

Promoting the Rights of the Batwa Pygmies: Recognition, Representation and Cooperation

Minority Rights Group International



Final Evaluation

September 2007

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Prepared for
Minority Rights Group International

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Partner Organisations visited during evaluation

- Rwanda
 - AIMPO – African Indigenous and Minority Peoples Organization
 - CAURWA – Communauté des Autochtones Rwandais
- Burundi
 - UCEDD – Union Chrétienne pour l'Éducation et le Développement des Déshérités
 - UNIPROBA – Unissons Nous pour la Promotion Batwa
- Uganda
 - UOBDU – United Organisation for Batwa Development in Uganda

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- Benon Mugarura of AIMPO
- Zéphyrin Kalimba of CAURWA
- Innocent Mawikizi and Béatrice Munezero of UCEDD
- Hon. Liberate Nicayenzi of UNIPROBA
- Penninah Zaninka and Henry Neza of UOBDU

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1

The target beneficiaries of the project were the Batwa populations in four countries in the Great Lakes region of Africa (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda). The project's main aims were:

- To increase recognition and respect for the rights of the Batwa
- To enhance participation and representation in the decision-making process
- To promote appropriate social development through intercommunity cooperation (leading to effective participation in the economy on the Batwa's own terms)

1.2

The principal activities of the project were:

- To hold regional advocacy and rights training workshop for representatives from Batwa organisations
- To hold regional workshops on peace and conflict involving NGOs, government officials and representatives of Batwa communities
- To create a special report on Batwa women translated into local languages
- To support small-scale community-based activities
- To translate an existing MRG report on land rights into local languages
- To enhance the organisational capacity of Batwa organisations through provision of training and equipment

1.3

The evaluation sought to test the attainment of the general goals of the project by seeking evidence of achievement in the following six specific areas:

1. Increased knowledge of issues among partners and Batwa at grassroots
2. Increase in Batwa networking with NGOs and government
3. Increase in Batwa networking with each other
4. Batwa having increased knowledge of land rights
5. Successful cascading of workshops
6. Improved community situation

1.4

The project ran from 2001-2004. This evaluation took place over ten days in May 2007. The time lapse between the end of the project (2004) and the evaluation (2007) has implications for the evaluation itself.

Firstly, some of the participants' memories of the MRG project are now rather hazy.

Secondly, as other projects with similar aims have also been in place, it is difficult – for both the evaluator and the participants – to attribute

particular outcomes specifically to the MRG project. On the other hand, the delay means that it is perhaps easier to assess the sustainability of the MRG project and the achievement (or not) of its longer-term goals.

Thirdly, some of the partner staff who were involved in the implementation of the project have since left their organisations, and two have deceased. Their insights would have enriched this evaluation.

1.5

This report does not provide detailed evaluation of particular components of the project, such as the cross-partner workshops held in Kampala and Kigali or the micro-projects. The former have been evaluated in detail in the interim report by Nigel Watt written soon after the events concerned. The latter have been assessed by MRG's own internal evaluation procedures.

1.6

Evaluation Itinerary

Thursday 3 rd May 2007	Arrival in Rwanda Contact with CAURWA
Friday 4 th May	CAURWA office, Kigali
Saturday 5 th May	Visit to CAURWA pottery boutique
Sunday 6 th May	AIMPO office, Kigali
Monday 7 th May	Travel to Ruhengeri Visit to Batwa community Travel to Kisoro, Uganda
Tuesday 8 th May	UOBDU office, Kisoro Meeting with local government official Visit to Batwa community Return to Kigali
Wednesday 9 th May	Travel to Bujumbura UNIPROBA office Visit to Batwa community
Thursday 10 th May	Meeting with government minister UNIPROBA office Travel to Gitega UCEDD office Visit to Batwa community
Friday 11 th May	Visit to Hope School Travel to Kigali Conversation with Tania Goosens-Allen (Trocaire) Conversation with Philip Christensen (CARE)
Saturday 12 th May	Visit to Batwa community near Kigali Depart Rwanda

1.7

Evaluation methodology

As time in the Great Lakes Region was limited it was impossible to visit all partners involved in the project. Besides, some did not respond to initial contact from UK. Five partners were visited over the ten days. As these were spread over three countries, a significant amount of time was spent travelling.

