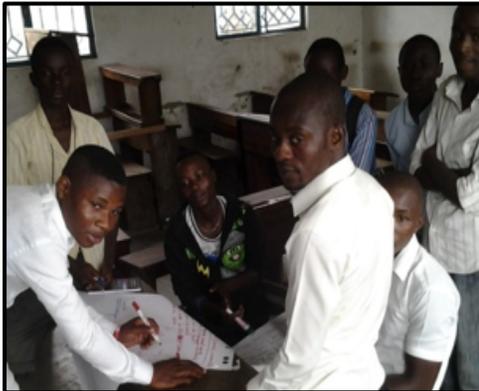


CARE

SISI VIJANA (“WE THE YOUTH”) INITIATIVE

**EXPLORING DIMENSIONS OF MASCULINITY
AND VIOLENCE IN BURUNDI AND THE DRC**



Way Fair Associates



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Acronyms / Abbreviations

DRC	: Democratic Republic of Congo
GEM	: Gender Equitable Men
HIV	: Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome
JJB	: Jumelage des Jeunes de Burundi/Burundi Youth Affiliation
NGO	: Non Governmental Organization
PLA	: Participatory Learning and Action
RCAC	: Reading and Cultural Activity Centre
REJA	: Reseau des Jeunes en Action/Network of Youth Organizations in Action
RWAMREC	: Rwanda Men's Resource Center
SASA	: Start Awareness and Support Action
SGBV	: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SMS	: Short Message Service
VSLA	: Villages Savings and Loan Association

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1. Background: Gender-based violence in the Great Lakes

For more than two decades, the Great Lakes region has experienced civil wars, ethnic conflicts and genocide, causing massive displacement, suffering and loss of life. One of the most frequently reported characteristics in these conflicts was the use of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a weapon of war. However, despite being well documented, it is important to recognize that the issue of SGBV is often much more complex than is reported. Rather than only being a product of conflict, SGBV is rather the outcome of a broader context of unequal relations between men and women, ineffective institutions and violence more generally.

A strong patrilineal culture still dominates both in DRC and Burundi. In this culture men are viewed as the guarantors of the family lineage and women are largely considered inferior to men. Women are therefore often much less literate than men, with little control over major family decisions and limited or no access to income generating activities. In Burundi over 80% of women depend on agriculture for their livelihood but they cannot inherit land, and in the DRC women or girls who buy land must register it in the name of male relatives. The low social status of women and girls within the household and larger community, together with poor governance and lack of accountability of duty bearers and service providers, can make women particularly vulnerable to abuse of their rights during the upheaval of disaster, as seen both in DRC and Burundi. In the DRC although sexual violence has to a large extent been militarised, research from South Kivu showed that while the number of civilian rape increased 17-fold between 2004 and 2008 the number of rapes by armed combatants decreased by 77 % during the same period, reflecting the normalization of rape and SGBV in the eastern part of the country¹.

2. Description of the initiative of preventing gender-based violence in the Great Lakes Region: SISI VIJANA

While many efforts have been and should continue to focus on empowering women and helping them recover from the injuries caused by violence in situations during and post-conflict, it is also necessary to work on prevention and target the structural causes of gender-based violence. This should include working with men and boys. New models of positive masculinity based on respect of human rights rather than domination and use of violence must be developed in order to contribute effectively to the fight against gender-based violence.

In order to achieve this, it is crucial to also understand the impact of the loss of power for men. Most of the ideals on masculinities that exist in a patrilineal system are considered as positive standards, but the rigidities and power hierarchies that create vulnerabilities for women also create problems and vulnerabilities for men. For instance, the pressure on men to be the sole providers for the family can lead to experiences of humiliation and feelings of vulnerability. When men have difficulties fulfilling this role,

¹ Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Oxfam International, "Now, the world is without me": An investigation of sexual violence in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, April 2010).



such as in fractured economic systems and conflict situations, violence and aggression may be used as a means of confirming masculinity. In addition, men are also victims of violence, and the same system that makes men abuse women also makes men abuse men. For example, this can be seen in cases where men have been victims of gender-based violence in DRC². Therefore, challenging rigid and dominant standards that link masculinity to power and use of violence will be beneficial for both men and women. To be effective in the work with men and address sexual violence based on gender inequalities, it is important to recognize these inequalities and to make clear and visible the benefits that men also receive from reducing inequality. This has been the case, for instance, in financial empowerment efforts where increasing women's economic capacity has brought benefits to the entire family, including the men in the household.

For young people, adolescence is a delicate transition period because it is during this time in their lives that they strive to understand their identity and to define themselves in relation to a multitude of influences in their environment. In the Great Lakes region, attitudes and behaviours of the current generation of young men have been shaped during the chaotic post-war period with high levels of violence, and like everywhere else in the world, young men are in most cases the main perpetrators of violence against other young men and girls. In fact, many young men are often sensitized to believe that aggression or violence towards others is an acceptable way of demonstrating strength and control, or that in order to avoid being a victim; they have to commit violence towards others.

From an educational perspective, this phase of a young person's development represents a window of opportunity to promote positive attitudes and behaviours in the roles and relationships between the sexes. Therefore, there is a great need to work with young men in order to help them discard messages and patterns of violence around them and develop skills favouring non-violent behaviors and good health. Based on experiences around the world, we know that targeted interventions intended for young men produce positive results. There is however very little work of this kind being carried out with the youth in the Great Lakes Region, and few NGOs have the capacity to actually implement programs for mobilizing and transforming negative masculinities in a sustainable manner or on a large scale.

Sisi Vijana is a three-year (December 2013- November 2016) innovative initiative that works with young people between 13 to 23 years old in Burundi and DRC. The objective of the initiative is to reduce sexual and gender-based violence and promote gender equality. Due to the lack of research on masculinity among young people in the Great Lakes region, the first phase of this initiative includes a formative study on the attitudes of young people towards gender equality, masculinity, sexuality and violence. The results will contribute to the development of a regional model of engagement of young men and boys focused on transforming gender roles. The model will be used for capacity building of youth in the prevention and fight against SGBV.

² The 2014 IMAGES Report, "*Gender Relations, Sexual and Gender Based Violence and the Effects of Conflict on Women and Men in North Kivu, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo*", found that 10 percent of the men who reported being affected by the conflict also reported that they were forced to have sex or to carry out rape. The study found that men who reported being forced to have sex or were raped were significantly more likely to perpetrate sexual or other violence against an intimate partner.



3. Participatory Learning and Action: Research design and methodology

A. Design

The participatory learning and action (PLA) research exercise was conducted over ten days from July 22-August 5th 2014. The PLA was preceded by a four-day training workshop, and then conducted over a four-day period of data collection. This was followed by two days of data analysis. Data was collected from in school and out-of school youth in two sites in Burundi (Gitega and Ngozi), and among in school and out-of-school youth in the town of Goma, North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Image 1 : PLA researchers during the training in July 2014.

B. Methodology

The PLA used a number participatory data collection methods and tools that been used successfully in previous PLA research exercises. The data collected explored a number of themes related to gender, masculinity and violence including gender norms, socialization of masculinity, power and influence, attitudes about violence, forms of violence, root causes and consequences of violence, exploring the transition from boyhood to manhood, experiences of violence, and moving toward change.

The PLA tools and exercises used throughout the five days ranged from the 24-hour day timeline and mapping to tools focused on more sensitive topics. The research team took care to sequence the PLA tools and the sensitivity of information in a timeframe that enabled participants to feel comfortable, starting with the less sensitive topics such as definitions of masculinity / femininity using standard exercises that were relatively easy to complete (the image of the ideal man and woman, how young men and women spend a 24-hour day, and others). The more sensitive issues such as sexuality and violence were discussed later in the exercise when the participants had already had the opportunity to know each other feel comfortable sharing experiences with each other. A guide to the tools used during the PLA exercise is presented in Appendix 1 of the report.

C. Overall Objective of the PLA Research

The overall objective of the PLA exercise was to identify the specific standards and expectations of gender that contribute to violent behaviour among young men in the Great Lakes, and to identify potential entry points for youth-oriented interventions that can be implemented by CARE and its partners.

D. Research questions

In keeping with its objectives the PLA exercise sought to answer an overall question about young men, masculinity and gender quality as well as number of specific research questions.

General question:

What are the norms and standards set by communities that regulate relationships between men and women, especially among young men and women in Burundi and DRC? How do these gender norms and relations contribute to or allow alternatives to violent behaviour among young men in both countries?

Specific PLA research questions:

- i. What are the current social constructions, attitudes and experiences of young men, particularly with regard to hegemonic masculinity?
- ii. How do the social institutions and spaces which young men frequent influence their attitudes and behaviour towards gender relations and violence?
- iii. What are the attitudes and behaviors of young men towards other young men and girls?
- iv. What are the experiences in which young men feel capable of exercising agency, in other words are they able to make their own choices and decisions about their lives, and the lives of others around them?
- v. What are the facts, events, or scenes of violence that influence young men's behaviour and attitudes?
- vi. How are the social constructions of masculinity and femininity related to the use of power by young men against other men, and against young women?
- vii. For young boys who do not use violence, what are the factors that influence them? What are the consequences?
- viii. What are the possibilities of promoting gender standards and more equitable measures for young men and young women, particularly in the prevention of gender-based violence?

E. Data collecting and analysis procedures

After four days of PLA training the PLA research teams travelled to the data collection sites in Burundi and the DRC where they spent approximately four days with the youth conducting the exercise. The researchers in both countries included senior staff of local partners organizations, CARE staff and a team of young researchers.

In Burundi a research team was based in Ngozi province and another in Gitega province. In the DRC one team worked with youth who are out of school and the other team worked with youth who are still in school, both in the city of Goma. The teams were composed of principal facilitator, an observer/co-facilitator and a documenter. The documenter was the primary person responsible for taking notes. Visual outputs were photographed, translated and archived in either CARE's offices or those of the local partners. At the end of each day the teams met to go over the day's activities and the notes taken, noted any gaps and set priorities for the following day.

The PLA research was conducted in local language in both countries – Kirundi in Burundi and Kiswahili in the DRC. At the end of the PLA research, the teams spent two days analysing the data based on the research questions in order to identify similarities and differences between the sites, gaps in the data collected and emerging trends as well as initial implications for the Sisi Vijana program and areas for future research.

F. Informed Consent

One of the most important aspects in the preparation of the PLA exercise was to ensure that measures were taken to protect the right of all participants to take part or not in the exercises and to ensure they understood the confidential nature of the discussions. On the first day of the PLA exercise the facilitation teams read a consent form to all participants and obtained their verbal permission to participate in the research exercise or to have their pictures taken during the five days. The discussion on consent also reassured participants of the confidentiality of all information they were asked to provide.

G. Participants' profiles

Data were collected from 30 young men in Burundi and 33 in the DRC. In Burundi the youth ranged in age from 13 to 18 years. The youth in the DRC were slightly older, ranging in age from 16 to 23 years. Approximately half of the young men in both countries were still in school. In Burundi the youth who were no longer in school were recruited from young people's village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) already supported by CARE's local partners JJB and REJA.

In the DRC the out-of-school youth were selected from places where young men who have left school normally meet each other, including car washes, places where bicycle water sellers congregate, taxi and bus stops and youth training centres.



Image 2: Young participants from the PLA research exercise in Gitega province, Burundi.

4. PLA Research Results

The process of the PLA itself presented an opportunity for the young men to talk about the norms of masculinity and use of violence around which they have been socialized. The report presents the key themes that emerged from the young men's discussions across the two countries, as they relate to each of the eight research questions. The results highlight common themes across the research sites, while also highlighting important differences and nuances.

The research questions were explored through a series of exercises and participatory discussions that gave the participants the opportunity to:

- Analyse their thoughts and perspectives about their own masculinity and how they were shaped by their families, communities, culture and life experiences;
- Reflect on their relationships with those around them, including those of the opposite sex, and their use of power (or lack of) in those relationships;
- Think about their perspectives on violence and its links with masculinity and how their communities believe they must behave as men.

A. Research Question 1

What are the current social constructions, attitudes and experiences of young men, particularly with regard to hegemonic masculinity?

The first series of questions sought to better understand the expectations of the community and how they influence the attitudes and behaviors of young men with regard to their own masculinity. These questions also sought to understand how the life experiences of these young men have shaped their perspectives on masculinity so far.

The main exercise used in order to help the participants to think about this question was a module that asked the young men to reflect on gender norms and how these play out in their lives, and an exercise where young men were asked to develop snapshots of the key moments that shape a young man's life.

