

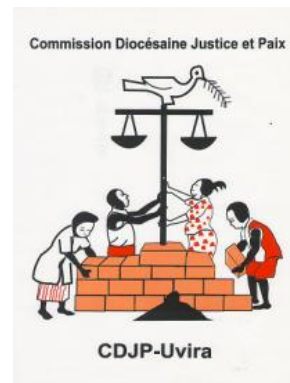


**Final Report of the PSO Action-Research Seminar on  
How to include men in activities related to gender equality?**

**17 - 21 September 2012, The Hague**

**Organized by Justice and Peace Netherlands and its partner organizations  
from the Democratic Republic of Congo**

**CDJP Uvira, Great Lakes Human Rights Program Beni and GADHOP Butembo**



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## 1. Introduction to the subject

Justice and Peace Netherlands has been engaged in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo on the topic of sexual violence since 2004. With several partners in North- and South Kivu a manual on sexual violence was developed with the objective to break through the silence and stigmas—imposed by families and communities-- which victims of sexual violence face on a large scale.

Justice and Peace Netherlands organized two researches on the Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) program in the DRC, one desk research and one field research. Both these researches came with results that the DDR program was not well thought out considering gender/power relations and that many cases of rape were a direct consequence of the DDR implementation.

With this track record and a history of good collaboration with our partners Justice and Peace Netherlands decided to join the PSO Action-Research program. This seminar summarizes our 1 year action-research.

## 2. Objectives of the seminar

The seminar had different objectives:

a. To finalise the results by the different partner organizations, GADHOP, Great Lakes Human Rights Programme (GLHRP) and Commission Diocésaine Justice et Paix Uvira (CDJP Uvira), in order to complete the PSO action-research report that all three organisations have been collaborating on and whose most important outcomes are:

For Justice and Peace Netherlands and GADHOP, GLHRP, CDJP UVIRA

- Integrated knowledge (including masculine perspectives) in each of the participant organizations on how gender relations evolved in the period before, during and after conflict (in the research regions);
- Each organisation has a well elaborated viewpoint internal and external with regard to gender mainstreaming/ gender sensitive programming;
- These viewpoints are translated in a *gender sensitive strategy* for the programme of Eastern Congo, to be further elaborated in all programmes of Justice and Peace Netherlands;
- Men speak up, organize an event, or let themselves be heard publicly what their roles and responsibilities are in contributing to the elimination of violence against women in the DRC
- Results of the field research and knowledge gained are integrated in *an action plan (see annex 2)* of the respective participant organizations (CDJP Uvira, GLHRP, GADHOP and JP NL) showing what activities will be integrated in each organization regarding gender sensitivity to elimination of violence against women. These action plans will be aligned with each other and be implemented beyond 2012;

With regard to churches

- Churches and religious institutions involved in our action-research *have discussed* the research results and decided whether and how to integrate them into their programs (they have written their respective plans);
- Churches have decided *which further steps* they will undertake (for ex. internal organizational adjustments, trainings, advocacy etc.) this and have included this in their implementation plan;

b. The future cooperation between Justice and Peace Netherlands and the different partner organizations has been discussed in such a way that all aspects of the subject, that is, how men can be included into fighting gender related violence, and can help promote gender equality, were tackled.

c. It was decided to publish the results of the action-research for public acknowledgment and discussion during a conference that was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September.

d. The conference attempted reach an audience in order to raise awareness on the matter at hand, and its urgency, through journalists.

e. Reach out to the political and decision making sphere in the Netherlands, by starting a dialogue with a varied representation of key Dutch political parties.

### **3. Programme of the seminar**

The programme of the seminar was a combination of different elements. There were several discussions regarding the outcome of the action-research by the different partner organizations. The discussions were led by the representatives of the three Congolese human rights organizations, respectively: Abbé Jacques and Constantin Amundala from CDJP Uvira, Moïse Kayitambya from GADHOP, and Nadya Ngandu from GLHRP. These discussions led to a consensus on what findings were of the greatest importance and should be made known at the conference on Wednesday. On Tuesday an interview with a Dutch journalist took place, in order to get the importance of the message across to the Dutch audience. The interview took place between the journalist M. Wallet from the Reformatisch Dagblad and Moïse Kambere Kayitambya of GADHOP. M. Kambere talked about the Pentecostal Churches in this region where he conducted the research:

*„Seksueel geweld is deel van de oorlogvoering in Congo”... Er zijn de laatste jaren veel initiatieven ontplooid om Congolese vrouwen meer bewust te maken van hun rechten. Het grote probleem was alleen dat mannen nauwelijks bij deze projecten betrokken waren, terwijl dat toch van elementair belang is als het gaat over de onderlinge verhoudingen... „Gebleken is dat de kerken graag willen meewerken aan bewustwording over de verhouding van man en vrouw.” Als mannen en vrouwen zich gezamenlijk intensief in de Bijbel gaan verdiepen, is er volgens Kambere al veel gewonnen.”<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Reformatorisch dagblad 'Kerk Congo kan grote rol spelen in strijd tegen seksueel geweld', edition of 26-09-2012

[http://www.refdag.nl/nieuws/buitenland/kerk-congo-kan-grote-rol-spelen-in-strijd-tegen-seksueel-geweld\\_1\\_677987](http://www.refdag.nl/nieuws/buitenland/kerk-congo-kan-grote-rol-spelen-in-strijd-tegen-seksueel-geweld_1_677987)

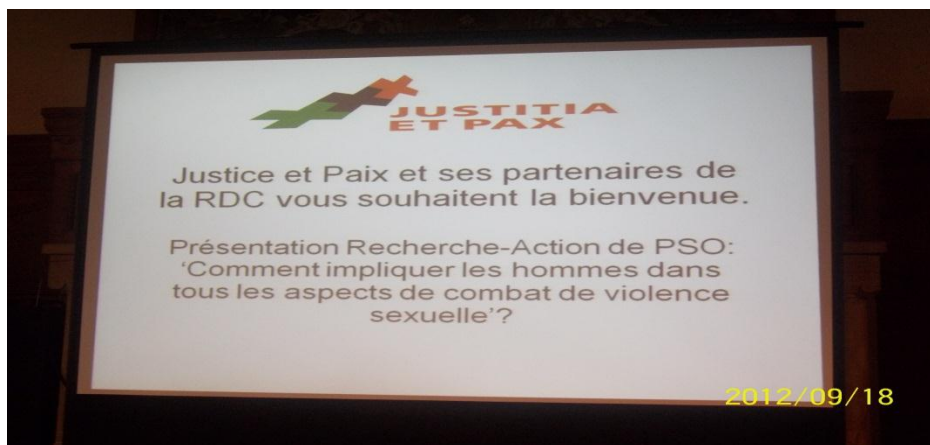
Translation of which would be:

*“Sexual violence is part of the war tactic in Congo”...Many initiatives have been deployed lately in order to make Congolese women aware of their rights. The big problem however was that men were not included in those projects, although this inclusion is of paramount importance when it comes to the relation between men and women...”Churches are willing to participate to raise awareness on the relation between men and women.” If man and women work together, reading the bible together, a lot is done already”.*

On Wednesday the Conference was held to present the outcomes of the action-research in the Nutshuis at The Hague, about which you can read in chapter 4.

After the conference, several meetings took place on Thursday and Friday. In these meetings our partners presented their analysis of the most security and political situation and pleaded for specific action for which they thought the Dutch political leaders could exercise their influence internationally. They met with the policy advisors of different political parties within the Dutch Parliament, including the PvdA (the labour party, moderate left wing) and the SP (the socialist party, left wing) the Head of the Gender and Children Unit of the office of the prosecutor at the International Criminal Court, Gloria Atiba Davies, and policy advisors at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

#### **4. Conference on September 19, Nutshuis, The Hague**



##### **4.1 Introduction by Victor Scheffers, director of Justice and Peace Netherlands**

*Dear ladies and gentlemen,*

*I would like to welcome our Congolese colleagues, who have travelled a long way to be present here today. Also, I would like to thank the other guests, who are here today, to participate in this conference, especially our PSO colleagues, who have entrusted us with this project, and supported us throughout its realization.*

*It is with great pleasure, that I share with you the outcomes, the experiences and the reflections of our Action-Research on the issue of masculinity regarding the debate on gender related violence. One can reformulate this topic with the question: “How can one imply men in all activities regarding the*

*fight against gender related violence” with a special focus on North and South Kivu, two provinces in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).*

*We are going to show you a compilation of our work, and share with you our doubts, questions, and dilemmas.*

*As the director of Justice and Peace Netherlands, I would like to reassure you that the learning process, the sharing of knowledge with our partners, and the integration of new knowledge into action has the emphasis in our daily work. One of those concrete actions is for example advocacy and lobbying on a regional, local, national or international scale.*

