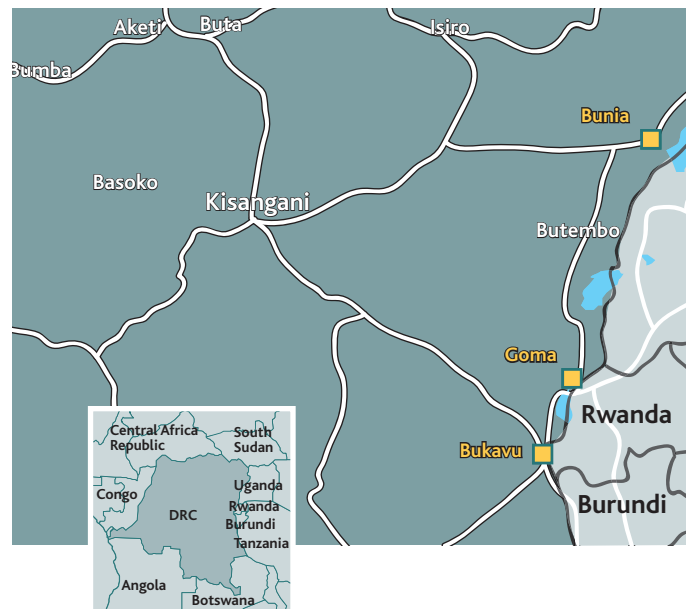
Burundi



Burundi is a country emerging from a history of civil war which devastated the lives of men and women.^{5,6} War crimes and gross human rights violations, such as torture and sexual violence, have been documented throughout the civil war.⁵ Today, Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world. This places women and children at particular risk as many women are heads of households and are perceived as unprotected. Early marriages are another consequence of a difficult socio-economic situation.⁶ Most people in Burundi are associated with the Christian faith, and the church is rooted and actively engaged in people's lives. The Anglican Church in Burundi has been active in addressing SGBV, and acknowledges the positive role men and boys can play in ending such violence. During August and September 2013, a total of 414 people were interviewed through 12 group surveys and 20 focus group discussions across five parishes of the Anglican Diocese of Matana. This included 219 men and 195 women who affiliated themselves to the Christian faith.

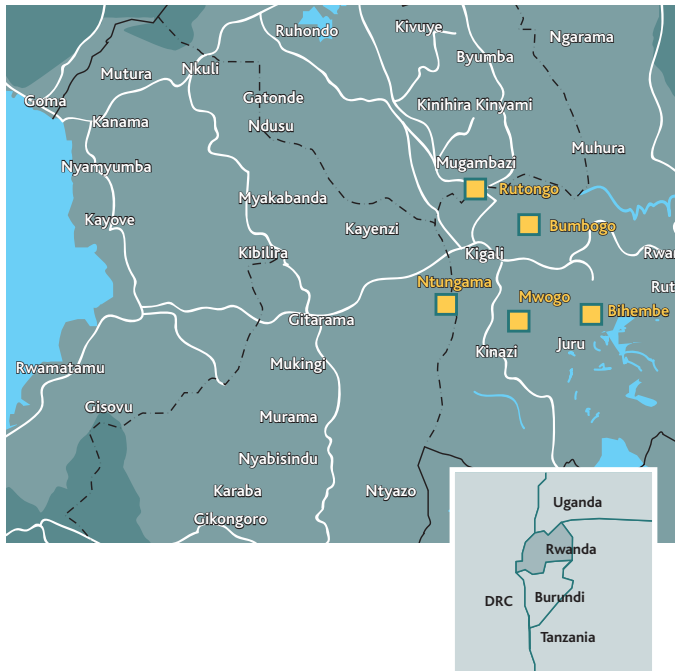
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The DRC has been plagued by years of conflict characterised by displacement, the collapse of health services, hunger and malnutrition and brutal violence.⁷ In 2008, The International Rescue Committee estimated that between August 1998 and April 2007, 5.4 million people lost their lives. In 2010 and 2011 it was estimated that approximately 1,150 women were raped every day, 48 women were raped every hour, and four women were raped every five minutes.⁸ It is important to note, however, that sexual violence is not only a weapon of war; it has been used as a weapon in daily life to oppress and abuse women and girls across the whole country. It is not exclusive to conflict-affected areas or carried out only by those carrying arms. The incidence of intimate partner violence has been reported to be 1.8 times higher than the number of women reporting rape by non-partners in the DRC.⁹ This study was conducted in partnership with the Anglican Church in the towns of Bunia, Goma and Bukavu, in Orientale Province and North and South Kivu Provinces. The sample consisted of 428 people which included 153 women, 147 men, 55 boys and 73 girls (aged 14–20 years).