The young men in both countries identified the family as having an important role in providing role models and being a space where young men learn how to become the kind of men that the society expects. It is important to note that they acknowledged that this also includes negative role models. For instance in later exercises the youth will elaborate on how much their family, mothers and sisters in particular, influence their views on gender roles and the “right” role for a young man in the household division of labor.



Image 3: Young male participants doing the exercise “Snapshots in the life of a young man...” in Ngozi.

Particularly in his early life a young man is strongly influenced by his parents, older brothers and older sisters. They give strong clues, and even clear directions, to the young man as to how he should act, the roles he should play, and how these differ from the roles that girls are expected to play. The young boy begins early to play games based on what he sees around him. For instance, the youth in Burundi said, a young boy begins to play at building houses while girls play by carrying children on the back and by making baskets. Early play between boys and girls, such as pretend wedding ceremonies where the little boy pretends to be the groom and the little girl the bride, also imitate the gender roles that the young boys see around them. The expectations that are set of boys early on and these first experiences around play and watching older siblings establish a pattern and set up early gender stereotypes that the young men follow as they get older.

As a young boy enters adolescence and early adulthood, between the age of 15 and 18 years, his parents’ influence is replaced by that of his peers and other men in the society. This was particularly true for the group of young men in Goma who had dropped out of school. Most said that they had been forced to leave school because their parents could not or would not pay the school fees. Several also no longer lived with

their families because their parents could not afford to keep them. As a result they considered their parents' influence on their attitudes and behaviors to be minimal. Many of these young men live in groups on their own in areas known as "ghettos". In these spaces their peers play a defining role in shaping their attitudes about gender. These "ghettos" are also apparently places where a certain amount of sexual freedom allows youth to engage in sexual relationships without the sanction of their parents.

In Burundi, particularly those who had already left school, expressed that they feel they begin to "have strength" around this time in life. Many of them begin to work and several expressed a good deal of pride in their increased independence from their parents. The young men also spoke of their physical development (increasing size and physical strength, body hair, larger sexual organs) and beginning to think independently of their parents. The small jobs that they do provide them with money to buy what they need and to increase their status in the eyes of their friends, family and other men in the community. For many of the young men (primarily those who are out of school) this was a time to begin to demonstrate to other men in the community that they too are also becoming men in their own right..

For the young men an important part of demonstrating their emerging masculinity is to show others their ability to attract the interest of young women. In both Goma and Burundi the young men spoke of adolescence as a time of "discovering" girl friends, with whom they try to assert themselves in front of their peers. The young men report that during this time they also often discuss sex and sexuality with each other, either at school, work, public water sources, on playgrounds, parking lots, and at social gatherings. During this phase, the young men report that their peers play a particularly important role in influencing their attitudes about sex. This sometimes leads to disagreements with their parents whose values may be in conflict with those of their friends.

This is also a time when young men begin to try set themselves on the road to building a home eventually and also to use his, for those who still have contact with their families. But

Although peers are becoming increasingly important the young men still experience expectations and pressure from their parents. They particularly have high expectations of obedience and responsibility from their sons, including using part of earnings to help his family. According to the youth when a young man becomes an adult, his parents and the community expect him to build his home and many try to influence his choice of a wife. If the boy rejects their suggestions, he risks paying dearly for it – his father may refuse to give him a plot of land on which to build a house, and may even use his power to take his revenge on his (unapproved) daughter-in-law by creating an unhealthy environment for her. "*Igitugu kirakura ntigisumba izosi*" which literally means "*the shoulder can grow but it cannot be bigger than the neck.*" A young man who surpasses orders given by his parents' risks dishonouring his family. Even further, many of the youth also admitted that as a young man gets older, beyond adolescence, he begins to return towards his parents, adopting the behaviour of older adults around him and also seeking advice from them on his future.

The young men also engaged in a series of exercises, activities and discussions to identify characteristics central to definitions of "hegemonic masculinity." In spite of some variation between the two countries the young men identified many common defining features of masculinity for their communities.



At the same that some youth believed that the ideal man is collaborative, it was very important to the young men both in Burundi and the DRC to acknowledge that the ideal man is authoritarian, at the head of his family and able to meet his family's needs. In the DRC the economic capacity of the ideal man seemed to be one of his most important characteristics. For the youth there, particularly for those youth who are out of school (this may be related to their own precarious economic situations where access to money is of fundamental importance to their own survival) the ideal man is one who is wealthy or at least economically independent.

When asked whether they believe that they can live up to the normative ideals of the "ideal man" most young men felt that there were a number of financial and societal obstacles they face in becoming this man. For instance several youth in the DRC expressed that they would like to also possess these admirable human traits because they understand that this type of man works with his wife and assumes his responsibilities such as educating his children. Some expressed regret at having experienced fathers was not ideal as described above:



Image 7: Young participant from Goma presenting the "ideal man".

Maybe if my father had respected my mother's rights (by not seeking out more women) maybe today I would not be bus conductor (Goma)

The typical man does not live up to the ideal

The youth in Burundi also spent a good deal of time juxtaposing the ideal man with the more "typical" man found in Burundi. The youth felt that when compared with the ideal man the "typical" Burundian man is a drunkard who returns home very late from the "cabaret"⁴, he fights with members of his family, abuses his wife, does not help her with any work and wastes household resources. In contrast to the "ideal man" when the typical man enters his home, the family members welcome and greet him but instead he yells at them, terrorizes and terrifies them. For example, if a child is sick, this man will blame the wife when he is the one who has the financial means to pay for the child's medical treatment but instead he spends all of his time in bars or pubs.

B. Research question 2

How do the social institutions and spaces which young men frequent influence their attitudes and behaviour towards gender relations and violence?

⁴ Local bar / pub



Sports grounds: Most of the young men in all three sites mentioned sports grounds as one of the most important social spaces for young men. For the youth these areas represented an important masculine space into which young women rarely enter. They young men shared their views about the importance of sports to their physical development and as a pleasurable past-time where friends, or even the players on an opposing team, could meet after the game for a drink. In Burundi the youth revealed that while young men meet most of the time to play football and have fun together, the football field could also be a place of violence where fights can break out after disputes about a football match. *"If we go to watch a football match, there are times when, after the match, players throw stones and we are very embarrassed (Ngozi)".*

According to the young men, girls and young women rarely venture into sport grounds unless an important sports event is being held and then the young women tend to group together in a single area. *"At the football field, girls come when there are matches between districts but they isolate themselves in one place and they are fearful. I do not know why, but it maybe due the fact that they do not come in (great) numbers to watch the football matches (Ngozi)."*

Nightclubs, bars, "ligalas", buvettes and "youth parties" venues: Another important social space



Image 10: Young participants in Goma preparing a community map.

mentioned by all four groups of young men are the pubs and local bars (largely informal), known as "buvettes"(DRC) and "ligalas"(Burundi)⁵ that can be found in almost every village or city in both countries. There is virtually no age limit to enter these places and it seems to be an important rite of passage for many young men to demonstrate to their community, men in particular, that they are entering adulthood, and that they too can attract the attention of girls and young women. *"What kind of young man wouldn't drink beer in the pub, who would not have fun on Sunday with a girl in a pub?"* said a young man from Gitega, laughingly.

While these spaces seem to emerge as an important place for young men to meet girls and women, and also to bring their girlfriends, the young men also expressed the view that young women who are pub goers without any companions are sexually loose and are often approached in exchange for beer. On the other hand a girl or a young woman who goes to a nightclub with her boyfriend or partner is under the "protection" of the young man.

Going to a pub, buying beer for your friends and drinking is an important step in becoming a man in both Burundi and the DRC. The young men shared their concerns about the pressure they face when they go to pubs and do not have enough money to buy beer. This can lead to the temptation to engage in risky behaviour such as theft in order to meet society's expectations of a man.

"If someone goes to the pub without enough money to buy beer, he would feel uncomfortable and (might) plan to rob others in order to get money to buy beer (Gitega)".

⁵ Ligalas are informal places where young men (principally) meet to have fun, share, play cards, chess.



While young men also mentioned nightclubs as a meeting place, they also acknowledged that they have less access to these places. Nightclubs tend to be more expensive and are accessible to those sponsored by older, richer people or young people that earn a lot of money such as motorcycle taxi drivers. Some young men said that they are not allowed to go to some “high-class” places frequented by senior officials and other important people.

Public places such as taxi stations, road junctions, fountains, fast food stalls: As with sports fields young men also use public spaces such as taxi stations, road junctions, public fountains and food stalls as places to meet friends, make important contacts for jobs, and discuss and share stories of their experiences with girls and young women. The conversations and interactions that take place in these spaces often serve as important reinforcement for the young men in terms of how they are meant to act as men in their societies, and how they should view and treat girls and young women. The influence of peers is very strong in these spaces. As one young man from Ngozi shared: *"We go there regularly because it is like attending school, we learn from one another"*.

Similarly in Goma the youth talked about public fountains as places where young girls collect water, share cooking tips or their experiences of intimate relationships, gossip about boys or share the latest news. However if a boy or young man ventures into an area where these girls are congregating he would make sure to avoid them by taking another path because he would be afraid that the girls would talk about him or laugh at him.

Youth centres: Most of the youth did not have access to youth centres but some young men who live near the youth centre in Gitega said the centre offers activities for young people; it is also a place to meet girls and boys. One participant who is a student says *"We meet boys and girls there, to read books but also for social and cultural activities organized at this place(Ngozi)"*.

Cinema halls: The cinema hall also seems to be a place for young men across all sites to meet friends, to watch a movie, to have fun and learn more about fashion from the stars they admire in films. At the same time the cinema and movies also emerged as very important vehicles for reinforcing the image of a sexually active and powerful young man who is entitled to have sex. For instance young men in Goma felt that the (pornographic) films that they see at the cinema also teaches them about sex, they also felt that these films influence how they feel about sex because after watching a pornographic film they may feel the need for a quick sexual encounter.



Image 11: Community map with social spaces for young men, Gitega

For some young men, in Gitega, the cinema hall and public spaces such as public water sources have also been places of ethnic rivalries between the Hutu and Tutsi youths. *"In our district (Bukirasazi) cinema halls and some public spaces such as public water sources are places of ethnic rivalries between the ethnic*

groups, because when young Hutus are already in the room, young Tutsis are afraid to enter for fear of being abused”(Gitega). The youth felt that these ethnic rivalries were holdovers from the long-standing ethnic conflict between Hutu and Tutsis in Burundi.

Hidden or isolated places, “Cointards”(DRC), where young people meet to take drugs such as "hemp", or where young men meet to chat with girls. The young men spoke candidly about these hidden relationships in which they engage out of sight of parents to avoid their scolding and negativity.

Media, popular culture and technology: Woven through most of the social spaces where young men meet with their peers is the influence of the media, popular culture and technology in both Goma and the two sites in Burundi. Several references such as their dressing style, regular visits to cinema halls (discussed in more detail above) and the music that young men listened to in the buvettes and ligalas made it clear that the influence of popular culture is very real. In addition, several young people who come from urban areas, particularly in Goma, either own a mobile phone or they have access to places where they could pay for phone calls. While the cost of airtime is a major constraint for most young people most of whom have very limited financial means, many young men send text messages (SMS) to friends and also use SMS to get in touch with girls.

C. Research question 3

What are the attitudes and behaviors of young men towards other young men and girls?

The attitudes of young men towards young women, including their aspirations and attitudes about relationships with women, emerged through a number of exercises over the four days of the participatory learning and action research including:

- i. How a young men and women spend a 24-hour day
- ii. Social spaces for young men and women
- iii. Analysis of personal experiences of power
- iv. The youth’s opinions on statements related to gender equality

The information on the attitudes of the young men towards women and their relationships with women can be grouped in accordance with a framework of four key gender "structures" developed by the leading researcher on gender and masculinity, R.W. Connell⁶: (1) symbolism, referring to the representation and the language used to establish gender differences; (2) production relations, or the *division of labor*, referring to the division of labor; (3) power relations, referring to relations of domination and subordination between men and women; and (4) cathexis, or *emotional relations*, referring to norms and experiences of desire, intimacy and emotion. Each of these topics will be explored within the framework

⁶ Connell, RW. *The Men and the Boys*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000.



of the relations of young men with their female peers, and intimate or marital partners.

I. Symbolism/gender differences

From the conversations with the young men their view on gender differences emerged in a number of areas, including the perception of clear differences in biological capacities of men and women and acceptable roles for both genders. The conversation about gender differences began with an exercise on gender ideals, specifically what they think a woman should look like and how she should think and act.

