



Addressing harmful social and gender norms in humanitarian settings: Engaging Faith Leaders and Communities (EFLC)

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Engaging Faith Leaders and Communities (EFLC)' pilot

How to improve approaches to challenge harmful social and gender norms, and their underlying power structures, in humanitarian contexts?

- Pilot 2019-2021 by DRA Innovation Fund, financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).
- Consortium: Tearfund, HEAL Africa, Help a Child, BEATIL, and EyeOpenerWorks
- Implemented in 15 faith communities in Kitchanga, North Kivu, and Miti-Murhesa, South Kivu.

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The **EFLC** targets social and gender norms of VAWG through Tearfund's faith-based, transformational, and community-driven model.

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Objectives

- **The adaptation** of the EFLC model from the **post-conflict** to **crisis- and displacement-affected** contexts;
- The duration : 20 months versus 36 months
- M,E&L: To **embed community-driven learning** into the pilot implementation throughout its life-cycle

Methods

The studies adopted a mixed methods approach: 2 KAP Survey and Qualitative studies, and Longitudinal observations and Podcasting: Most Significant Change,

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- 1. Phase 1: Baseline**
 - CAP Survey (778 respondents)
 - Qualitative study (136 interviews)
- 2. Phase 2: Longitudinal**
 - Podcasting: Most Significant Change
 - Longitudinal observations
- 3. Phase 3: Endline**
 - CAP Survey (802 respondents)
 - Qualitative study (130 interviews, 25 focus groups)

EFLC pilot

- **Target social and social-religious gender norms** as the root causes of violence against women & girls, through a faith-based, transformational, and community-driven model (Transforming Masculinities)
- Tailored to crisis-affected communities with significant internally displaced populations, fragmented community structures, and strained social cohesion.



Transforming Masculinities – engaging faith leaders

- *What does it mean to be a man – in homes, relationships, communities and society in general?*
- *Create space for conversations, reflections, accountability and a shared journey with other men to break the cycle of violence because of harmful ideas on masculinity (toxic masculinity).*
- *Harmful interpretations of religious scripture allow gender inequality to continue, and are often even used to justify violence and to shame survivors of SGBV.*
- *Faith leaders and faith traditions can equally be powerful agents for change in addressing SGBV.*

1. Relationship between faith, gender, and violence

- Faith leaders significantly shape attitudes, beliefs, and practices around gender norms and intra-marital relations.
- 94% affirmed that religion is 'important' or 'very important' in their lives,
- 62% reported participating in couples counselling
- A core belief that men are the heads of the household whose wives should serve and support their husbands.

75.1% of respondents in South Kivu and 63.9% of respondents in North Kivu affirmed that scripture commands that wives should submit to their husbands represent an act of love.

- 92% of endline respondents (women and men) disagreed with the statement: 'the strength of a man is demonstrated through violence, severity, and intransigence'.

However:

- 72% of women at endline reporting experiencing or witnessing violence, including sexual violence, in the previous twelve months (89% at baseline).

Findings show a striking schism between professed attitudes and beliefs, and women's reported experiences of violence.

2. Engaging men: relationship between masculinity and violence

- Physical violence **not** ascribed as a marker of a 'real' or 'good' man
- **Thresholds of acceptable violence**, when women disobeys husband or is unfaithful.
- Responsibility for unacceptable violence placed on '**other**' '**non-religious**', '**alcohol consuming**' men.
- Influence of **disrupted gender roles** in crisis and conflict, socio-economic challenges and men's experiences of violence,
- **90% of men** surveyed had themselves **experienced violence**.

3. Engaging women: The role of women in upholding unequal gender norms

- Women **expressed support for gender unequal** norms, often framed around religious scriptures,
- Women expressed support for the idea that **men's violence against women is acceptable in certain circumstances,**
- Women upheld the idea that **causes and solutions to intrahousehold conflict lie** disproportionately, if not primarily, with women.
- **Important to adopt a relational perspective** when implementing and evaluating masculinities focused interventions.

Recommendations for gender transformative programming, involving faith leaders:

1. **Significant and influential role of faith leaders and socio-religious norms** in shaping ideas and expectations of gender roles and relations, as well as of gender violence.
2. Reconsider the framing of interventions and their messaging around the relationship between masculinity and violence, and:
3. Always include a **contextual analysis of the relationship between masculinities and violence in conflict settings**, both including and beyond socio-religious gender norms.
4. Adopt a **relational perspective** when implementing and evaluating masculinities focused interventions. Be aware that the tendency for women to carry the disproportionate burden of responsibility for change is not reinforced.

The model may want to consider being reinforced by complementary components: livelihoods activities and MHPS. To work closely with faith leaders and communities to ensure that survivors' needs, voices, and experiences be squarely.

Impact of influence change (Ccl)

VAWG remains a prevalent protection concern in the humanitarian settings. It is underpinned by harmful social and gender norms. The EFLC model produced encouraging results, including by broadening knowledge, awareness, and understanding of VAWG and by equipping faith leaders and communities to act as first responders to SGBV.

Questions, clarifications,
thoughts

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