“Rape is like guns in our country, it is killing our women.” DRC participant

Rwanda



Known as the land of a thousand hills, Rwanda shares its borders with Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and DRC. It is one of the fastest developing countries in East Africa and in Africa as a whole.¹⁰ Since its independence in 1962, it has faced many cycles of violence. The most recent was the 1994 genocide which tragically claimed close to 1 million lives, and in which up to 250,000 women were raped.¹¹ In the aftermath of the Rwanda genocide, the Christian churches in Rwanda have faced extreme criticism from diverse groups and people. The church was accused both of failing to effectively oppose the genocide, and of being actively complicit in the violence.¹²

Since the genocide the church has reinvented itself, pushing its boundaries beyond evangelism to engage in social development issues, particularly in ending SGBV. During August to September 2013 this study was conducted within five parishes of the Anglican Diocese of Kigali: Rutongo, Bumbogo, Mwogo, Bihembe and Ntungama. A total of 391 people were interviewed through 10 group surveys and 15 focus group discussions.

Tearfund believes that the church should always be a place where social norms and attitudes can be challenged if they are causing harm

Findings were summarised according to themes within all three participating countries. These findings will enable:

- The development of tools to address harmful historical and traditional values, behaviours and knowledge that have influenced societies throughout the years and allow the continuation of SGBV within communities.
- The understanding of male identities and roles, experiences of becoming a man, and experiences of trauma and violence within the family and their vulnerabilities in an evolving social environment.

The Bible teaches that all humans should be treated with love and respect and that men and women are created equal in the eyes of God

3. Understanding men, faith and masculinities

Summary of findings

The research process used multiple statements (which participants could agree or disagree with) and focus group discussions. Participants were separated by gender to encourage greater openness.

3.1 Gender roles and decision-making in the home

Caregiver role and household activities

In all three countries, women and men held strict beliefs about gender roles which influenced their work, roles and responsibilities within their homes and within wider society. In Rwanda, such strong beliefs caused frustration both at home and in the community, and impacted on family relationships. From focus group discussions, it emerged that both men and women faced challenges in living up to their defined gender roles and expectations. Women wanted their husbands to be more actively involved at home but expressed the view that changing the 'status quo' was not worth the trouble. One woman noted: *"The men in the house will milk the cow, and the women/girls will clean up after them"*. Men said they were reluctant to get involved in household activities or caregiving roles as these activities and roles were perceived to be 'soft' or more feminine. Participants supported these cultural norms with religious beliefs, often citing the Bible passage from Ephesians where Paul told women: *"submit to your husbands"*.

In Burundi, strictly defined gender roles seemed to be non-negotiable. Most women (94%) agreed that their primary role is to take care of the home and cook for their family. Burundian participants reflected on gender roles as being 'natural', and 'how God created them to be'. However, there are tensions, as seen from the introductory quotation. Although men and women were well aware of changing cultural norms and practices in the outside world (such as men having positions as chefs), these were not views felt relevant in the home. Men felt stigmatised by comments from others such as: *"why are you doing a woman's work?"* when involved in household activities, even though they expressed the need to be more active fathers.

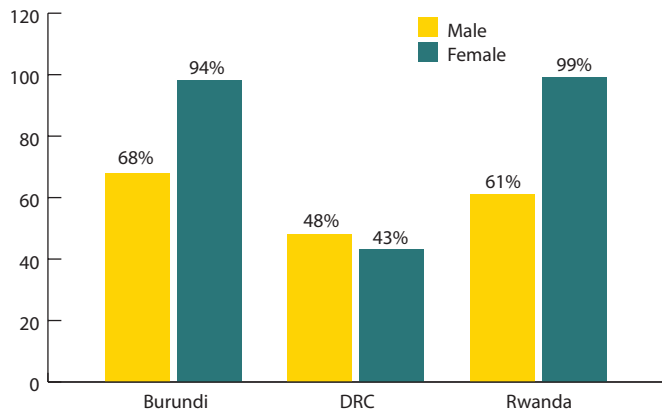
The roles and identities of men and women in the DRC are defined, restricted and controlled by the norms within their communities. Participants used examples from the Bible to justify their views of why God created man to be superior to woman (for example, Adam being manipulated by Eve in Genesis 3). Men and women both agreed that women were responsible for their children's care but interestingly, over half of men and women did not think that a women's most important role was to take care of her home and cook. On asking who carried out the cooking, cleaning and washing of clothes, results clearly showed this was done by the women. However, when respondents were asked if they agreed with the statement; *"If a man does these things at home, the woman will neglect and not respect the man,"* not all men agreed. One respondent used religion as justification, saying: *"God separated the work for men and women, therefore this work is not relevant to men"*.