An ideal woman: physically attractive, weak and submissive

Although the young men across all the research sites spoke of the ideal woman's physical traits, the youth in Goma used much more explicit language to provide a very clear description of the ideal woman in their society.



Image 12: 3-D image of an ideal woman, Goma.

For these young men the ideal woman should physically be of a good height with a small waist, breasts, well-kept hair, a tender body, not at all masculine, clean, attractive, disinterested in sports, with an elegant walk. The young men also used apparent biblical references to support their description of the ideal woman. For them, according to the bible, an ideal woman should be physically weak but friendly and smiling. The young men in both countries also underlined a woman's reproductive capacity as an important part of this ideal "Respect for women is motherhood (Goma)".

The
the
of the
hard-working, honest, trustworthy, character that is not easily modest in dress and behaviour, persevering in the face of woman was also described, contradictorily, as both cunning, in deflect unwanted attention and to "just". By "just" the young men ideal woman also respects custom and tradition. The young men pointed out that the ideal woman must also clean and cooks well.

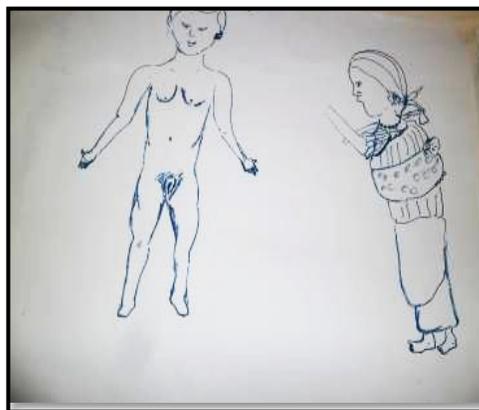


Image 13: Cartoon presentation of the ideal woman, Ngozi

young men across all the research sites described ideal woman with many same character traits - patient, with a strong influenced by others, courageous and difficulties. The ideal somewhat terms of her ability to get things done, as well as essentially meant that the

Many of the traits described by the young men demonstrate the extent to which in the context of Burundi and Goma women are expected to be "receptive, submissive and willing to put aside their own needs to support their children and families". According to the young men across the sites the ideal woman thinks first of her family, she is faithful to her husband and she is responsible for "educating" her children, instructing them on how to be good, mannerly people who respect their roles in society. *It is also important*



for women to behave appropriately in public and be submissive. This is apparent contrast to what was said earlier about the ideal man in Burundi being one who listens to his family and promotes dialogue.

"An ideal woman avoids speaking too much in front of people for fear of being taken as an arrogant woman, in any case, she must not reply ...when her husband speaks or gives her orders (Gitega)".

The young men insisted that the ideal woman does not disclose the secrets of the family. With her husband's family she is careful to be helpful, sociable and faithful. The ideal woman also ensures that she has a good relationship with the rest of the community and never abuses alcohol. For the young men in Goma a woman who meets these criteria is considered a "model in the society".

To get a sense of how much the realities in their communities reflect these ideals the youth were asked to think about the "typical" woman and to compare her with this ideal. Many of the young men suggested that while the typical woman may have several positive traits - hardworking, trusting of her husband, loving of her children and religious, she can also be unfaithful, dishonest, indiscreet, envious and selfish. The youth in Burundi spoke specifically of a "typical" woman who, they felt, loved going to pubs and coming home late. A few youth felt that the typical woman often does not, in fact, respect her husband, has difficulty "managing" her household and tends to blame others when things go wrong at home.

Gender inequitable attitudes of gender equality and women's rights

*«Educating a girl, that is comparable to someone who waters his neighbour's garden..."
Young participant, Goma.*

In Burundi the young men spent a good deal of time discussing their attitudes to gender roles and the rights of women. The young men's opinions differed on the wisdom of gender equality - some supported equal rights for women and girls "*gender equality means that tasks of boys can be also tasks of girls and vice versa. Once upon a time, a woman could not be an administrator but now there is no problem (Gitega)*", however other youths argued that "*gender equality can lead to homosexuality*".

Much of the discussion focused on what gender equality would mean for the sharing of important resources such as land, as the young men discussed the controversial bill currently before the Burundi parliament. While the young men were divided in their views on this issue, the majority tended to disagree with the bill.

"How can we accept that a girl comes to inherit while she will be married elsewhere? If I get married to a girl belonging to a poor family whereas my sister will inherit her land from our home, isn't it a problem? She will be entitled to the assets of her husband but not to the ones of my father. We pay for her education that is enough for her share of the inheritance. It is impossible to be equal at this point", said a young participant from Ngozi.

Another young man justified the fact that girls cannot inherit land:



"There are girls, in order to (help them to) study, their parents sell a plot of land, how can they come back to inherit the land?"(Ngozi)

However, another young man disagreed:

"As for me, I would be delighted to let my sister inherit because my wife will have already inherited from her parents"(Ngozi).

Some participants thought that the inheritance laws could disrupt the fragile balance not only between man and woman, but also within the extended family.

"In our communities, we understand that gender equality will bring about war because boys will never agree to share the legacy of their parents with their brothers-in-law"(Ngozi).

The young men contended that even some institutions, such as schools and churches, also discourage gender equality. They spoke of cases of teachers who discourage girls by telling boys not to be overtaken by the girls in terms of marks they get in the classroom.

"Sometimes jealous boys try to distract girls so that they do not have (higher) marks than them (the boys) in school (Gitega)."

In summary, despite some disagreement from a minority, the majority of the youth's expressed around equal rights for women and girls largely echoed the patrilineal culture that dominates both in DRC and Burundi. Men are seen as the guarantors of the family lineage and women are inferior to men. Several direct quotes from the youth confirm this reality:

- *We, boys, are superior to girls, it is our duty to look for food for the family and besides, God also said that we will always be superior to them, a girl should be the aid of man, she is a small thing and besides, she exists because the man began to exist, a woman is the bone of man (Gitega).*
- *A man is logical while the woman is sentimental. (Goma)*

Some young men justified these inequitable attitudes in part by placing some of responsibility for discrimination on girls and young women themselves:

"Women discriminate (against) themselves through the fact they do not submit their candidacy in order to be elected..." and

"Girls think that boys are clever than them..." (young participants, Gitega)

Attitudes toward models of masculinity that do not comply with the ideal

The attitudes of the young participants towards men who do not comply with the hegemonic ideal of masculinity were revealed in discussions during an exercise called "vote with your feet", and in statements



about equity between women and men as measured in responses to the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale. Two statements in particular are worth noticing:

- i. I would never have a friend who is a gay;
- ii. It bothers me when I see a man who acts like a woman

I would never have a friend who is gay.

On the third day of the research participants were invited to vote with their feet on this statement: *"I would never have a friend who is a gay."* The young men were overwhelmingly opposed to having a homosexual friend. In one group in Goma virtually all of the young men (14 out of 15 in one site) replied that they would refuse to have a gay friend. In a somewhat dramatic session in Gitega the young men showed very strong opinions about homosexuality. During the exercise some participants began by voting that they could have a friend who is a gay, however after significant pressure from their peers in the room several young men changed their "vote" to "no". In the end only 1 of the 15 young men agreed that he could have a gay friend, this young man maintaining his position despite intense pressure from his fellow participants.

"I would never have a friend who is gay."

	Goma : In-School Youth	Goma : Out-of-School Youth	Gitega	Ngozi
I agree	15	11	15	8
I don't agree	0	7	1	7

The young men in Ngozi and the second group in Goma were a bit more measured in their responses. While half of participants from Ngozi thought they may have a friend who is a gay, they also felt that it would be their duty to try and change his behaviour.

"... Agreeing to be his friend is good because we would advise him"... "I will be next to him, I will advise him until he changes ... "(Ngozi).

Those youth who felt they could not have a gay friend said they could never imagine having such a friend because they would be very concerned that the friend would attempt to convince them to also become gay. Below are some direct observations of the young men from Ngozi who turned to sayings from traditional Burundian culture and the Bible to make their points:

"Ubana na suneba ugasuneba nkayo" a Burundian proverb meaning " if you live with a dishonest person, you end up becoming dishonest (Ngozi)".

"Such a friend will involve you in bad things, if he is caught, you won't stay free, you will go together ". "The bible and Burundian culture say it's not just" ... and "a gay (person) does not deserve to have friends, such people provoke the anger of God and it precipitates the end of the world for us" (Ngozi).

"I would never have a friend who is gay."

Exchange between youth for and against in Gitega:



Youth 1 (the only participant in the room who agreed he would have a gay friend) : *"but you have all been guided by your pre-conceived ideas. I would remain his friend but try to urge him to change his behaviour ..."*.

Youth 2 : *"... But you cannot change him because he is already what he is".*

Youth 3: *"... I do not think I would even want to set my foot in the place where that guy has just set his(foot) ..."* .

Youth 1: *"the homosexual person cannot really influence you ... somewhere, you people are also responsible for [your actions] ... we always have a tendency to say that someone has influenced me ... but you are also responsible "(much laughter in the room) ..."*

A man who acts like a woman:

"It bothers me when I see a man who acts like a woman"

	Gitega	Ngozi	Goma : In-School Youth	Goma : Out-of-School Youth
I agree	9	7	14	6
I don't agree	6	8	1	12

Young men were also asked to give their comments on this statement: *" It bothers me when I see a man who acts like a woman"*. The young men in Goma largely agreed with this statement (14 out of 15 in one site) while in Burundi the statement elicited an extensive debate among the youth on both sites about what it means to be seen and act like a man in their communities. Many of the young men were strongly opposed to the idea of a man who does not comply with the normative ideal of masculinity that is generally accepted: in terms of his physical appearance, strength, control over those around him and ability to defend one's family and friends. Several of the young men in Gitega and Ngozi were particularly clear on this subject:

"It bothers me when I see a man fleeing without intervening when there is a fight...(Ngozi)."

"When something happens during the night, it is the man who intervenes; he cannot send the woman ... (Gitega)"

Some young men could not understand why someone would give up the "rights" and the status enjoyed by men and deliberately choose to behave like a woman. According to these youth:

"The man who acts in such way loses his privileges, does not enjoy his rights ... (Gitega)".

Some young men also thought that there are roles intended for women and that it is important that the man is not seen while doing this type of work or there would be rumours saying that he has been "bewitched" (in other words he has lost control over his wife and his home).



"There are activities intended for women (and if a man does them), we think he has been bewitched (Gitega)."

However, not all the young men accepted these gender stereotypes. A participant from Gitega and few young men from Ngozi provided a more positive view of what it might mean to act like a woman:

"... saying that to act like a woman means being weak ... far from it ... being a woman means that you can work hard, you also help resolve conflicts, you can contribute to the development the country(Gitega)".

The Division of Labour

The social expectation of women's role in the household, the way young women spend their time and how it might be different from the way young men spend their time was discussed at length with the four groups of young men in order to get the young men's perspectives on gender roles and the gender division of labour. While the young men in both countries largely believed that young women may do more work around the home, they also strongly believed that young men's work is more physically demanding and more stressful.

"If the girls have a lot of domestic work, this does not need a lot of physical force. For example sweeping, washing dishes is very easy and it is done by the girls while boys must find firewood, use heavy equipment, and the like" (Gitega).



Image 14: young male participants constructing the 24-hour day in Ngozi.

Umukobwaniumuzwanzu" or "the girl must stay at home and work", "the girl identifies with her mother and looks after the housework while the boy identifies with his father and takes on physical tasks specific to men such as building houses, earning a living...(Ngozi)".

Several young men also felt that young men have to contend with the stress of being expected to go out and seek employment to help the family, particularly those who have left school and are still living at home. The issues around the young men's anxiety about living up to expectations, given their limited economic capacity and the impact that this stress has on their relationships, will be discussed in more detail under in Research Question 4.

The young men also pointed out that differences in the economic situation of girls and young women influenced how they spent their days. In Goma the young men highlighted how economic class influences the gender division of labour in their communities. According to the youth in Goma girls and young women who work hardest are those from poor families. Young women from wealthier families have much more leisure time for visiting friends, watching television and even using the internet in a few cases. Similarly, in Burundi the young participants felt that girls who live in urban areas are "free" in the afternoons (after school or their household chores) to rest or do leisure activities, and in the evening to watch TV, while

young men who are out of school must work a full day to bring in money to supplement the family's income.

