Tearfund’s approach to addressing SGBV starts with the premise of helping people to understand that gender equality and their faith are not mutually exclusive, but are compatible and most importantly are rooted in the values and principles of their faith.

PRABU DEEPAN, TEARFUND’S TECHNICAL LEAD FOR TRANSFORMING MASCULINITIES

Transforming Masculinities training in action with faith leaders, DRC. Photo: Uwezo Baghuma/Tearfund partner
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

KEEPING THE FAITH: ADDRESSING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV) IN DRC

Faith leaders have a unique potential to speak out against harmful social norms and be catalysts for positive change. Over the last 10 years Tearfund has worked with faith leaders in DRC to respond to the HIV epidemic, provide support to survivors of sexual violence and re-envision concepts of masculinity to end the cycle of violence for good.

REASONS FOR OUR RESPONSE

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a dangerous place to live, especially if you are a woman. The country has suffered many years of civil war, which has caused the displacement of people, the division of communities, the collapse of social services and widespread poverty. As a result DRC consistently ranks among the lowest countries in the UN Human Development Index.47

One of the most shocking features of this conflict is the widespread occurrence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and girls, as well as men and boys, as a tactic of war.

More worryingly, research suggests even higher levels of sexual violence within communities and intimate partner relationships.48 It is estimated that one in four women will experience sexual violence at some point in their life in DRC.49

Survivors of SGBV face physical and emotional trauma, and stigma, blame and rejection by their partners, neighbours and even churches. Sexual violence and poverty also contribute to the HIV epidemic in the country. Twenty per cent of women who have been subject to sexual violence in eastern DRC are HIV positive.50

There is a lack of information about HIV and SGBV, and a lack of access to treatment and support, as the government struggles to provide public services, particularly in remote areas.

No woman, man or child should experience such violence. Tearfund has been mobilising and equipping local faith leaders and faith communities to transform the harmful social and gender norms that are root causes of stigma and violence. This approach is having impact because of the powerful influence faith leaders have to change negative belief systems related to gender roles and behaviours.

‘Faith leaders are influential local opinion leaders, and they’ve got a unique mandate to speak to their communities on these sensitive issues,’ says Maggie Sandilands, who leads Tearfund’s response to SGBV in humanitarian contexts.

This chapter follows the journey of Tearfund’s work in this area over the last 10 years.
1. RESPONDING TO HIV EPIDEMIC
In 2009, Tearfund secured UK government funding to deliver a five year HIV programme in eastern DRC. Faith leaders were trained to raise awareness and reduce stigma around HIV in their communities, and six local partners provided healthcare and psychosocial support to those diagnosed with HIV.

Church leaders became champions in increasing awareness and knowledge of HIV in their communities. This led to reduced stigma, increased support for people living with HIV, more people being tested and reduced transmission from mothers to infants.

Working with faith leaders had a strong impact because of their influence over community norms and behaviours. However, to have a long-term impact Tearfund needed to work with faith leaders further to prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), a key driver of the HIV epidemic.

2. GREAT LAKES RESEARCH
Tearfund conducted extensive research in the Great Lakes region between 2013 and 2014, to understand the cultural context of SGBV and how to effectively respond. Interpretations of religious teachings justifying male dominance and violent behaviour was a significant finding. This confirmed the need to engage with religious leaders, as well as men and boys directly, to challenge harmful concepts of masculinity.

3. PSVI PROJECT
In 2014, the research informed the development of Tearfund’s first SGBV programme in northeast DRC, funded by the UK government’s Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI). Religious leaders of different faiths were mobilised to tackle SGBV in their communities.

An approach called ‘Transforming Masculinities’ was developed using scriptural reflections to promote value-driven and respectful relationships between men and women.
(see case study). Community Action Groups were established to help survivors access treatment, to provide psychosocial support and to teach income-generating activities.

As a result, faith leaders are speaking out against SGBV, and communities are prepared to provide support to survivors. There is notable change in gender attitudes and behaviours among participants in the training, including increased respect between family members and opportunities for women.

4. UK GOVERNMENT GLOBAL SUMMIT
From grassroots work to national and global discussions; at the UK government’s first Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, 2014, Tearfund, as founder of the We Will Speak Out Faith Coalition, hosted a panel discussion on the role of faith-based organisations in prevention and response to SGBV. The Summit resulted in an unprecedented display of political commitment to tackle sexual violence and included recognition of the unique role of faith groups in this work.