Men and women from one community in the focus group discussions in Eastern DRC. Photo: Tearfund.

"My father is a chef, but I have never tasted the food he cooks, because he never cooks at home." Burundi young male participant

Figure 1: Percentage of participants who agreed with the statement: A woman’s most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family.



Although most men across the three countries held more flexible views of the caregiver role, there were contradictions. The focus group discussions made it clear that participants held conservative views based on the scriptures. Attitudes and practices around gender roles seemed to stem from interpretations of creation. Men and women both held the view that the wife is inferior and unequal to her husband.

From these findings it emerges that there is a real need to create safe spaces where core beliefs and particular interpretations of the scripture leading to inequality can be explored and addressed. Only then can people be challenged regarding their roles in the home.

Provider role and decision-making

Table 1: Attitudes toward statements about men as decision-makers

	To be a man, you need to be tough (Percentage agreeing)			To be a man means providing for your family/extended family (Percentage agreeing)			I think that a man should have the final say in all family matters (Percentage agreeing)		
	Burundi	Rwanda	DRC	Burundi	Rwanda	DRC	Burundi	Rwanda	DRC
Males	2%	0%	33%	51%	99%	64%	60%	50%	63%
Females	14%	0%	30%	63%	93%	78%	43%	13%	52%

Though the survey findings showed that few men and women in Burundi and Rwanda in particular agreed that men ‘had to be tough’, this was often contradicted during the focus group discussions, where many individuals discussed the need for men to be tough (Table 1). In the DRC, male toughness was linked to superiority, and perceived as the natural order of things and the way God intended it to be, as the quote by a male participant indicated: “When God created man, God said that he was the head of the family, and therefore the man needs to be tough”.

In all three countries there was strong agreement that men should be able to provide economically for the family. They are seen as the decision-makers on a variety of issues relating to family life, from health issues and schooling to financial expenditure. Almost 100% of both men and women in all three countries agreed that a woman should obey her husband, leaving little scope for women in decision-making processes. However

in the DRC, one participant noted: “Our culture prevents women from progressing. We see in other cultures that women are doing other work, and this is helping the progress and development of their communities. We need the same in our country.”

Many men root their sense of manhood in being the provider and the head of their families. However, in Burundi, Rwanda and the DRC, women are increasingly generating income as men struggle to meet the needs of their families. This places a double burden on the women both to take care of their homes and family, and to be the provider.

“There is a problem in my house. It is the wife who makes the decisions, because she is the one earning.” DRC participant (physically disabled and unable to work)

“My husband needs to be tough; if not I will not respect him.”

Female participant, DRC

Men in Rwanda and Burundi said that they felt frustrated when they were unable to fulfil the role of provider in their family. In the DRC, men who were unable to provide enough income for their families seemed to question their identities. They felt that women were leading their families. This left them frustrated and neglected. A man from Bukavu noted: *“We don’t feel good, because right at this moment we cannot provide for our families”*. Feelings of frustration and neglect might be part of the reason for the use of violence within the home to demand respect and demonstrate power. This was clearly expressed by a female participant: *“He takes the money, but doesn’t give it to me, and if you ask for any he will beat you. Then he asks for food, even when he didn’t give money”*.

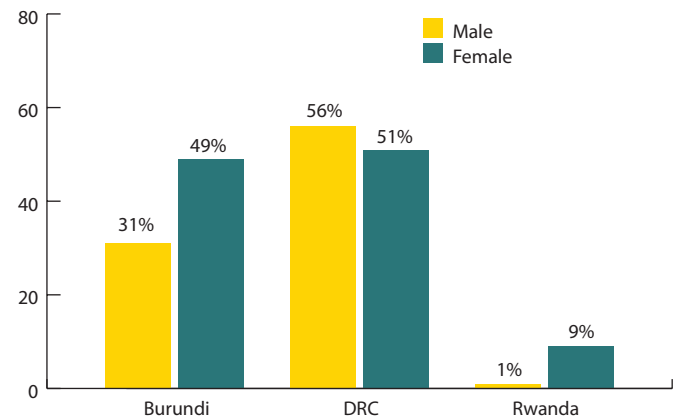
Feelings of being overburdened and frustrated by not fulfilling their role as provider, yet wanting to assert power in decision-making, create a unique tension challenging men’s identities. This could provide an opportunity to promote positive relationships and encourage open discussion between partners in order to share their physical, emotional and economic burdens. There is the potential to involve men in their family lives more actively in terms of fatherhood and family well-being. Engaging men in the capacity of caregiver roles may create a space for them to be role models in their homes, churches and communities.