When asked what was behind this sexual division of labour the young men explained that their parents – fathers and mothers - and the young women themselves, are often the greatest obstacles to the boys' taking on roles in the household traditionally reserved for women and girls. Mothers play a significant role in teaching girls to take on their role as homemakers, and in using girls to do housework as an important preparation for their future role as wives and mothers. They also felt that mothers are generally proud of the role they play and are convinced that housework is their job or that of other women and girls in the household. A young man from Goma explained his own experience:

“One day mom came back from the market and found us, my little brother and my little sister watching a (football) match. The meal had not yet been prepared and she began to blame my little sister even though it was our little brother's turn to cook. Mom directly accused my sister of being irresponsible because she was relaxing with a hobby normally reserved for men. And my little sister was immediately ordered not to continue to follow the game and go to the kitchen to do girl's work...”

Similarly, according to some of the rural young men in Burundi, if a mother sees her son cleaning, she would consider him a fool, a social deviant or that he had been bewitched.

The participants also spoke of pressure they felt from fathers who would punish them physically for helping with women's work.

“My dad would beat me if I he found me drawing water...because one day he hit me when he caught me cleaning (Goma)”.

Others spoke of how their mothers would enforce a strict gender division of labour in the household

According to the young men, the girls and young women themselves found it difficult to understand why a young man would want to fetch water, or sweep the house. A few participants in Goma provided specific examples of being discouraged or mocked in their homes when they tried to work normally reserved for young women:

" My girlfriend would probably dump me if she caught me carrying water containers (Goma) "

“The neighbour found me actually doing the dishes and she laughed at me and said, 'Not only are you doing the work of girls, you even do it in public.' This discouraged me (Goma). ”

Young women have very limited access to public spaces

Another important difference between the genders was highlighted during discussions with young men about young women's access to public spaces, and the expectations that the society has of these



"appropriate" spaces. From the answers of the young men, it was very clear that girls' social spaces are much less numerous than those for boys because of the strong social pressure from parents and the wider community, and because young women generally have less leisure time than young men, despite their (the participants) earlier assertions that young men have more work responsibilities than young women.

"We spend our time taking a rest and in leisure except for fetching water and washing (our) clothes,"
young participant, Gitega.

When girls and young women do go out they tend to meet each other after church, at the market, or on the local sports field though generally only on special occasions such as rehearsing a song or dance for a special event. Some of the young men also reported that a few young women may sometimes go to the cinemas and youth centres. Some young men believed that young women do also go to pubs over the weekend, after church with their girlfriends.

"The girls go to pubs on Sunday after church, before returning home(Ngozi)."

If the public spaces accessible to girls are very limited, according to young men, available safe spaces for boys and girls to meet are even more limited. They explained that after church boys may gather in one place and the girls in another and watch one another at a distance.

In some places considered as reserved for men, such as clubs, bars and roadside corners, cinema rooms and pubs, some young men said they would feel uncomfortable in the presence of girls or young women. Others reported that it would not be possible for girls and young women to come to these places because they would not feel at ease as many boys and young men use profanity and other offensive language amongst themselves. According to the young men girls and young women are also reluctant to visit these places because of pressure from their parents, most of whom do not accept their daughters fraternizing with boys in places like these for fear of romantic relationships and unwanted pregnancy. The young men also affirmed that, many girls do not have time to visit these places because they have too much work at home and, in any case, many young women cannot afford these "luxuries". In Goma the young men believed that the women who frequent the bars tended to be poor young women and girls who may often engage in sex work to earn a living.



Image 15: Young male participants in Ngozi in a small group discussion of gender norms.

The young men recognize the inequalities and double standards.

Most of the young men seemed to be aware of these apparent double standards in terms of society's expectations of the role of young women and young men both in the division of labour and in the kinds of places and activities that society allows for young men and women. However most seemed to accept, and many were quite pleased with, the status quo.



«Girls stay at home because we always take care of them and protect them in all their movements (Gitega)”.

Another youth from Gitega explained, laughing: *“Boys are blessed by nature (since their creation) and are proud of it. They are free in many things. ”*

“If today I accept to help my sister in household chores, if she gets married, how will things be? Shall I be with her to help her? She has to continue and has to know this is part of her duties s(Ngozi)”

Several of the young men invoked biblical references and traditional values to explain the status quo. According to several of the youth in both countries the bible explains that the sexual division of labour and women’s lower status is, in fact, a curse of God after Adam and Eve’s betrayal in the Garden of Eden.

“God said to Adam, ‘You eat at the sweat of your brow’ and Eve ‘give birth in pain’”(Goma)..

“The Bible says that ‘...man was not created for the woman, but the woman was created for man's sake’”(Goma).

The young men also believe that the current division of labour, and the status of women more generally, can also be explained by strong traditions of filial piety whereby children respect and carry-on the education they receive from their parents. From early childhood girls are raised to become mothers and home-makers while boys are trained to become the head of the family, as the early exercises in the PLA research (“Snapshots in the life of a young man”) demonstrated. This, the youth largely felt, explained why girls and young women accept and are, in fact, proud of their respective roles in the household.

D. Research question 4

What are the experiences in which young men feel capable of exercising agency, in other words are they able to make their own choices and decisions about their lives, and the lives of others around them?

I. Power relations:

Using an exercise called “Power mapping”, as well a series of role plays in which the young men presented different situations of power in relationships, this aspect of the research sought to gauge the extent to which young men felt that they had the power to make decisions in their lives, and the extent to which others had power over them. This information was useful in helping the researchers to understand how much power the young men would have to engage in more positive models of masculinity.



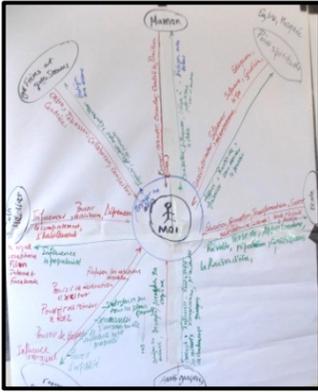


Image 16 : Power map from Goma

Relations between young men and those who surround them (parents, couples, women and girls) are largely based on the sharing and negotiation of power.

Parents: The young men acknowledged that their parents have considerable power in their relations with their children, largely through their support and advice, paying for their children’s education, providing food and eventually an inheritance. The young men also spoke extensively about what they considered parents’ abuse of power through punishment, verbal abuse, and even, in some cases, forcing the young man out of the home for a number of perceived infractions.

Nevertheless the young men also felt that they too have some power in their relationships with their parents, depending on their age and their own economic independence. The young men in Burundi reported that as they begin to earn their own money, they begin to grow in their parent’s esteem and can often even advise their parents. The young men said that *“especially when the young man reaches the age of adolescence and starts to work for the money, he takes time to share a drink with his father and may take the opportunity to submit his complaints or concerns about issues in the family”*(Ngozi).

The out-of-school youth in Burundi believed that as they establish their financial independence young men can begin to refuse their parents’ “orders”. Those young men who are still in school in both Goma and Burundi reported that they have a more dependent relationship with their parents since they still rely on them to pay school fees, food and other living expenses. Others in the young men’s lives who they pointed out as having power over them include:

Older and younger siblings, sisters: Several young men also pointed out that older brothers, particularly if they are more educated, have a good idea of influence and power in their relationships with younger brothers.

Some of the young men from rural areas in Burundi, particularly those who had dropped of school, spoke specifically of their reliance on older educated brothers who are receiving a regular salary who may help them materially, or with advice. This relative financial capacity gave the older brothers power over their younger brothers, who are in turn beholden to their older brothers for fear of losing the benefits of their material support and advice. In addition the young men spoke of their admiration for older brothers who had managed to complete their education and had become successful. These brothers were seen as “always right”.



Image 17 : young participants in Goma

The young men in turn felt that they have power to control their younger brothers and their sisters (though they did not specify if this control also applied to older sisters). As one young man in Goma put it: *“if my sister comes home late I have all the right to ask her where she was and to make a big noise about it, but if*

it is I who comes late and (my sister) asks me where I was, I can either answer her or not, and if she insists, and I don't feel like talking, I can just slap her, that's all".

Outside of the family the other "institutions" that the young men felt had power in their lives included:

The media : The out-of-school youth in Goma specifically spoke of the influence that they felt the media has over them. They spoke of how imitating media "stars" in their clothing and language entertains them and gets them to spend their money. These youth also spoke of how they looked to radio and television for guidance on intimate relationships. Young men still in school in Goma said that through the media and technology (presumably the internet) they sometimes download violent movies and pornographic films, and through social networking they exchange photos, flirt with and seduce girls.

Schools : in both Goma and Burundi the young men who were still in school spoke of the power and influence that teachers have over them. The young men largely saw teachers as exerting positive influence in their lives – teachers share their knowledge with their students, provide useful advice and can even "transform" their students (Goma). However the young men felt that teachers could also use their power and influence in a negative way to intimidate and manipulate students. Teachers have considerable power to "punish", to "chase" students from school, or cause them to fail. The young men in Goma spoke specifically of some male teachers who exert sexual favours from female students in exchange for good marks. The young men said that this phenomenon was very widespread and even had a locally known name, spoke of in jest as PST, or *points sexuellements transmissible* in French, meaning earning grades by providing sexual favours. In Burundi the young men spoke, with frustration, of rivalries between teachers and young men for the attention of some girls in school. The loser in this rivalry inevitably tends to be the student who can be failed by a teacher in revenge for competing with the teacher. In Burundi the young men in school also said that they felt that some teachers can also abuse of their power for other reasons:

*«A teacher who was in a political party that is different from my father's caused me to fail last year"
(Gitega).*

Nevertheless the young men also felt that they too have some power, for instance, they can complain to school administration when they feel that teachers are being unjust. In Goma the youth said that they are the ones who pay for their education and they can make the school lose its reputation. *"After all we are the reason the school exists"(Goma).*

Religious leaders (priests, pastors and imams): In addition to teachers the youth cited the power of pastors, priests and imams to bless them, to pray for them, to give them God's forgiveness, or, to exclude them from the church and deprive them of the sacraments. The youth in Goma felt that they also had power over the church because they support these institutions financially through their donations and collections.

Authorities: The young men felt that the power relationship between themselves and authorities was imbalanced in favour of the authorities. In Burundi, in particular, the youth spoke of local authorities abuse of power with young men, specifically a few cases of young men being harassed by police even when, the

youth felt, they had done nothing wrong. But the young men in Goma also recognized that as citizens they too could influence the authorities through their actions, largely by choosing to be respectful of the law or not. Political leaders, the young men felt, also abuse their authority. Several participants in Gitega spoke of the youth wing of the party in power harassing other youth with both the overt and tacit approval of their leaders. These incidences and the sense of powerlessness that they create serve to undermine young men's sense of masculinity, according to participants.

Relations with peers: Relationships with peers largely meant those with other young men, although in a few instances the youth spoke of non-romantic peer relationships between girls and boys in school. Power and dependence in these relationships seemed to be more balanced than those with other members of the young men's circle (parents, siblings, girlfriends etc). The young men felt that friendships with other boys provide companionship, financial support (for example you could borrow a bicycle from your friend or money), protection and an opportunity to widen your network, *"because a friend of your friend becomes your friend (Ngozi)"*.

But the youth recognized that these friendships also come with tensions - disappointment; in-fighting, and jealousy. According to the participants, money, in particular, could ruin a friendship :

« For example, if you are friends and you earn more money than the other, then you are no longer at the same level and (your) friendship will be affected. If for example you go to bar, you pay his drinks once, twice, you cannot continue and your friendship will be affected» said a participant from Ngozi.

Indeed, the young men in Goma spoke at length about the importance of economic means in exerting power over others, even one's peers. They felt that young men who had more money could use their relative economic power to get others to do things for them.

In their relationships with other young men and peers the young men also spoke of being able to use their influence over the attitudes, choices and behaviour of friends and other youth in their circles. The youth in Ngozi felt that this influence could be used positively to convince their peers to change their behaviour for the better, for instance, in the case of a young president of a local youth club who apparently used his position to punish a member of the association who had misbehaved:

«In our club, our president does not hesitate to intimidate anyone that does not follow the procedures"(Ngozi).

At the same time the young men also acknowledged that they could, and do, use power over others in negative ways. In Goma participants spoke of instances where a young man in better economic circumstances than another might "steal" the latter's girlfriend. Or a young man might, because he is physically stronger, oppress his younger brothers and his sisters through threats of beatings. The young men also believe that their role in the household, as a surrogate to their father in his absence or the absence of older male sibling, gave them more power than the women in the household.