Due to time pressure and security considerations it was not practical to visit partners in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This report therefore makes no claims to the success or otherwise of the project in that country.

The short time available and the amount of travelling made it difficult to arrange many meetings with government officials and NGOs, who have their own busy schedules. However, there were particularly useful meetings with the Minister for National Solidarity, Human Rights & Gender in Burundi and the Chairman of the RC5 local district council in Uganda.

It was crucial for the evaluation to meet and talk with Batwa communities. In total, five Batwa villages were visited, although not all were represented by beneficiaries of the micro-projects scheme or the training workshops. There was significant variation in standard of living between these communities and varying degrees of participation in and knowledge of the MRG project.

The principal means of collecting information was through interviews with participants in the project. Interviews with project leaders and government officials were conducted either in French or English. Interviews with Batwa were conducted in the local language through the intermediary of an interpreter. In all cases except for the interviews conducted in one Batwa village near Bujumbura (see section 2.5 below) the interpreter was the project partner. See Recommendation 4.9 below.

2. ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES

2.1

Increased knowledge of issues among partners and Batwa at grassroots

All partner staff interviewed felt that the Kampala Human Rights training gave them an understanding of their rights and of local and national laws and mechanisms. For many, this was the first time that they had been brought together to be informed on national and international laws, as previously this had just been on an individual basis.

It was particularly useful for Batwa to meet MRG in the flesh and find out what they do. They are keen to keep up this contact even though the project has ended.

UOBDU held local workshops one month after Kampala. At grass roots this was the first time that many Batwa members began to understand that they have rights. This has led to confident lobbying. This was in evidence when Batwa met Ugandan MPs in Kisoro and told them directly, 'We have problems of land, education, marginalisation and injustice. We would like access to medicinal herbs, firewood and honey.'

Several partners stressed that grassroots sensitisation needs to be an ongoing process which needs continuing support. See Recommendation 4.1.

Partner staff were generally positive about the MRG publications concerning Batwa rights and issues. One partner said it was the right of Batwa to see what is written about them. However, it was fairly evident that the MRG publications are not widely read amongst Batwa themselves. This is due in part to low levels of literacy. CAURWA claimed that they are read by local Batwa leaders (chefs d'antenne) but it was hard to gauge how widely. Further consideration might be given to how such information might be made more accessible to Batwa. See Recommendation 4.2. The report on women needs to be translated into local languages.

2.2

Increase in Batwa networking with government and NGOs

Government:

The evaluation found plenty of evidence of Batwa relations with government bodies. Partners felt that this is increasing all the time, with greater understanding on both sides. All claimed that the MRG workshops and training were instrumental in opening doors to government. CAURWA claim that the MRG project made Rwandan Batwa aware of the possibility that they could be chosen for the 2003 representatives project.

Since the MRG Burundi workshop, CAURWA has been involved in many government initiatives, such as commissions on Droits de l'Homme and Lutte contre la Pauvreté. The president of CAURWA, Zéphyrin Kalimba, was consulted by the government on its NEPAD document. Of course, not all of these outcomes can be directly attributed to the workshop, but Kalimba felt that there is a snowball effect started by MRG's intervention.

CAURWA feel that their lobbying work is severely limited by the fact that Rwandan law does not allow them to exist as a body representing the Batwa as an ethnic group. Kalimba would like MRG to organise a follow-up workshop on how the authorities view Batwa and what their attitude is to their rights. He feels this is particularly pressing in view of the Rwandan government's policy of not recognising ethnic groups. See Recommendation 4.7.

This non-recognition in Rwanda of the Batwa as an ethnic group contrasts strongly with the situation in Uganda where UOBDU exists publicly as a Batwa organisation and authorities deal with them on that basis. This allows a greater freedom of expression. One example of this is the participatory video made by the Batwa. This was a result of Insight Films coming to the Batwa and training them to make a film about themselves in November 2006. The Batwa made a draft copy and decided amongst themselves what should be added and what should be taken out. The finished version was given to the district government offices. When local authorities saw the film they were so shocked that they sent it up to the government in Kampala (Ministry of Gender and Planning). See Recommendation 4.3.

On the day I arrived in Kisoro a group of three honourable parliamentarians and three senators had been specifically to visit to Batwa of the district. They felt the Batwa were not receiving their share of the national cake and so decided to talk directly to the Batwa at grassroots level.