Control of women’s bodies

Although not mentioned by all men in the focus groups, Biblical scriptures which refer to men as the ‘head of the home’ were a clear underlying theme. In Burundi for example, a participant

justified men’s control over decisions in the home through the following verse: *“...the husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the church”* (Ephesians 5:23).

Figure 2: Percentage of participants who believe women have no right to refuse sex with their husbands



Although these figures vary between countries, it is interesting to note the differences between participants’ views over the rights to a woman’s body in marriage. In Rwanda and Burundi more women than men agreed that they cannot refuse sex. One of the DRC participants noted: *“Marital rape is not possible, because the woman’s body doesn’t belong to her according to the scriptures.”*

A participant in Burundi noted that disciplining a wife was linked to biblical manhood, and that it was important to show this in front of children and the community to maintain respect and control.

3.2 Manhood and sexual and gender-based violence

Violence and honour

It is important to understand that any form of violence, whether sexual or physical, does not happen in a vacuum. While many external factors can aggravate the potential for violence and create a culture of impunity, these are not the root causes of the violence.

Table 2: Acceptance of physical intimate partner violence

	A woman should tolerate violence to keep her family together (Percentage agreeing)			There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten (Percentage agreeing)			It is manly to defend the honour of your family even by violent means (Percentage agreeing)		
	Burundi	Rwanda	DRC	Burundi	Rwanda	DRC	Burundi	Rwanda	DRC
Males	63%	1%	60%	2%	0%	41%	97%	93%	31%
Females	99%	1%	67%	12%	0%	28%	95%	98%	51%

“You can’t go to the jungle and blame the animal for attacking its prey.”

Male participant, Rwanda

It is crucial for the church to openly denounce all kinds of violence, and act as catalyst in challenging an environment where violence has been allowed to flourish, where violence has been normalised and internalised.



Church pastors and men are challenging harmful attitudes and behaviour in Burundi following the baseline studies. Photo: David Deakin/Tearfund.

In both DRC and Burundi approximately two thirds of both men and women agreed that a woman should tolerate violence for the sake of her family. Physical violence is believed to be an accepted characteristic of men being head of their household. In a conflict environment where many men are unable to provide for their families, this may be a method of regaining control. This is in stark contrast with the majority belief in Rwanda where both men and women felt that domestic violence should not be tolerated.

Sexual violence

Questions on sexual violence were framed around the central theme of victim-blaming. Men and women in Rwanda, although holding strong views around the issue of appropriate dress, are much more progressive in their perceptions about sexual violence and accountability when compared to the results from Burundi and the DRC.

Table 3: Attitudes toward statements about sexual violence

	I believe some women 'ask to be raped' by the way they dress and behave (Percentage agreeing)			I think that if a women doesn't physically fight back then it isn't rape (Percentage agreeing)		
	Burundi	Rwanda	DRC	Burundi	Rwanda	DRC
Males	77%	97%	82%	89%	14%	22%
Females	95%	91%	82%	93%	0%	43%

The response to the statement asking whether it is manly to defend the honour of the family, even by violent means, brought nearly unanimous agreement from both men and women in Burundi and Rwanda. While most men felt it was their duty to protect the family, there was also an expectation from women for men to fulfil this role. Interestingly the statistics were much lower in DRC with only a third of men agreeing.

In Burundi, although all men in the survey said they did not agree that women deserved to be beaten (Table 2), in face-to-face discussions, it became clear that they actually held opposite views, saying that they needed to be corrected. A male participant from the DRC commented: *"In our culture it is a sign of love for a woman to be beaten"* and *"In marital life there are several problems that take place. In the case of a drunkard husband, a wife should understand his state. He can do anything to her and she should understand that he doesn't know what he is doing."*

Women's expectation of tolerating violence from their husbands, together with the dominant, forceful and controlling attributes of men and their need to correct or discipline women, poses a serious threat to equitable relationships. It is fascinating that in Rwanda both men and women unanimously disagreed with wife beating in any situation.

The burden of responsibility is placed on the victim by almost all men and women, across all three countries, rather than on the man's wrong-doing (which is instead attributed to outside factors 'breaking men's spirits'). This is an issue which clearly needs to be addressed. The church has a special role to play since it has the power to influence norms and thus to change

perceptions around victim-blaming and stigma. In DRC women and men explained how their families and husbands reject survivors of rape. This adds to the layer of under-reporting and silence around sexual violence. If the stigmatisation of survivors is not addressed, the silent epidemic will continue to affect the lives of millions in the country.