*When I mentioned the term compilation, I was also referring to the various extracts of two films that we are going to show you. The films are called: ‘Fighting the silence’ and ‘Justice for sale, both being produced by IF-Productions, and made in the DRC. We hope that those excerpts will familiarize you a little more with the local context of our Action-Research.*

*Our choice for this Action-Research does not come out of nowhere. We took into account the geopolitical situation, the current financial situation and especially the human rights status in the area.*

*Enjoy the presentations!*

*Thank you.*

## **4.2 Presentations of the partners<sup>2</sup>**

### **GADHOP**

Why did we join the research?

- Follow our objectives to reinforce the capacity of our member organisations, within the “Synergie Genre Droits de la Femme et de l’Enfant” group.
- Contribute to the research in the field of innovating approaches.

Used methods

- Workshops on exchanging experiences between different member organisations.
- Discussion and debates that allowed for new approaches regarding the fight against gender related violence.
- Training and reflexion workshop: together with the communities and the Pentecostal church (1<sup>st</sup> training on gender).

Selection of participants

- Trainers of the member organisations, priests and believers that are responsible for the programme of the church.
- Men and women.

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<sup>2</sup> The presentations of the partner organizations were given in French. In this report you find the translations of their Powerpoint presentations to English.

- Representatives of the grassroots communities, both men and women to respect gender equality.

“A communal debate where men and women have equal voice”

How did the participants experience the exercise?

- The question “role of men in the gender issue” Men again? Good start for a debate around the question: Is it a solely female fight?
- The concept of masculinity has only been understood at a very late stage. Only by coupling it with the concept of “femininity” to question the truth of the “real values related to gender”.
- The shared feeling was that their approach was being doubted upon, a legitimate question for the communities and churches that already face the emancipation of women and women’s leadership.

Results

NGO members and communities

- They have dropped the notion of “gender” as an exclusively feminist fight in order to embrace the notion of “men and women” as actors and targets, sharing the same solidarity and being equal.
- Commitment of themselves to the elaboration of a gender policy, and tools in order to measure the change in behaviour.
- Regarding the gender related violence, men and women are equally responsible.

The three attitudes on the gender participation

- Raising awareness regarding gender equality: men and women commit themselves to defend women against all kinds of discrimination, non-exclusive fight.
- Active solidarity: make time for women so they can have other social roles.
- Commitment to integrate men in order to promote gender equality and fight against gender related violence.

Concrete example of member organisation (FEPSI)

- The engaged men make their peers aware of the women’s dignity.
- The husband of the victim: through his support to his wife she already feels better, and by accompanying the victim to the hospital, so that she has a psychological support.
- Implication of husband in the care taking: the husband, as a hypothetic collateral victim, should be treated together with his wife. If he is not infected , cooperate with his wife in order to smooth healing process.
- A male healer: although a men may have aggressed a women, by making another men heal her, trust in males can be restored.
- Capacity building: NGO’s should be instructed on the importance of the inclusion of (wo)men in the fight for gender equality.

Pentecostal churches of Butembo

“God can accomplish great things for this world, through his grace, and complicity with women of faith (that believe in the might of God) without consulting any men” (Lc 1:31: do not be afraid Mary, for thou have received the grace of God).

Women have the same gifts as the Holy Spirit (1Cor 12: 4-6) and serve god in all ministries (Eph 4: 11-12) for the edification of the saints: apostles, prophets, evangelists, reverends, doctors.

Recommendations of the churches of Butembo (15)

- Dissociate the tradition (practices and traditions of the churches) from the doctrine of our church.
- Retain the church as the primary space for the raising of awareness on the fight against gender inequality and gender related violence.
- Train the men and women that received religious tasks to avoid discrimination in any form, whether written or unwritten against women.
- Women must participate in the decision making process in the churches.

Significant results

- The discovery of the approach: “awake the whole community” against gender inequality and gender-related violence.
- Notwithstanding resistance by traditions, a female leadership is being created.
- Commitment to emphasize the role of the church for the fight against gender inequality and gender related violence.
- The Christian doctrine is not contradicting the promotion of gender equality.

Outcomes that allow for new approaches

- Commitment of organisations that are member of the Pentecostal church to continue the reflexion on the process of elaborating a gender equality policy.
- Elaboration of tools that can measure changes in behaviour in communities.