5. WHAT WORKS PROJECT
In 2015, Tearfund received UK government funding to gather further evidence for the value of working with faith leaders, through a research project called ‘What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls’. Tearfund’s approach was taken to 15 new communities, and results to date verify that our faith-based approach is leading to the transformation of deeply rooted negative attitudes and behaviours. It also highlighted that violence between partners was a huge and neglected issue in DRC, and hard to address since it is not considered an offence.

6. PASSAGES PROJECT
In response, Tearfund became a consortium partner in a project called ‘Passages’ in 2015, alongside Georgetown University, funded by the US government. Tearfund’s contribution is the Transforming Masculinities approach working with young married couples in Kinshasa to raise awareness of and prevent intimate partner violence. Early findings show a clear shift in attitudes and knowledge around SGBV and more churches are now requesting for the training to be carried out with their congregations.

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(Images of community members and faith leaders.)

**(Inspired Individual: Daphrose Kyakimweto)**

Tearfund is supporting Daphrose, a passionate and innovative youth counsellor and chaplain, to run the Gratia Counselling Centre in one of the largest schools in Goma, DRC. The centre provides psychosocial support to over 1,000 students annually who have been traumatised by the conflict and sexual violence they have witnessed, helping them to rebuild their lives, succeed academically, and become a future generation of values-driven leaders. Daphrose’s model is present in 45 other schools and she plans to train 500 teachers and parents and 1,300 chaplains to deliver similar support by 2020.
An estimated 84 per cent of the global population are affiliated to a religious tradition or faith belief. Belief systems and faith leaders have a powerful influence over social norms, including gender roles and behaviours. Certain interpretations of religious texts can play a powerful role in reinforcing patriarchal attitudes, dominant forms of masculinity and rigid gender roles, which are harmful to men and women, boys and girls.

As a faith-based organisation, Tearfund’s experience and understanding is that faith leaders and sacred texts can equally be powerful agents for change in addressing SGBV, as seen in Tearfund’s Transforming Masculinities approach.

Transforming Masculinities: A faith-based approach to restoring relationships

NOT JUST A WOMEN’S ISSUE
Responses to sexual violence have typically focused on the needs of survivors and the empowerment of women, but SGBV is not purely a women’s issue. It is a gender issue and requires work on gender justice and equality of individuals to tackle the root causes of violence. It is crucial to involve men and boys in addressing SGBV in their communities, since it is often the harmful ideologies of what it means to be a man which normalise violence as a masculine trait.

Tearfund’s approach is to work with faith leaders, and use scriptural reflections to encourage communities to question the underlying values and status traditionally assigned to men and women. The goal is to promote positive models for being men and women, for leadership, for restoring relationships and for promoting gender equality in every sphere of society.

Transforming Masculinities training involves three key stages:

1. **FAITH LEADERS**
   National-, provincial- and community-level faith leaders attend workshops that engage and equip them to provide leadership and support for the Transforming Masculinities process.

2. **GENDER CHAMPIONS**
   Community faith leaders select key male and female members of the community to be trained as facilitators of small group discussions called ‘community dialogues’.

3. **COMMUNITY DIALOGUES**
   Small groups of men and women meet weekly in their communities for six weeks for discussions led by Gender Champions. Weeks 1-5 are conducted in single-sex groups and Week 6 in combined-sex groups.

The groups consider topics including SGBV, and how it affects their communities, and the underlying harmful norms that cause broken relationships. They are encouraged to rethink gender attitudes and behaviours from a faith perspective to promote value-driven and respectful relationships between men and women.

WHAT CHANGE HAVE WE SEEN?
The Transforming Masculinities training is part of Tearfund’s three SGBV programmes in DRC. Over 400 faith and community leaders and Gender Champions have currently been trained in the approach, reaching over 2,500 men and women through community dialogues.

The PSVI programme has been using the approach with communities in northeast DRC since 2014. An external evaluation in 2016 found that faith leaders trained in Transforming Masculinities have become committed to teaching their communities about positive masculinities and are key players in the prevention of SGBV. As one pastor reflects:

‘Before, I didn’t work at home, I considered my wife as a thing, I did not respect her. But today, I have been transformed. At home, I started helping my wife, going to the field with her, looking after our children, I feel very happy.’

**GENDER CHAMPION, PSVI TRAINING**
‘Any change must start with oneself; having followed the gender training I committed myself to live out gender equality in my own home. I began by asking my wife for forgiveness and showing my love and consideration to her. I am ready to transform others in my church and to be a model example.’ Pastor from Transforming Masculinities training

In these communities, the church has become a place where survivors are welcomed and supported. The commitment of faith leaders is demonstrated by the advocacy work they have undertaken, such as developing community action plans with local authorities to prevent and monitor SGBV.