“Christian men rape because their spirit is broken, and not freed from bondage.” Female participant, DRC

In Burundi, 89% of men and 93% of women said that if a victim did not physically fight back, it was not rape. A culture of shame and stigma was associated with SGBV and participants focused on the behaviour of the victim rather than that of the perpetrator. However, interestingly, in DRC only 22% of men and 43% of women agreed with this statement, whilst in Rwanda only 14% of men and no women agreed. In DRC one participant commented on the gendered dimension of rape: *“We are raped because we are women”*.

SGBV cannot be addressed without addressing the cultural and religious influences on gender and masculinities. In all three countries sexual violence is not exclusive to conflict zones but

has been deeply rooted in these societies for years. A burden is placed on survivors to keep silent, both to protect the honour of their families and because of their fear of rejection and being stigmatised. This may often keep survivors from accessing essential health and justice services. Churches should be active in breaking the silence and in assisting survivors to access services.

But there is also hope, as this quote from a participant in DRC shows: *“If my wife is raped I will accept her, because I love her. If I reject her, she may die.”*

“As a Christian you shouldn't avenge yourself, the laws of this country are there for this.” Participant in DRC



Pastor Assiel Bizimana from Mwogo community has been working with his church and community to speak out and act against sexual violence. Photo: Eleanor Bentall/Tearfund.

4. What can be done?

Conclusion and recommendations

SGBV cannot be addressed without addressing cultural and religious influences on gender and masculinities, such as roles and identities. From the quotes and findings in this study, it is evident that sexual violence is fundamentally an issue of inequality. Unequal attitudes, practices, beliefs and structures perpetuate and contribute to the impunity of violence. It is also evident that many people hold conservative views and interpretations of scripture, which first need to be addressed in order to build equality. There are many opportunities for the church, faith-based organisations, and non-faith based organisations to intervene and impact on behaviour and practices. The following recommendations are made:

Break the silence

- The church needs to openly denounce and reject the normalisation of sexual and gender-based violence under any circumstances. It needs to break the stigma associated with survivors of violence. This will encourage survivors to speak out and have the faith and courage to pursue justice through the courts.

Build awareness and understanding

- There needs to be sound theologically-based education for lay leaders, pastors and bishops in order to transform harmful understanding of the scriptures.
- Pre- and post-marriage counselling should be offered which includes teaching on intimate partner violence, marital rape and equitable relationships. This teaching should also include awareness around existing laws, policies and services related to SGBV.

Provide positive leadership and role models

- Church leadership, at all levels, should promote positive leadership models to challenge the dominant, controlling and violent leadership that has been shown by men in the church, community, or business setting. The church should show its commitment to uphold principles of non-violence and equity.
- There need to be programmes for young people encouraging positive masculinities, nurturing and growing positive relationships and family well-being.
- There should be programmes for new parents on positive fatherhood and positive parenting practices in general.



Archbishop Henri Isingoma of DR Congo has been championing the need for the church to openly discuss attitudes and practices towards gender roles within Congolese society. Photo: Maggie Sandilands/Tearfund.

Provide safe spaces

- Safe spaces for men need to be created where they can discuss the concept of positive masculinities, and where discussions can be facilitated to enable them to share their frustrations, challenges and traumatic experiences with peers and church leaders. This is crucial to help men adapt to the changes around them and find healing from past experiences.

Establish effective partnerships

- Churches should explore interfaith dialogues in an effort to end SGBV. Church leadership must also engage in joint advocacy efforts, both locally and nationally, adding its voice to other campaigns and working collaboratively with other agencies to rationalise limited resources and increase impact.
- The church and non-FBOs need to find common ground in order to work in partnership on SGBV-related prevention, response, care and support services, and to address this issue efficiently and holistically.

Enhance policy and practice

- The international community should regard as a priority a focus on building the capacity of governments to address SGBV.
- Judicial systems must be scrutinized and strengthened to hold perpetrators accountable and end the culture of impunity. This includes providing protection to survivors to enable them to access justice without fear of rejection and intimidation from their communities.

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Tearfund is a founding member of 'We Will Speak Out', a coalition of faith-based groups, international aid agencies and individuals committed to see the end of sexual violence (SV) in communities worldwide.



www.wewillsspeakout.org

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Cover photo: Pastor Alexis works with men and women from his church to ensure that men and women within his communities experience transformed relationships. He also actively works with his church members to ensure that survivors receive the holistic care and support that they require. Photo: Prabu Deepan/Tearfund.

Tearfund is a Christian relief and development agency building a global network of local churches to help eradicate poverty.

Tearfund is committed to working with the church to end sexual violence in 150 communities across 15 countries by 2018.

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