Considerable progress has been made in the area of representation in the decision-making process. This is notable in Burundi, where there are three Batwa representatives in the General Assembly and three in the Senate. The short time available in Bujumbura and the absence of one Mutwa Senator in New York meant it was impossible to discern whether the MRG project played any direct role in this increased representation. However, the positive climate of political dialogue which the project has fostered can only contribute to such progress.

Some project personnel have very strong relationships with central government. For example, Hon. Liberate Nicayenzi of UNIPROBA is a senator and has regular access to the Minister of National Solidarity, Human Rights & Gender. This is encouraging, but it is important that such contact at management level should provide opportunities for developing

grassroots contact with government. The risk is that it simply replaces it. See Recommendation 4.4.

Similarly, it is a slow process to get grassroots Batwa onto the international stage. Mostly, international events are attended by the project staff, who have experience in this field. The staff at UCEDD in Gitega feel that they miss out on invitations to international events in favour of their more accessible counterparts, UNIPROBA, in Bujumbura.

A member of UOBDU, a woman, attended Africa Commission training in 2006 and presented in English (a first for a Mutwa). The Minister of Justice saw the shadow report from the Africa Commission and was asked 95 questions by the Africa commissioners. He met with the UOBDU member and project staff so that he could answer the questions.

In most cases concerning the Batwa in Kisoro, local authorities go through OUBDU. In the last three years, Batwa have started to approach local authorities without necessarily going through OUBDU. This is an encouraging sign. Of course, OUBDU is there for particularly complex cases. This change is put down to the influence of MRG training and workshops. As one partner expressed it: 'Before, they had inferiority in their minds and were not participating fully in their own destiny.'

Many partners commented on the confident way that Batwa are now able to represent themselves before government officials. MPs who visited one Batwa community said, 'People tell us the Batwa can't talk. So how come they are talking?' They replied 'Because we have an association.' One group of Batwa were so confident that the MPs asked if they were really Batwa.

However, there are still some government officials with a dismissive attitude. One Rwandan partner complained that Batwa organisations have problems meeting with senior government officials because their limited financial means prevents them from offering the level of hospitality such officials expect and that other pressure groups are able to give. He felt that MRG could support Batwa partners in this respect.

NGOs:

Contact and liaison with NGOs is also getting stronger. The MRG project led to AIMPO making an application to the Gorilla Organisation for funding for 33ha of land, but the Gorilla Organisation mandate does not allow them to buy land, so they got seeds and money for school equipment and pesticides and rehabilitation of Batwa houses.

The UOBDU micro-project sponsored by MRG has been very useful. Its aim was to collect data on numbers of Batwa, including children, widows and orphans. This information has helped NGOs buy land for Batwa as they realised how chronically short of land they were. See Recommendation 4.3.

Copies of Uganda Batwa video were sent to NGOs that work with Batwa. This is a model that could be replicated throughout the region.

CAURWA, UOBDU and UNIPROBA consider they have raised awareness of Batwa issues to a considerable level and that there is an appetite for more information. University students in Kigali come to CAURWA to find information on the Batwa. The MRG publications are very important in this regard. Greater public awareness is leading to greater demand for information.

2.3

Increase in Batwa networking with each other

Partners all considered that the fact that the MRG project gathered partners from across the GLR for workshops has been important in encouraging networking. However, beneath this rhetoric there are tensions between some partners (e.g., UNIPROBA and UCEDD in Burundi). It must also be recognised that while they are all involved in the common Batwa cause, the partners are also often in competition for funds. This situation predates the MRG project. Indeed, the MRG project, in giving cross-partner funding, could be said to have made a contribution to alleviating any tension arising from this situation.

The evaluation was unable to find much evidence of Batwa networking at grassroots level, though of course the Batwa associations have been important in bringing Batwa villagers together. One Mutwa woman, a pioneer of UOBDU, said of its founding, 'We wanted an office to bring Batwa together to discuss our issues. We had a need for a visible building.' The office in Kisoro now serves that function but there are problems of accessibility for those villages further from the town.

Networking between Batwa at a grassroots level is hampered by the cost in time and money for transport. Also, some rural Batwa are afraid to travel far for fear of attack or losing access to their land. See Recommendation 4.5.

In Kinichi 1 district in Rwanda, some Batwa have created cooperative groups. They have harvested four tonnes of sweet potatoes: some are eaten, some are kept for seeds and some are sold and the money banked.