«If for example I ask my sister to wash my clothes and if she refuses, I beat her because she must do it, she has time"(Ngozi).



The desire to exercise and maintain control and authority over potential intimate partners

The young men's account of their intimate relationships with the women and girls around them revealed a good deal of complexity where in the same relationship a young man would move between negotiating power and using force to exert control over an intimate partner. The young men felt that they had a good deal of power over potential and current girlfriends, and much of their reflections during this part of the discussions indicated a very strong sense of sexual entitlement. Young men felt that part of being a real man was to demand (and obtain) sex from intimate partners, at any time. For many young men, a girlfriend or intimate partner who refuses to engage in sexual relations is showing disrespect to the young man:

"Girls must always show respect for us, and, as we give them money, we can oblige them to have sex, we exercise power over them... if they refuse, it is sign that even if we get married, there will be no mutual respect(Gitega)".

"I will marry in order to have a woman who prepares food for me and does other household work, "
(Goma).

Youth in Goma, in particular, insisted on a young man's right to have sex with his girlfriend or intimate partner, and a few even went so far as to assert that a woman refusing sexual relations with her partner is a form of sexual violence against men, though these comments may well have been made as a demonstration of male boasting, or in gest. These feelings are analysed more deeply later in this report as part of the discussions on the attitudes of the young men regarding gender-based violence.

Exercising and maintaining power were important themes in the discussions with young people, in particular power over their girlfriends and (future) wives. For the young men in Goma economic means are as crucial to exerting power in relationships with young women, as it is with their peers. As one young participant in Goma explained "to approach a girl from a rich family you have to consider your economic capacity".

Some of the young men in Gitega and Ngozi mentioned that when they marry, they expected to have the power to demand sex from their wives, and if their demands are not respected, they can easily seek another woman. Several young men spoke specifically of how critical it was that they be seen by their peers and by other men in the community as having total control in their intimate relationships:

"Sometimes when a woman begins to be too aggressive in claiming her rights, the man can start acting violently against her, by attempting to chase her from the house and then by taking another woman, younger and more obedient" (Ngozi).

Young women have also power, especially in intimate relationships

However the young men also noted that, although they may have relatively more power, girlfriends in turn often have a significant amount of power. For example girlfriends refuse to meet with a young man, or to enter into a sexual relationship. Girls also have the power to excite or seduce a young man, in other words to "*plaquer un garçon*" "*trick a boy*" (Goma). The young men in Ngozi described an instance of how a young woman demanded that her boyfriend change his religion or she would stop seeing him.



“A friend of mine had a girlfriend who was not of the same religion as him. After a certain time the girl demanded the boy to change religion and the latter, as he did not want to lose her, accepted to change his religion and to day they are married and they live together”(Ngozi).

The young men felt that girls also have the power to abandon a young man or to demand that he buy them gifts. Girls can even convince young men to change their friends or their style of dress. One young participant explained:

“I used to drink a little alcohol. One day I looked for a girl so that she can become my girlfriend and she accepted. Shortly after, when she learned that I take a little alcohol, she laid down a condition that I not drink anymore in order for our friendship can continue. I did not stop drinking and finally we separated” (Gitega).

II. Emotional relations and desire

The negotiation of power can be particularly delicate in intimate relationships. The research sought to go deeper into the young men’s views on how their emotional needs and sexual desire influence their ability to exert power in their relationships with young women and intimate partners. The young men were invited to speak in more detail about their experiences with and the expectations of emotional relations not only with intimate partners but also with peers and friends, and how these relationships have been influenced by their views of masculinity, particularly in light of the earlier exercises on how the ideal man should think and act.

Sexual / intimate relationships & desire

Young men spoke at length about how they began early intimate relationships and their hopes and expectations from these relationships. According to the youth, early relationships for boys and girls generally begin under the influence of friends. Some participants reported feeling pressured by their peers to start these early relationships in order to demonstrate their emerging masculinity. Much of this early experimentation is also often an imitation of what they observe from their peers and older men in the community. The youth also felt that many of these early relationships gave them the experience that they will need later on in life when they were ready to seek out a long-term partner. The young men admitted that the possibility of having sex was also a primary motivation in seeking out relationships with young women, and once again referred to the importance of expressing one’s sexual prowess to demonstrate that one is a real man:

“It's natural for boys to make love even (before marriage (Goma))”.

In fact the young men in Goma were particularly candid in their details of what they sought through relationships with young women. They seek sexual pleasure and adventure through the intimate exploration of women’s bodies and experimentation of what they may have learned through pornographic films, but young men also felt that they wanted emotional intimacy and companionship – the young men spoke of wanting to know the thoughts of a woman and to “share life experiences”. They said that it is a matter of pride for a young man to have a girlfriend at his side and enjoy his youth.



"... I have enough male friends and I'm looking for something else. With our male friends we talk about plans for the future, more serious conversations... but with girls, we can have casual small talk, fun, laugh and enjoy ourselves... when we are with a girl, we feel more comfortable than when we are with a boy. This is also a matter of discovery... If among my friends one of us has had a sexual relationship with a young girl, the rest of us may also want to discover it. There are things you cannot tell other boys... but it is easier to have a trusting relationship with a girl because girls do not reveal your secrets, if you have a very close relationship with her" (Ngozi).

"One good thing is that you can share your most intimate secrets with your girlfriend and she can do the same with you. (However) economic dependency is very important... the young girl gives friendship and the boy ensures financial security" (Ngozi).

A few young men mentioned other reasons such as seeking to develop long lasting relationships in order to marry later; looking for an intelligent girl so that they can help each other in their studies; or the search for material benefit (looking for a girl whose parents are rich so that they can help them in their future homes).

The young men also speculated about what young women seek in romantic relationships. In Goma many of the young believed that young women also seek affection and sexual pleasure in relationships as well as money, recognition, and a confirmation of their position as women in their society. The young men felt that girls too are also proud to be pursued by young men.

*"A girl who reaches a certain age without ever having been courted by a boy is not comfortable" and
"...girls feel nice with soft and flattering words in their ears 'maloba sukali'" (Goma).*

But in Burundi, several youth also believed that many young women are already thinking of the future when they begin to enter into romantic relationships. *"These girls are intelligent, they plan to marry, they may project (that) this young man (will) be a good husband and they can mislead you, but what is good is that when the relationship is based on love, being with a young girl and planning for the future is very nice...(Ngozi)".*

Among the participants in Burundi many of the young men insisted that young women primarily seek material gain and protection in a romantic relationship. Further, most young men across all the research sites agreed that friendships with the opposite sex require financial resources to buy gifts and meet other material needs of the young women. The young men spoke at length about the stress and anxiety they felt about meeting these financial obligations. As one young man put it:

"... You cannot really be 15 years old and go in front of a young girl and lack a 'project' to show her or to keep up with her demands" (Gitega).



In Ngozi young men discussed different “categories” of girls – “some seek relationships for their financial security and if you cannot address her financial needs, she will abandon you”. Some girls are interested in a romantic friendship, but they are also interested in marriage. However, a participant from Ngozi was more pessimistic: “All the girls are the same, if you do not have money, no one will come to you...”.



Image 18: Skit demonstrating intimate partner violence in Ngozi.

Respect in relationships

The researchers also wanted to know the young men’s views on what a respectful relationship looks like and the extent to which the relationships they see around them are built on mutual respect. For the young men the characteristics of a healthy relationship is based on respect for each other’s views, warmth and shared goals. However, according to the young men, most relationships between young men and young women are characterized by an imbalance of power- for example, society would never accept a girl asking a boy’s hand, but a boy would not be fearful and would even be expected to ask a young woman’s hand in marriage. According to a young participant of Gitega, “in our culture, it is prohibited to the girl to make the first step towards the boy “this looks as if she is not well educated”.

Another issue brought up by participants that negatively affects mutual respect in relationships is the strong sense of sexual entitlement that they felt many young men exhibit. This belief in the importance of expressing ones sexual prowess and the expectation that a virile young men should be sexually active, was particularly strong among the young men in Goma. According to the young men themselves these attitudes influenced their relationships with young women in that they felt that it was their right to pursue sex whether their partners wished or not, and this often led to violence in relationships. This imbalance and lack of respect is in turn reinforced by what the young men see around them in their families and the society at large, as has been discussed in research questions 1 and 3, and will be discussed at greater length under question 6.

E. Research question 5

What are the facts, events, or scenes of violence that influence young men's behaviour and attitudes?

The 3rd and 4th days of the PLA research focused on the young men’s views and analysis of violence. Through a series of exercises that included grouping types and places of violence, sketches showing scenes of violence, causal analyses to identify the causes and consequences of violence, reflections on their attitudes towards violence by agreeing or disagreeing with a set of statements about violence and gender equality, and visioning exercises of the future, the young men focused on the role of violence in their lives, their attitudes towards violence and the possibility of a life free of violence. On the last day of the exercise



the young men examined their personal ideals of masculinity including whether they would be able to reject societal expectations of the use of violence.

I. Types and Places of Violence

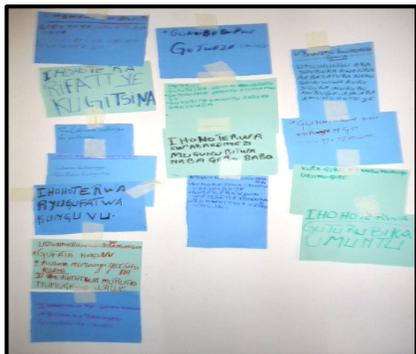


Image 19: Types of violence, Ngozi

All four groups of young men were asked to reflect on and discuss different types of violence that they have experienced, witnessed or perpetrated in their lives, and to categorize these types of violence into physical, psychological (emotional), economic and sexual violence in an attempt to try and identify commonalities across varying experiences of violence. The different categories of violence clearly resonated with the youth and they were able to easily provide many examples. Types of psychological (emotional) violence highlighted by the four groups of youth included insults or verbal abuse from parents or others and various types of discrimination and

intimidation. They also cited several examples of physical violence including domestic violence (the youth in Goma acknowledged that domestic violence was not just physical but involved a complex issues that in fact touched all of the other types of violence – sexual [marital rape for example], psychological and economic), physically beating a weaker person, or parents beating their children.

The youth cited a broad range of types of economic violence including preventing a woman from carrying out her income generation activities, extortion⁷, fraud, confiscation of someone's land, theft and employers who deprive wages to their workers, especially if the worker is a minor. Some young men in Goma also spoke of what they considered the economic exploitation of young girls who are made to work by their families to help pay the school fees of their brothers. Examples of sexual violence, which the young men largely considered to be one of the most serious forms of violence, included sexual assault, intimidation, forced marriage and rape.

A number of themes emerged from the exercises and discussions with the young men on how experiences with violence influence the young men's attitudes and behaviors. They are presented below, with highlights of commonalities and differences across the sites.

Pervasive presence of violence in the young men's lives

⁷ The young men in Gitega spoke of experiences where young men who have wanted to undertake a commercial activity in the market face intimidation and exclusion from other already established male traders who ask for an "entrance or admission fee" before they would be allowed to trade the same market.



The exercises on safe and unsafe spaces revealed a pervasive presence of violence in the lives of the young men across all of the research sites, and highlighted the risks that youth face in frequenting less safe environments around them.

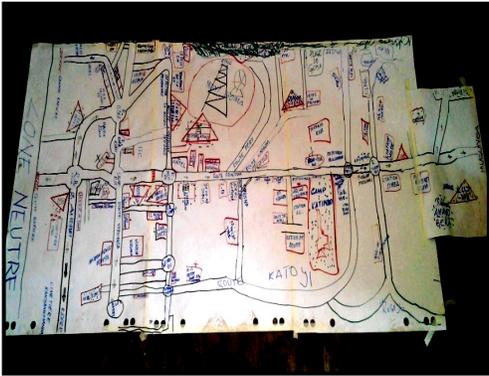


Image 20 : Community map with safe and unsafe spaces in Goma.

While the young men in Goma’s experience with violence is closely tied to the conflict in the Eastern DRC, in both countries the use of violence appeared to be endemic and closely linked to men’s expectations of masculinity and perceptions of men’s and women’s rights and roles in society.

During the mapping exercise, the young men readily illustrated several community spaces with the potential for violence and indeed the number of “unsafe” spaces seemed to greatly outnumber safe spaces.

One of the spaces in fact the home - they themselves violence in the children, men considered a pay school fees. The particular suffer and many are forced to earn money to young men (in economic exploitation. Moreover, the home can also be a place for other types of violence such as forced marriage and domestic violence. In addition, the school can also be an unsafe place with sexual violence and intimidation of students by their teachers.