## Great Lakes Human Rights Programme

How did we do our research?

- In the territory of Beni.
- Beni is one of the territories in the province of North-Kivu in the Eastern part of the DRC.
- The challenge was to convince the tribal and traditional leaders (chef coutumiers) to gather to a meeting on gender equality.

Method

- The territory of Beni has four collectivities, we thus selected 4 tribal leaders per collectivity.
- Discussion of the concept of gender and the fight against gender related violence with tribal leaders.

Why did we choose the tribal and religious leaders for this research?

- The customs are delaying the fulfilment of gender equality and are also the catalysts of violence in the DRC.
- A wrong interpretation of the traditional texts.
- Selection criteria: good knowledge of French language.

Outcomes

- 16 tribal leaders in Beni.
- An evaluation of the gender-related violence, and the status of gender equality in the territory of Beni.
- The tribal leaders explain the traditional customs and strategies in Nande Bambuba Batalingi regarding gender related violence.
- The tribal leaders function as a bridge between GLHRP and the local communities.

Recommendations by tribal leaders to the Congolese government

- Enforce the adjudication in general, but especially regarding the cases of gender related violence.
- Revise the law on the provisory freedom regarding the gender related cases.
- Integrate the concept of gender equality in the national education programme.
- Imply the tribal leaders in the judgment in cases of gender related crimes.

Recommendations by the traditional leaders to the NGO's

- Clearly explain the law prohibiting gender-related crimes to the population in collaboration with the tribal leaders.
- Multiply the gender equality sessions with both men and women.

Conclusion of GLHRP

The Action-Research that was started in 2011 has dramatically changed the tribal chief's perception of gender related violence. The tribal leaders are willing to collaborate with us in order to introduce the male perspective in the fight against gender related violence.

### **Commission Diocésaine Justice et Paix d'Uvira (CDJP Uvira)**

#### Localisation, methods and sample

- Territory of Uvira Fizi and Mwenga.
- Working method: surveys coupled with questionnaires, individual thinking, debates and recommendations.
- Targets: social leaders, religious leaders, representatives of tribes, leaders of women organisations, coaches, tribal leaders, and wise men of the different ethnic groups.

#### Important outcomes

- Age: persons aged 17-35 in order to eradicate the issue out of their future.
- Religious confession, converging views besides a few particularities.

#### Key outcomes of our work

- All the tribal leaders say the "levirate" is bad.
- Almost all of the tribal leaders say that a women or girl can still recover her dignity after being victim of rape with the support of the community.
- Almost all state that dowry can cover the future of a raped minor because it rehabilitates the girl and is a sanction for the perpetrator.
- All find that the community based approach has a very positive outcome.

#### Principal recommendations:

- The principal traditional leaders and authorities should be instructed in order to avoid discrimination of women.
- The religious leaders should use their influence on the local authorities on the scale of the gender related violence.
- CDJP and partners should create spaces for discussion between NGO workers and authorities; raise awareness among women about their rights.

### 4.3 Panal discussion



The conference was a culmination of hard work where the results of the action-research were discussed, involving several questions, objections and clarifications by the partner organizations and the different participants. After the presentation by representatives of the three different organisations, a discussion took place regarding the outcomes of the research. This discussion can be summarised as follows:

- The organisation Cordaid wondered about the importance of trust on the gender issue. Abbé Jacques in response underlined this importance and stated that man should be involved in the women empowerment in order to reach this trust.
- A representative of Cordaid further wondered why the authorities' enforcement personnel consisting of all Congolese military and police personnel were not included in this research and the enclosed set of surveys and ethnological research. The answer by Abbé Jacques was that an in-depth research enclosed by a survey was already done in 2010, research that had a focus on those armed forces, making a new research on those factors unnecessary.
- Sylvestre Bwira, Human Rights defender from the DRC questioned whether there could be an extrapolation of the survey held amongst the traditional leaders regarding the women empowerment. The answer by Mr. Amundala of CDJP Uvira was that the goal was not to create a representative sample, but rather to show that there is a considerable amount of goodwill regarding the gender issue among the tribal leaders.

There was a separate discussion regarding the conviction of Massamba, a traditional medicine man who was convicted of rape in very dubious circumstances, circumstances that are enlightened in the film "*Justice for sale*".