This evaluation was far too limited in time to fully assess the degree of grassroots networking amongst Batwa. Nor could it assess whether this had increased over the duration of the project, as this was not monitored when the project began. If networking has increased it cannot necessarily be ascribed to the MRG project. There is a need for a monitoring and evaluation of Batwa systems of networking at grassroots level, both within associations and independent of them. Only then will it be possible to assess the degree to which Batwa share knowledge and best practice

regarding human and land rights issues. When this is known, it will be easier to promote them. See Recommendation 5.

2.4

Land rights

According to the project document, the project aimed to facilitate Batwa access to land through the translation into local languages of the MRG report *Land Rights and Minorities*. Partners hold copies in their offices, but they are not consulted widely by local Batwa due to issues of literacy. It was not possible to evaluate the document's readership at government level. There was no evidence of this document in any of the Batwa communities visited.

The document provides both a useful summary for outsiders to understand the land shortage among Batwa and some firm policy recommendations. It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to measure to what extent these have been followed up. It is difficult to gauge how accessible or useful the information included in the report is to grass roots Batwa. The document describes the Batwa experience but does not provide Batwa with advice on how to go about claiming land rights in the context of the daily discrimination they experience. It is recommended that more be done to support this, particularly through means not dependent on literacy.

One way in which the MRG project has supported Batwa land acquisition is through the MRG sponsored micro project conducted by UOBDO. This project collected population data on local Batwa settlements with the result that NGOs became aware of the chronic land shortage among Batwa.

2.5

Successful cascading of workshops

While the training workshops attended by partners in regional capitals were well received and generally successful, the transfer to grassroots Batwa of what was learnt there was very uneven. Nowhere was it an unqualified success.

It was generally hard to find evidence of multiplier effect of regional workshops. This may be partly due to the time elapsed between the project and this evaluation. At grassroots, there was a lack of clarity about human rights issues and about what advocacy could be done.

Some partners did not appear to have a clear strategy for multiplying the learning gained by project leaders at the regional workshops. The co-ordinator of AIMPO suggested that the workshop follow-up training was not really done and so the workshop skills were not passed on. In making this claim, he may have been referring to other partners, since AIMPO was in fact given a grant by MRG to organize a follow up training to share

the knowledge and skill that its representatives has acquired from Batwa Advocacy Rights Training. MRG may wish to clarify this with AIMPO.

At one Batwa village on the outskirts of Bujumbura, the villagers said they had little contact with UNIPROBA and were not sure what its role was or what it could do for them. They said they had not received training in any area and knew nothing about the human rights training. They do their own advocacy. In itself, this is not a bad thing, but training might have made them more effective. It is of course possible that other villagers have received training of which those interviewed were unaware. The frankness expressed may possibly be due to the fact that these interviews were interpreted by an independent (i.e., non-partner) translator. See Methodology (section 1.7) and Recommendation 4.9.

UOBDU project leaders stated that they passed on the Kampala human rights awareness training to locals on the ground by demonstrating possible responses to discrimination. E.g., 'If X happens to you, you have a right to defend yourself in XYZ ways.' UOBDU held a workshop in Kisoro attended and facilitated by Juliet Nakato, which 38 local Batwa attended. One Mutwa woman who attended this training said it had given her confidence but it was a long time ago. She said women were particularly unsure how to stand their ground.

UOBDU project leaders said that they had difficulty in maintaining the level of human rights training necessary to keep the knowledge alive. They suggested that the training could perhaps be put into booklets in local languages and used as a tool for those who didn't attend the training. Booklets would also serve as a reference document to keep the skills available and as a record of what exactly was communicated in the training so that new training projects would know where to start. They felt that if the Batwa don't keep reading and revising the knowledge it will disappear. All of these comments raise the problematic issue of literacy. UOBDU also suggested there needs to be follow-up to see if grassroots community members have learned from training and to reinforce it before it is forgotten. OUBDU would like MRG to support more village-based trainers. (CARE have committed to 24, but this is only a small percentage).

All the above comments from OUBDU suggest that lessons have been learned from the lack of supported strategy for cascading the regional workshop training. This is discussed fully in Recommendation 4.1.

2.6 Improved community situation

Whether or not the community situation has improved due to the MRG intervention is hard to measure. This is a long process, and the benefits of effective lobbying may not be fully evident for years. However, there are some encouraging signs.