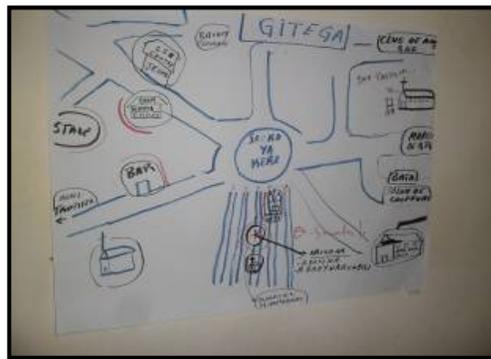


Image 21: Community map showing safe and unsafe spaces for young men, Gitega.

the young men felt could be unsafe was many of the young men revealed that have been exposed to different forms of home such as verbal abuse by parents as favouritism by parents (which the young form of violence) and parental refusal to youth also felt that young girls in from parental refusal to pay school fees to drop out at an early age to find work support their brothers’ education. Some Goma) considered this a form of

Other “unsafe spaces” mentioned by the youth included places where young men sell mobile phones on the black market, areas where there may be several bars or pubs (buvettes and ndandas) together, areas where internally displaced persons have settled (these were spaces particularly known for their ethnic rivalries and violence), cinema halls (where youth the felt one could watch violent films that contribute to aggression), public fountains, parking spaces, night clubs, bus stops, the roadside, pubs (“ligalas” of “buvettes”), and small forested patches of land for cattle grazing. Other unsafe spaces, some of them particularly unsafe for girls and young women, mentioned by the youth in Goma included “ghettoes” a place of sexual violence and drug taking where many of the out-of-school in Goma who participated in the study live, as well as isolated roads and areas known as “cointards” where the risk of sexual assault is very high. In both Burundi and the DRC alcohol and drinking emerged as major catalysts for violence, particularly in places of entertainment where young men may go to drink beer and dance.

Very few safe spaces for young men



The youth felt that the safest places generally were their families (despite the concerns they raised about violence in the home), their churches, mosques and their schools. In Burundi the youth also felt that youth centres were very safe, though few of these centres exist. Other safe spaces included sports stadiums, markets and town centres.

Sexual violence seen as the most serious form of violence, but also widely accepted

Many of the young men saw sexual violence as one of the most serious types of violence in their communities. But at the same time many, those in Goma in particular, asserted that sexual violence against intimate partners (particularly wives) is normal and to be expected. In addition to this sense of sexual entitlement, young men's views on the payment of dowry also appeared to play an important role in young men's belief that a man's economic control of his household meant he had a right to force his wife to have sexual relations.

"I do not understand how a woman for whom I provide, to whom I give food every day can refuse me sex. If she dares refuse, this type (of woman) can even be killed"(Goma).

Impact of conflict on the young men's views and experience of violence

In Goma the research was conducted just after the end of a longstanding active conflict in the Eastern DRC⁸, including in areas very close to Goma, therefore the impact of the long years of conflicts in this region was evident throughout the discussions. The young men in Goma spoke of the trauma of living through successive wars, including forced recruitment of boys and young men, as well as the experience of boys who have either witnessed or been victims of sexual and gender based violence. The youth confirmed that, indeed, some young men have themselves become perpetrators of the same types of violence that they experienced earlier in their lives.

One participant in Goma related the case of an 8 year-old child who had been an eyewitness to the rape and murder of his mother, this same boy was later caught in act of raping a young girl. None of the youth spoke in the larger group about specific personal experiences with violence and the researchers, in keeping with the ethical guidelines when discussing issues of violence with potential survivors, did not insist, preferring to let the young themselves volunteer this information if they felt at ease in doing so. Further, given the underlying ethnic dimensions of the conflict which might have been reflected in the make up of the young men in the room, the facilitators in Goma were careful to let the young men take the lead in the discussions of violence and to respect when the youth were reluctant to enter into more detail about the experience of the war and its impact on their lives.

In Burundi, although the conflict ended several years ago, the underlying issues that led to the communal violence that engulfed the country have not been fully resolved. For some of the young men in Gitega echoes of this violence are still very much alive in ethnic rivalry and intimidation among young men, particularly abound certain areas of Gitega province.

⁸ In fact, just before the start of the PLA exercise the Eastern DRC again erupted into conflict.



Taboos and a culture of silence make it difficult to denounce certain forms of violence

Generally in both Burundi and the DRC it is difficult to speak openly of violence. Against this backdrop the youth felt that domestic violence covered a broad spectrum of abuses that were least likely to be spoken about publicly. In Burundi the young men admitted that generally, when a woman is beaten during the night, in the morning the family pretends that nothing has happened because, according to the culture, a woman must keep silent regardless of the abuse she has suffered.

The youth also spoke of the strong social taboos around sexual violence. As a result a girl who is raped would have great difficulty speaking of it or denouncing her attacker for fear of being stigmatized by the entire community. In fact the youth argued that even the victim's parents and family would suffer stigma from the community hence the family's reluctance to mention these crimes.

Types of violence most often used by young people

Despite initial reluctance to go into details about the types of violence committed by young men, some of the youth in both Goma and the two sites in Burundi spoke of sexual violence against girls and young women through coercion and forced marriage.

"If for example you do not have money to marry the girl you love, you can discuss and agree with your friends to help you to kidnap her...you invite her to share a drink, you let get her drunk and you kidnap her in the evening. You lock her in your house for at least a week and after having slept with you during those days, she feels ashamed to return home and stays with you against her will" (Gitega).



Image 22: A sketch showing violence between young men in Ngozi.

For the young men violence (physical, sexual, emotional) was largely used to demonstrate power and physical, emotional and economic force, and to establish dominance. According to the participants young men tend to resort to violence against a person (another woman or a child) who is perceived to be physically smaller or weaker. One common form of violence that the young men said they used was psychological and physical abuse against their sisters and girlfriends, for example brothers may hit their sisters if they refuse to wash their clothes or one might beat a girl who refuses to have sexual relations.

However not all young men resort to violence. For those youth who do not easily turn to violence the young men gave a number of reasons:

- Some youth spoke of those who may be non-violent by nature. The young men also realized and clearly articulated the link between early exposure to violence and the potential to use violence later in life. They revealed that, in their view, those young people who do not use violence generally come from families where they have not been exposed to violence at a young age and they have parents who regularly show affection to their children. They felt that these youth often have strong relationships with their parents and are confident when out in the world.



- The young men also felt that “non violent” youth often come from a social environment that strongly discourages violence, such those affiliated with churches who might organize dialogues with youth, or they may be involved in church sponsored activities such as “catholic action movements”.
- Some of these “non-violent” youth simply have the ability to exert better self-control than others.

A more detailed discussion of the choice not to use violence and the consequences will be presented in more detail later in this report in the section on the decision not to use violence.

F. Research question 6

How are the social constructions of masculinity and femininity related to the use of power by young men against other men and young women?

I. Violence among men

The use of violence to demonstrate one’s masculinity differed between the youth in Burundi and those in Goma. The youth in Goma directly connected the use of force and violence to asserting one’s masculinity, which stemmed largely from the need to be respected by other men. When asked if they agreed with the statement that a man should use violence to defend his reputation, 20 of the 33 young men in Goma responded that they would use force if insulted. One young man in particular spoke of almost coming to blows with his friend who stole his girlfriend, stating “a man shall not accept any form of humiliation, whatever the cost (Goma)”.

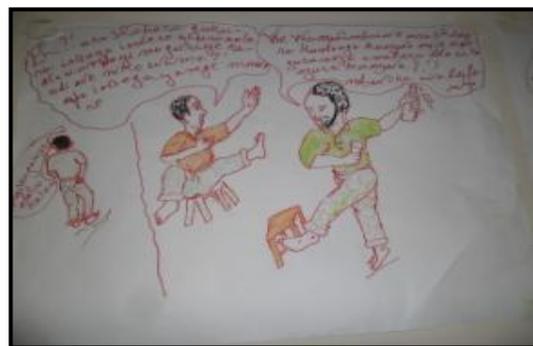


Image 23 : scene of violence, Gitega.

Although some youth in Burundi expressed similar views as youth in Goma it seems to be emerging from the responses of the youth in Burundi that proving one’s masculinity is more closely related to exercising control - even resorting to violence - over women, rather than aggression and violence against other men. Despite their regular presence at places where there is real potential for violence or where violence actually occurs, young men in Burundi seemed to avoid violent confrontation with other young men to a large extent.

Most of the young men at the two sites in Burundi explained that they generally attempted to avoid violence, if possible, either because of a personal aversion for violence, for religious reasons or simply to avoid being punished by the law.

The difference in the young men’s views of the use of violence was very evident in their responses to the following statement where the young men were asked to “vote with your feet”.



“If someone insults me, I will defend my reputation, with force if I must.”

	Gitega	Ngozi	Goma : In-School Youth	Goma : Out-of-School Youth
I agree	5	3	12	8
I disagree	10	12	3	10

A majority of the young men in two sites in Burundi responded that they would not in fact find it necessary to use violence to defend their reputation.

“I will look for intermediaries to resolve the case amicably” and “My (religious) belief does not allow me to be violent; I will only tell him that God forgives him(Gitega)”.

Some young men felt that they would avoid resorting to violence if the opponent was physically stronger. *“If he is stronger than me I will not reply(Ngozi)”.*

However, some of the youth agreed with the idea of using violence to defend ones masculinity. These young people affirmed that, if insulted, it would be important to defend their honour in front of others, and if they do not have the choice, they would resort to violence. *“In any case he would not leave like that, I will try to defend myself anyway,”* said a participant of Gitega.

The youth in Gitega province spoke specifically of violence associated with ethnic rivalry and tensions between Hutu, Tutsi and BaTwa youths as well, as violence associated with sexual rivalry. A participant talked about a recent experience:

“One day I was coming back from a visit to a girl and while returning home, I came across a young man who was also interested in the young girl, he was with two companions. The three guys came over me; I knew I was not able to fight them, so I tried to run. Unfortunately I was not faster than them, I threw a stone at one of them and hit him on the leg... and they were scattered(Gitega)”.

Even in these cases of violence, in accordance with the general trend among the young participants in Burundi, only a few participants spoke of using outright physical violence. Even the cases of violence around ethnic rivalries, although very real, seem to be focused on intimidation rather than outright physical violence. Cases of violence around sexual rivalry seemed to be more widespread among the youth in Burundi. Though not discussed at length during the research one other possible explanation for lower levels of violence between (young) men, in Burundi may be related to the fact that violence between men is generally more public, and, as such brings with it other consequences besides bodily harm. For instance if these conflicts are observed by local authorities the (young) men involved may be subject to prosecution, family members of one’s opponent may seek retribution, or the community as a whole may frown on these actions. The case of violence against women is very different, as will be explained in the next section of this report. The question of why violence among (young) men as an everyday occurrence⁹ appears to be less prevalent in certain societies in the Great Lakes was not fully explored during this research. But this

⁹ During those times when there is no larger civil or military conflict.



particular dimension of the issue merits further study, particularly as it relates to accepted norms of masculinity in the region.

II. Violence against women



Image 24: sketch of gender-based violence, Gitega.

All four groups of youth cited several types of violence that they felt girls and young women face at the hands of men and boys around them, including sexual violence, domestic violence (for instance being beaten by a brother because they did not wash their clothes or by their boyfriends for refusing sexual intercourse), forced marriage and unwanted pregnancy caused by young men who subsequently do not recognize the children born of a sexual union outside of marriage. The extent of violence faced by young women and girls correlates strongly with the widely accepted view that sexual and gender based violence is endemic in many parts of the Great Lakes

and based on a patriarchal system where aggression or violence toward others is an acceptable way to demonstrate strength and control.

The "vote with your feet" exercise gave the young participants the opportunity to share details about their attitudes and ideas about violence against women. Two themes emerged from these exercises and discussion across the different research sites:

Trivialization of certain types of violence against women

The attitudes of the young men in both countries showed a strong tolerance for gender based violence, including sexual violence. The youth felt that the trivialization of violence was in part due to society's expectation that young men demonstrate the kind of masculinity that shows aggression, domination and violence. The young men also tied violence to controlling and "correcting" the behaviour of women. Using violence was seen as a legitimate right of husbands, especially when one had "purchased" a wife through dowry.