The issue at hand is that the rape did not take place, and the case was considered successful due to the intervention of a powerful local NGO, which did more harm than good in this case. The reactions of the audience and the Congolese Human Rights defenders concerning this issue were very diverse:

- Mrs. Ngandu point was that it was very difficult to prove rape due to the lack of either good doctors, or psychologists, making proof beyond reasonable doubt rather hard to find. She

also pointed out that victims are often poorly instructed on the issue of rape, and do not know how to act.

- CDJP Uvira stated that the intervention by these NGO's was bad in some cases, but had also yielded very good results in other cases of rape.
- Mr. Bwira elaborated on the fact that the so called rotating tribunals, that rotate from one place to another, sponsored by NGO's, had done more harm than good since their creation.



At the end of the Conference, during informal networking a Dutch journalist Selma Zijlstra from Vice Versa interviewed the participants on the subject of masculinities in relation to sexual violence in DRC.

([http://www.justitiaetpax.nl/userfiles/file/We%20moeten%20de%20strijd%20samen%20met%20mannen%20voeren%20\(Vice%20Versa,%20najaar%202012\).pdf](http://www.justitiaetpax.nl/userfiles/file/We%20moeten%20de%20strijd%20samen%20met%20mannen%20voeren%20(Vice%20Versa,%20najaar%202012).pdf))

#### **4.4 Conclusion of the Conference on September 19, 2012 by Jagoda Paukovic**

*Dear participants,*

*I am thanking you for your insightful comments and inputs which we will definitely use in our future Action Research. As you have noticed, we have split our program into two parts marked by the excerpts of the films. It was done on purpose. In the first part we presented our research in its contexts and our partners presented their methods, findings and results. All with the aim to share with you the process we went through in our search for the answer: How to include men in all activities related to gender equality. From the beginning our focus has been sexual violence against women as a result of the armed conflict and shifting power relations between men and women. We concluded that the gender power relations are one of the underlying causes which prevent the change towards more just gender relations. In our work, workshops in the field, we focused a lot on the changing gender relations and openings for change. We especially focused on the religious and traditional leaders as protectors of tradition to work with us towards the solutions and you had a chance to hear here that the success is more than was expected at first. The most important conclusion is that YES, men do want to be involved in all the steps leading to prevent sexual violence. And also one should not forget that the research clearly showed that the responsibility lies with the entire community. One has to work with the communities in order to address gender relations and*

*bring about social change. I was told by somebody that we have to see our work as a very important, but long historical process. Like the process that led to the abolition of slavery. Slavery was also legitimized by the religious texts and still working with the religious leaders and communities the social change came about.*

*The second part of our presentation following the excerpt of the movie 'Justice for Sale' was tackled here following on the research of Nynke Douma and Thea Hilhorst which was addressing the issue of NGOs influencing the focus and the outcomes of the judiciary with sometimes negative outcomes. We are aware of this discourse as well as of the larger discourse of commodification of suffering. To put it simply of the power that international community has with its interventions to attract attention and direct the aid towards regions and issues chosen for political reasons. We do not have time to discuss the entire issue but we heard the reactions of our partners: even though that there are negative influences of some NGO influences on the judiciary system. The judiciary system in the DRC is so corrupt that without NGOs women would have almost no access to justice.*

*We thank you for coming.*

## **5. Brief conclusion of the seminar**

This seminar was a roundup of the first year of the research. It synthesised the answers to the Action questions and to the Research question. Just to remind:

### **Action question (what change or improvement we envisage):**

*How can Justice and Peace Netherlands and its church-related partners work towards an inclusive gender sensitive policy taking into account different realities with regard to gender relations in the context of Eastern Congo?*

### **Research question:**

*How can J&P NL and its engaged partners organizations in Eastern Congo contribute to changing perceptions of roles attributed to men and to women and how can we translate these insights into our policies and our common activities?*

The answers are based on multiple research findings, common reflections and learning cycle shared with Justitia et Pax Netherlands. No doubt that the process has opened new doors and spaces for change. Justitia et Pax Netherlands will continue with the partners to strengthen the research with new knowledge and instruments and the partners will include more target groups from their regions in the research. We hope that we can develop closer cooperation with several stakeholders in the Netherlands and also include more academic input.

## **Annex 1 List of participants from the DRC**

Moïse Kambere Kayitambya, GADHOP

Nadia Ngandu, Great Lakes Human Rights Program

Jacques Bulambo Wilondja, CDJP Uvira

Constantin Amundala, CDJP Uvira