The community dialogues have led to changes in the mindsets of participants, including increased understanding of issues related to SGBV, awareness of harmful gender behaviours, and increased respect between family members. This is leading to behavioural changes including increased confidence among women and a reduction in violence within communities and intimate partner relationships.

Transforming Masculinities is now being successfully adapted by Tearfund in nine other countries including Nigeria, Myanmar, Iraq and Colombia.

MARY’S STORY

Mary suffered the abuse and control of her husband for more than six years, ‘He would come back home drunk at around 10pm and would immediately attack and insult me in front of the children.’

Mary had no voice in her relationship, especially when it came to money: ‘Each time I would try and say something about the management of our household income, we would end up in a quarrel and fight most of the time.’

Then her husband began attending one of Tearfund’s community dialogues as part of the PSVI project. ‘Papa Kapisa, who is the chairman of the dialogue, began talking to my husband,’ Mary remembers, ‘and he agreed to start attending the sessions.’

After her husband attended the training she began to notice a positive change. ‘I was so amazed by the way my husband started changing little by little and acting differently,’ Mary says,

‘Now he speaks to me in a soft voice, we even get to discuss questions in our home. He comes back home at 7pm at the latest and he is now concerned with the education of the children and most importantly, not being drunk. I do not know how to thank you enough.’

Tearfund’s Transforming Masculinities training promotes value-driven and respectful relationships between men and women. Photo: Bryony Dobson/Tearfund
## EVIDENCE LIST

The following is a list of significant evaluations and research used as evidence for this report. We have scored our evaluations against the Bond Evidence Principles to ensure quality in the evidence used. Only evidence that scored 40 or above was chosen to be included. The scores have been assessed and cross-checked by Tearfund’s Impact and Effectiveness Team.

This list does not represent all the evidence used in the report – only the significant evaluations and research documents. The Impact Narratives were constructed by triangulating different sources of evidence, including project reports, annual reports, interviews and qualitative and observational knowledge from our teams and partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Report title</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Bond Evidence Principles score</th>
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<td>Participatory evaluation process implemented by PAG</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>Church and community mobilisation process by PAG, Soroti</td>
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<td>Capacity enhancement project</td>
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<td>Bridging the gap</td>
<td>Research Report</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>Faithful and flourishing communities: The church’s role in community transformation in Uganda</td>
<td>Research Report</td>
<td>2016/17</td>
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<td>Evaluation of the capacity building programme for Myanmar Baptist Convention</td>
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<td>Cyclone Nargis evaluation report</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Telling the story of Eden</td>
<td>Review Report</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Social Capital, Resilience and the Local Church</td>
<td>Research Report</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>82</td>
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<td>Our Daughters’ Voices</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>Malawi</td>
<td>Investing in communities: the benefits and costs of building food security in Malawi</td>
<td>Research Report</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td>Improving food security and livelihoods of rural households in Salima district, Malawi</td>
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<td>Malawi: water and climate justice project</td>
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<td>Enhancing water management project, Malawi</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Khwamba sustainable livelihoods improvement project</td>
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<td>2017</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>FCS Aid4Life programme</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>2012-2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Faith-based coalition on holistic responses to HIV and gender in eastern DRC</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
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<td>Middle East</td>
<td>Syria appeal real time review</td>
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<td>Emergency cash assistance for displaced households in northern Iraq</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evaluation of European refugee response 2015</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>64</td>
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</table>
'If another big drought hit, it wouldn’t be like before, ample food would still be available within the community since some farmers have greatly increased their production and we have savings from previous years...we are much more secure now.'

PARTICIPANT FROM TEARFUND’S DISASTER RISK REDUCTION TRAINING, MALAWI
58. ACAPS (2016) Haiti - Special Reports www.acaps.org/country/haiti/special-reports
67. Ibid
68. Tearfund (2013) Syria Appeal Real-Time Review
69. ACAPS (2016) Iraq Key Figures www.acaps.org/country/iraq
74. UNHCR (2017) Humanitarian Response Plan Iraq
75. Markus G (2016) Operation Safe Passage – Refugee and Migrant Relief in Greece
80. Eco Church is an A Rocha UK initiative that Tearfund supports. To find out more see ecochurch.arocha.org.uk
Following Jesus where the need is greatest