In their discussion of violence against women some of the young men (from Goma) also echoed the reality in the larger society where depriving women of access to education and material and financial resources makes women obedient and dependent on men and this allows men to retain their power. In both countries the majority of the youth said that they considered physical and psychological (emotional) abuse of a wife (girlfriend, wife or intimate partner) an acceptable form of violence, and a legitimate right of a husband especially if the violence is not serious enough that the woman is seriously injured. In fact a recurring theme for the "legitimate" use of violence was the need to "correct" the behaviour of one's wife. The perception that a woman's (mis) behaviour needs to be corrected as one might correct a child who misbehaves, was also evident in earlier discussions among many young participants when they shared their views on gender equality and women's empowerment (under research question 3).



“A woman must tolerate violence in order to keep her family together.”

	Gitega	Ngozi	Goma :In-School Youth	Goma : Out-fo-Schoo Youth
I agree	3	11	14	11
I disagree	12	4	1	7

In Goma 25 out of the 33 youth and the majority of the youth in Ngozi interviewed believe that women should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together. However, contrary to Goma and Ngozi, in Gitega the majority of young men did not agree that a woman should tolerate violence.

Further, 13 of the 33 young participants in Goma and a majority in Burundi agreed that there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten, because they consider beating a woman is a way of educating her. Several of the youth in the other research sites also agreed that beating one’s wife is often a way of educating her.

“Since it is the man who gives all, if a woman disobeys or refuses sexual intercourse she deserves to be beaten...(Goma)”¹⁰.

“if a woman is not corrected in time, tomorrow it will be late, so she must be corrected(Ngozi).”

“There are times where a woman deserves to be beaten.”

	Gitega	Ngozi	Goma :In-School Youth	Goma : Out-of-School Youth
I agree	9	10	4	10
I disagree	6	5	11	8

The use of alcohol continued to be an important factor in the use of violence - many young men felt that behind this use of violence by men was drunkenness, a non-respect for the rights of women and a lack of respect for woman’s ability to decide for herself.

“She must accept it because there are times when her husband hits her when he has drank and is drunk..”
and

“There are times when he (may) hit his wife without hating her but in order to correct her (Ngozi).”

“It is good for a man to beat his wife if she does not want to have sexual intercourse with him.”

	Gitega	Ngozi	Goma : In-school Youth	Goma : Out-of-School Youth

¹⁰ The original quote stated that the woman deserved to be beaten or killed, but during a session to validate the results of the PLA exercise the youth felt that referring to killing an intimate partner was too extreme and reflected the idea of only one participant and had distorted the message the larger group was trying to send.



I agree	2	2	3	5
I disagree	13	13	12	13

While a large majority of the youth agreed that it is unfair to beat one’s wife if she refuses to have sexual intercourse, this view was not shared by all youth. Those young men who voted yes on the question that it is acceptable to beat your wife if she refuses to have sexual intercourse with you explained their decision as follows:

"When you are married, you also accept to have sexual relations with your husband; the woman knows why and what she signed for (Gitega).

Some youth said that they would see this refusal as an assault on their masculinity. One participant of Gitega said *"I will consider the refusal of my wife to have sexual intercourse as a sign of disrespect."* A young man from Ngozi thought that when this happens *"The man would be underestimated."* indicating the fear of losing control over one’s partner.

However those who disagreed with this statement believe that beating your wife because she does not want to have sexual relations at any given time is unfair. They offered a few explanations: *"She (a woman) may refuse sexual relations for a health reasons, or for birth spacing."*

A tendency to hold women partially culpable for acts of violence, especially sexual violence.

Another trend that emerged from these discussions was a tendency to suggest that women may provoke violence either by the way that they dress, by refusing the advances of an intimate partner, or by humiliating a man. All these actions appear to trigger violent reactions and, according to the responses of most of the young men, women bear some responsibility.

The example for the analysis of a case of violence by the group of young men in Gitega illustrated these views particularly well. In this example the participants developed a causal analysis around a case of sexual violence committed against a young woman by a young man. The young men in this exercise found that the underlying causes of this act of violence were:

- a lack of self-control on behalf of the young man
- The young woman’s style of dress

Young men insisted repeatedly that the way a woman dresses can be an incitement to, and a legitimate reason for, rape.

There were a number of reasons advanced by the young men in the exercise to explain why (young) women are more likely to experience violence than (young) men. One additional possible driver of violence against women that merits further study (as a compliment to the question for further study that was identified in the previous section on “violence against men”) would be the extent to which the high rates of violence



against women (versus against men) is due to the fact that much of this violence is carried out in the home or away from public view, and thus public sanction, where women and girls, because of their lower status in the household, cannot effectively defend themselves? This particular question was discussed during the research but it should be looked at more closely in the continuing quest to deepen understanding of the dynamics that drive violence against women, and to identify ways for young men to contribute to stopping this violence.

III. Causes and the consequences of violence

To initiate a discussion of the causes and consequences of the forms of violence that the young men experience, the researchers invited the youth to develop role-plays around a few scenarios of violence, and then to reflect on what might have been the causes and consequences of these scenes of violence.

All four groups of youth presented several scenarios and sketches of different types of violence and they affirmed that these scenes reflect the reality in their communities. According to the youth these were real incidences of violence that they had either experienced, witnessed or heard about.

One of the sketches revolved around a man who insisted that his wife have sexual relations with him, while the wife refused because she was still breastfeeding their 4-month old child. The woman was beaten by her husband until she relented.

The youth also staged a scene of violence between a young woman and young man – the young woman was sexually assaulted as she collected water at the fountain. In the sketch the young woman related the story to her father who then went to complain to the father of the alleged perpetrator. The two sides argued the matter and eventually settled on a monetary settlement, ignoring the views of the victim. The youth also incorporated in the sketches the taboos and silence that surround this type of violence in their communities, as well as the lack of trust and dialogue that exacerbate these issues. After the sketches, the facilitators spoke with the youth about the causes and possible consequences of these acts of violence.

To get at causes and consequences of violence in their communities the youth were asked to think of this issue in light of the sketches that they just witnessed which showed a scene sexual violence against a young woman. The youth speculated about the range of causes that could have led to this incidence - a lack of self control and discipline, the desire of young men to show their strength, and, on a deeper level, a lack of regard for the rights of women and girls and the relative powerlessness of women and girls.

The youth in Goma admitted that many cases of violence could be linked to the fact that, whether conscious of it or not, given society's expectations, men feel that must confirm and demonstrate their power by using violence to show their masculinity, and to show that they are indeed worthy of being called a man.

The young men also acknowledged that these incidences of violence can have deep and lasting consequences for victims, including : the psychological impact, stigmatization of the victim by the rest of



society and possible rejection by her family, as well as possible unwanted pregnancy. The victim may also jeopardize her future by dropping out of school, thus making her more likely to live a life of poverty. The family, if they seek to avenge the young woman's assault, could be led into a situation of criminality with serious possible consequences such as imprisonment and even death.

G. Research question 7

For young men who do not use violence, what are the factors that influence them? What are the consequences?

Towards the end of the PLA exercise the young men explored situations when there could be alternatives to the use of violence and the factors that would allow a young man the option of not turning to violence. Below is the young participants' assessment of when young men are able to choose not to use violence, barriers to less use of violence, and how they would ideally like to reduce their use of violence. The young men listed a number of strategies that could be used to avoid the use of violence by young men:

Alternatives to violence - acquiring maturity, self-control, and the recognition of consequences

Many of the young men affirmed that there are indeed alternatives to violence. According to the participants, there are always alternatives to violence because many young people think about the consequences of violence before they act and the threat of imprisonment is a brake on the impulse to use violence. The participants also felt that today young people recognize that there are laws in place to reduce the use of violence although they also acknowledge that the implementation of these laws is incomplete.

The young men felt that there are several other factors that may allow a young man not to use violence including a religious belief in the teachings of the churches, the advice of parents who do not support violence, good friends who would discourage their peers not to use violence, or sensitivity training that the youth may have received. The young men also felt that some youth are naturally non-violent. Others felt that the ability to exert self-control was a major factor in young men's ability to reject violence. Many participants also believed that membership in youth clubs, associations, and their roles as leaders of associations were factors that help them to avoid the use of violence. The youth in Goma cited a number of civil society organizations that work with youth on non-violent resolution of conflicts.

Nevertheless, physical strength also seems to play an important role in young men's decision not to use violence. Several youth felt that when facing someone who is physically stronger they were less likely to resort to physical violence. However if that person is weaker they would more easily resort to violence.

The consequences of the non-use of violence.

"Here in Burundi, a boy who does not use physical strength is stigmatized," a participant from Ngozi.

The young men in both Burundi and the DRC felt that the social pressure to use violence as evidence of one's masculinity is very high. In cases of violence among men, there are consequences for those who do not resort to violence as they may find themselves also victim of more violence. A participant declared:



"[another] young man might see that you're kind, non aggressive and he violently attacks you, if others see that you do not react strongly to defend yourself, they will do the same to you and you will be regularly a victim of violence (Gitega)."

Many young men described the central role that their families, especially fathers, play in encouraging the use of violence, from early childhood, to prove their masculinity and defend themselves and their reputations. The young men cited several phrases that parents have used to convince them of the need to resort to violence:

- *If someone is stronger than you, you have to bite or throw a stone and save yourself,*
- *The man must not let himself be carried away,*
- *A man does not cry,*
- *A man should not bear humiliation of any sort.*

According to the youth society expects young men to react with violence when their reputation is threatened or when they need to control the actions of the women around them.

H. Research question 8

What are the possibilities of promoting gender standards and more equitable measures for young men and young women, particularly in the prevention of gender-based violence?

Young men's views of gender and equality now and in the future

At the end of the five-day PLA exercise, young men were asked to identify what aspects of masculinity and violence they would keep or strengthen, and which they would want to change. At the end of the exercise the young men still retained what can be described as gender inequitable views on the rights of women and girls, which can be summed up below. Many of these statements reflect contract some of the norms and ideals that the young men described at the beginning of the PLA exercise particularly with regard to the "ideal" man but also confirm others such as the "ideal" man's authority and control over his household, and the "ideal" woman as a submissive homemaker who is reluctant to speak out and whose first loyalty is to her husband and family.

- *A woman must remain subordinate to her husband*
 - *A woman is largely responsible for household chores (such as cooking, caring for children, etcetera)*
 - *A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep the unity of her home*
 - *A married woman should not be empowered because she must be submissive to her husband and she must be dependent on him so that his authority remains intact).*
 - *Single women can be independent because they do not have a home to preserve and protect.*
- 

- *Young men fear that women's empowerment may lead to women's encroachment on a man's rights.*

The young men were at some level aware that their attitudes were very gender inequitable and sought to justify their beliefs by asserting their importance in enhancing cultural and traditional norms, safeguarding male honour in the society, maintaining the family unit and enabling man to justifiably maintain control and power over women.



Image 25 : Cartoon image of a couple in Goma in 2014 and in 2020.

However at the same time that they espoused these strongly gender inequitable attitudes, in the cartoons they developed to express their visions of the world five years from now, these same youth showed clear images of shared power and respect in relationships between men and women in the future. While the PLA discussion did not resolve this apparent inconsistency in the young men's views, the contradiction offers a clear direction for discussion, training and awareness raising with the youth during the implementation of the program.

In terms of their vision for the future, in one case, the group of young men still in school in Goma presented an image of today showing an arrogant man who has total freedom to do whatever he wants, and next to him is a woman who is very socially and economically dependent on this man. The image to the right, five years from now, presents a man who is now responsible, engaged in his work next to his partner who now appears emancipated, their standard of living has improved (as evidenced in how the youth presented their clothes) the couple lives in a climate of love (holding hands), mutual respect and open dialogue.

The young men in Burundi also developed several cartoons, all of which featured significant changes in relations between men and women, and between men themselves where violence is rejected and relationships are far more equal.

In the first cartoon (Image 26), the young men presented an image of a girl who is left alone with all of the housework for her family while her brothers played football. The girl is threatened by her brothers to make sure that she keeps up with her work and prepare their meals before it gets too late. In the same family five years later the boys share the household chores with their sister, the youth included an image of the boy sweeping while his sister is cooking. The boys explain how they behaved towards their sister in the past and how they have changed their behaviour for now and into the future.

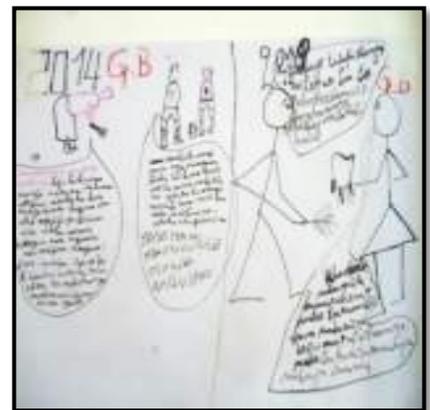


Image 26: Before & after cartoon depicting changed household division of labour in a family in Ngozi.



Image 27: Cartoon image of violence, Gitega

In the second cartoon, the image on the left shows a scene where the man of the family who takes his wife's harvest (which she cultivated and harvested alone), and then threatens her. In their depiction of the future the youth present a cartoon image of the changes in the household. The wife is very proud of the change of her husband who was previously an alcoholic. The husband declares, "Now I'm a real man". The cartoon shows the couple returning from their farm together with the wife declaring, "Now I am happy because you do not beat me any more, and if all men could change their behaviour as you did!". And the husband answers: "Now I have changed and I will continue to help you with you all that you need."

5. Findings and recommendations

There are a number of striking results from the research that the Sisi Vijana initiative will need to consider, in addition to those already addressed in the project design. These themes, if addressed, could represent potential cracks in the current construction of masculinity in much of the Great Lakes region. Each of the trends are summarized below followed by a brief recommendation of how the Sisi Vijana initiative might begin to consider that particular issue.

1) Contradicting messages of the ideal man.

The young men wrestled with the contradictions and pressures of defining the kind of masculinity they ultimately aspired to. On the one hand, they expressed a strong desire to be perceived as prosperous and successful, men of honour, with integrity stemming from their success. This is largely the model they tried to portray in the "ideal man" exercises. On the other hand, they acknowledged having grown up with a more common model of masculinity in which a man has the power to follow his own desires, he is not answerable to his wife or others, he can choose whether or not he works. Men demonstrate less responsibility, and focus more on their relationships with each other rather than on becoming successful and responsible for their families.

The views of the young men also reflected a very strong patriarchal culture that promotes an ideal of hegemonic masculinity juxtaposed with an idea of womanhood in which the "ideal" woman is passive, submissive, reticent, fulfilling of traditional roles of reproduction, homemaking and care-giving.



In part due to these ideals with which youth are socialized in the region, many of the young men strongly espoused a number of attitudes that were extremely gender inequitable. Women and girls are expected to fit into rigidly defined gender roles. Those who stepped out of this mold opened themselves to violence from their spouses or intimate partners. In fact, throughout the PLA exercise, many of the young men openly shared their expectation that they would and could use violence against an intimate partner, particularly if the violence was corrective with the intention of controlling the behaviour of one's spouse thus also sending a clear signal to the rest of the community that one is in control of one's household, and a "real" man.

In order to break these destructive patterns of hegemonic masculinity the Sisi Vijana initiative should look at ways of developing alternative norms and models that encompass less dominating types of masculinity that recognize women's equal rights. Some indication on what good entry points for this could be is evident from the research, such as the ideal man being faithful, respectful and valuing dialogue.

2) Need to be seen to be in control.

Driving some of the gender inequitable attitudes expressed by many of the young men was the concern, from what the youth see around them, that manliness is very closely tied to a man's status and position in his community. The fear of being seen to do "women's work" is a keen driver of the sexual division of labour, as is the discouragement that youth said they felt from mothers, fathers and older sisters. The young men also spoke of the pressure that the men around them faced to be seen to be in control of one's household and the fear of being perceived as having been "bewitched" by their wives or female partners.

(Young) men's need for inclusion, to be seen to be in control, and to be respected according to the community's values, is an important reality that needs to be taken into account when designing the gender equitable messages as part of the Education Manual.

3) Sexual entitlement

Related to the gender inequitable attitudes the young men also demonstrated a seemingly strong sense of sexual entitlement. Throughout the conversations the young men, from their representation of the sexual virility of the ideal man to their discussion of the importance of sex to a healthy and active young man, many young men felt that an important part of being a real man was to demand (and obtain) sex from intimate partners at any time. Several added that if their partners refused sex this amounted to a show of a lack of respect.

There were several examples of these gender inequitable attitudes and the sense of sexual entitlement throughout the research - from how boys are first socialized in their families, the conversations they hold with peers, the pressures they feel peers to act in a certain way and accept certain behaviors, to the role models they see in school from teachers and older boys. In addition to a strong sense of entitlement the young men also tended to put the responsibility for sexual violence onto the victims by pointing out that a young woman's style of dress is in part responsible for whether she experiences sexual violence.

The Sisi Vijana initiative needs to examine ways of addressing the rights and status that boys and young men feel they have naturally as men, in particular the strong sense of sexual entitlement that can, and does, lead to violence.



4) Sexual and gender based violence

Another recurring theme that came out strongly in the research was the widespread acceptance of violence, particularly violence against women, among the young men. This acceptance and trivialization of violence, particularly domestic violence, could in part, be traced to early exposure to violence, as many of the young men shared during the PLA discussions. The youth confirmed that, indeed, some young men have themselves become perpetrators of the same types of violence that they experienced earlier in their lives.

This exposure to violence appears to continue as the young men grow up (violence and intimidation at school, psychological violence from teachers, violence among peers) in many of the social spaces that the participants identified, including their homes, school, sports fields, bars and other “male” meeting places. In the Eastern DRC, in particular, youth have had such high levels of exposure to violent acts during the conflict (which is in fact still on-going) that this experience has led to a greater propensity to use violence.

The youth acknowledged that the use of force and violence to assert one’s masculinity is in part to ensure that one is respected by other men in the community, and is seen to be in control of one’s household. Further, the idea of using violence to “correct” behaviour, largely through domestic violence, seems to be very widespread. For example the youth spoke at length of violence against wives and intimate partners, and the ideas that it is acceptable to beat someone if no “visible bruises” are produced.

Another factor which should be looked at more closely is the relationship between the apparent trend of violence against women and girls occurring most often in the home and the extent to which the silence around this diver of violence in effect contributes to impunity for the perpetrators of violence and the trivialization of this violence. Acts of violence between men on the other hand are more likely to be public and accompanied by repercussions that (young) men, at least in some parts of the region, would rather avoid.

The role of alcohol as a catalyst for violence also emerged strongly from the research. Although alcohol (primarily local beer) is an ingrained element of culture in the region, and not surprisingly many young men have grown up around drinking of beer, the young men spoke extensively about how alcohol, and increasingly illegal drugs, played a large role in fuelling violence towards women and girls.

Throughout the research the issue of violence against sisters was also a topic of discussion. This was both referring to violence committed by themselves or by others. As some of the boys that the program works with might not have developed intimate relationships with girls addressing violence against sisters can be a useful entry point.

The project should address the aspects of violence that are most relevant to young men in the region. The research report indicates violence is much more prevalent against women than other men. The program should devote resources to further exploring the dimensions and drivers of this violence, including the extent to which violence against women, which often takes place in the home, with much silence around it, contributes to trivialization and continued cycles of violence. Relatedly the initiative should further examine the dynamics that drive violence among (young) men, in order to better understand why, in many areas around the region, (young) men appear more reluctant to engage in violence against other men (than against women), and whether fear of the consequences plays a role in this decision.



Further the initiative should consider specifically addressing issues of binge drinking and the increasing use of illegal drugs among school age boys, as an increasingly important catalyst of violence and as an issue of health and well-being .

5) Anxiety over economic capacity

The young men raised the importance of having economic means in exerting power over others, including girls and women, and the stress and anxiety that they felt around meeting the economic and financial expectations that the rest of society has of them. The emphasis on success (both economic) and the idea of being seen to be someone respected in society was a powerful part of the young men's testimony, recurring over and over again. In all of the research sites the young men spoke at length about the importance of having money as a pre-requisite to being able to approach young women and about the stress and anxiety they felt about meeting these financial obligations. This anxiety is compounded by the reality that many youth struggle to meet even their most basic needs, much less meeting the cost of maintaining a relationship and eventually affording a wedding, a dowry or the cost of setting up a home. At the same time however this anxiety presents a potential opportunity to speak with young men about the importance of girls and women's economic independence.

The Sisi Vijana initiative should address the issue of economic dependence by sharing with the young men the possibilities that exist for building the economic capacity of young women and the benefits that this can bring to them as young men. A young woman who is more financially independent lessens the burden to the young men of being the sole earner for his family.

6) The role of parents

During the course of the PLA research, the important role played by parents and their tremendous influence on the attitudes of young men came up in several discussions. Parents play a fundamentally important role in the socialisation of boys, and the youth themselves identified their parents, both fathers and mothers, very often during the research, as principal upholders of gender stereotypes and reinforcers of negative masculine identities. For instance, according to the young men, mothers will often not let boys do household tasks and fathers regularly coach their sons on the need for use violence to assert oneself as a man.

The strong influence of parents suggests that, in addition to work with boys and their peers to challenge their idea of masculine identities, the Sisi Vijana initiative should also identify innovative ways to work with parents so that they can be positive partners in changing the behaviour of boys and in preventing violence against girls and women.

7) Inequality in inheritance

One aspect of gender (in) equality that the young men, in Burundi in particular, raised at length was that of women's rights in land inheritance. This subject caused a particularly strong reaction in Burundi, perhaps in part because of the controversial bill currently before the Burundi parliament that could reverse current land tenure practices and allow women to inherit land on an equal footing with men. The young men in Burundi were somewhat divided in their views on this issue, however the majority voiced strong disagreement with the bill. Most argued that allowing women to inherit land would lead to a range of



disastrous consequences including disrupting the fragile balance not only between men and women, but also within extended families and entire communities.

At the same time Burundi is still largely an agricultural country where over 80% of the population relies on agriculture, or the agriculture value chain, for their livelihoods. Therefore the issue of land inheritance is fundamental to the equality of women and girls. The attitudes expressed by the majority of the young men in Burundi, and to some extent in Goma as well, demonstrate quite clearly the wide gap between the current reality of young men's gender inequitable attitudes and the ultimate aims of the *Sisi Vijana*, particularly the second aspect of the initiative's goal – the promotion of gender equality.

The Sisi Vijana initiative should address this issue, particularly in Burundi, by working with other parts of CARE's Women's Empowerment Program to support ongoing advocacy efforts to influence the process of passing the current land tenure bill in Burundi. The initiative should also raise awareness among the youth involved in Sisi Vijana of the following: (1) the contents of the bill; (2) the ways in which a fairer allocation of resources would benefit both men and women; and (3) how, practically, young people might adjust their plans and expectations in light of the new laws if they are passed.

8) Ethnic and political violence

Lingering issues of ethnic and political violence have manifested themselves among youth in Burundi. Similarly in Goma, the issue of ethnic violence very much underlies the on-going conflict in the Eastern DRC. While the young men in Goma did not discuss this issue extensively it is a critically important aspect of the continuing presence of violence in the lives of most of the young who participated in the PLA exercise.

The program should explore ways of addressing the root causes of violence, including ethnic (and political) rivalry, through the educational manual as well as through outreach and public information activities using traditional media as well as social media, music and other innovative mechanisms.

Finally in order to begin open the potential cracks in hegemonic masculinity that have been come as a results of the PLA research Sisi Vijana must find ways to work with those youth who have expressed a willingness to truly break away from the mold. There were several instances during the PLA exercise where young men showed resistance to the pressure of their peers and instead demonstrated their independence of thought – instances such as the young man who resisted his peers when insisting that he would remain friends with a gay person (albeit to try and change their behaviour).

6. Strengths and limitations of PLA research

The PLA research process was successful overall beginning with the training of researchers, up to the field exercises and analysis. The study covered normally sensitive aspects of masculinity and gender and allowed the young participants to share their points of view on hegemonic masculinity, gender and violence. The youth participated effectively in the exercise largely because the research was conducted by young researchers whom the youth considered peers.



It is important to acknowledge that this was a qualitative study with a small group of young boys who is part of the impact group of the Sisi Vijana project. This was done because there was a need for in-depth understanding on their views and perspectives for informing the design of the project. Thus, the project is in no way representative for youth in either DRC or Burundi.

The PLA exercise also encountered some limits in its implementation. Most of the tools worked well, with the exception of the session on the underlying causes and consequences of violence. Young men shared their points of view on the forms of violence that they believe they are exposed to, as well as the more serious types of violence, and those considered taboo. However there was a general reluctance on behalf of the young men to get into details about the violence, notably violence among young men. Thus, the data obtained for the research question 7 are relatively less detailed.