Some Batwa in south west Uganda have formed a beekeeping association. They did this out of their own initiative, and 100 Batwa have received training. Project leaders in the region see this as evidence of an increased confidence and assertiveness that may be an indirect result of the awareness raising associated with the MRG project.

One partner claimed that the existence of Batwa associations whose leaders are sure of their civil and human rights means police are less likely to be dismissive of Batwa claims to justice and protection in the event of discrimination and victimisation. The police know that even if an individual Mutwa doesn't know their rights then they have an association behind them that can act on their behalf. MRG training in human rights has been instrumental in this new confidence.

For example, a group of Batwa near Gitega were falsely accused of stealing stones. Having a confident and informed community representative meant that they were treated like normal citizens and their story was heard. They felt that without this they would probably have been imprisoned without a proper investigation, as tended to occur in the past.

Successful Batwa lobbying in Burundi has led to one local governor having the idea of establishing a boarding school for Batwa at Gitega.

But there is also plenty of evidence that the Batwa still suffer discrimination.

Many Batwa complain of wage discrimination. Employment is irregular and they are paid very little for the work they do, often about half of what non-Batwa are paid. For some gardening jobs they may be paid only a can of beans. Often they can earn a similar amount through begging. This does little to improve public perception of the Batwa.

On the outskirts of Bujumbura the local authority has sited a rubbish dump very close to a Batwa village. Batwa children pick over the rubbish and sell what they find. Sometimes they take food home for cooking. There are 315 families in Butarere. Women are engaged in farming, charcoal burning and brick making. Many of the men are unemployed. There are numerous children not in school.

This village claims to have little engagement with the local Batwa organisation. They say they have not received training in advocacy. This may to some degree account for the presence of the rubbish dump and their poor situation in general.

3. NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

3.1

It is clear that partners feel much more confident on issues of human rights and advocacy since the project began in 2001. Links with government and NGOs are strengthening all the time. Batwa are represented at parliamentary level in Burundi. Contacts with authorities are cumulative. Not all of today's relationships can be ascribed to the MRG project, but project certainly played a vital part in this outreach process.

3.2

The human rights training was particularly successful at raising awareness among project leaders of their rights, both locally and internationally.

3.3

The three regional meetings proved a good forum for discussion, problem sharing and networking. They were an excellent forum for outreach to government representatives.

3.4

The fact that a Mutwa woman who was not partner staff addressed an international conference in English is an important step from which all partners can learn.

3.5

The census of Batwa populations in Uganda has proved vital in convincing government of the need to provide support. It has made the Batwa visible to the state

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1

Grassroots training

There is work to be done on increasing the efficacy and sustainability of the training given to rural Batwa. The cascading of the workshop training needs to be thought through more carefully and supported more closely. Project leaders and rural Batwa require different forms of training. This cascade training needs to be tailored to the situation and skills of rural Batwa.

There need to be mechanisms for monitoring the usefulness of the training at grass roots level. Levels of comprehension should be checked. Feedback should be sought on the content and form of the training. Follow-up should be built in. Examples of successful implementation of new knowledge should be logged and shared.

The Batwa have found that speaking up for their rights can often get them into trouble. The training needs to address the Batwa tendency not to raise their head above the parapet. That is, it needs to provide them with ways of assertiveness that they are comfortable with.

The form and content of the training should be made as relevant to the skills of the Batwa as possible. Given the low levels of formal education among the Batwa, formal presentations of abstract ideas may not be the most appropriate medium for training. Instead, training could play to their strengths of musicianship, song, dance and story telling. Theatre and song can work very well for non-literate people. They are memorable and illustrative. Concrete examples of successful Batwa lobbying could be shared in the form of stories. There is much to learn from the Theatre of the Oppressed (www.theatreoftheoppressed.org) developed by Augusto Boal in South America. This method allows people to put their new knowledge into practice in a dramatic rehearsal before they find themselves confronted by authorities.

The training should be devised in such a way that it answers the needs and skills not just of the more educated (who tend to be young men). Women and children may be particularly ill at ease with external voices of authority. The training should take this into account.

Attention needs to be paid to the widest dissemination of the training. Given that many Batwa are afraid to travel in case they lose their land or are attacked, perhaps a mobile training workshop could come to them. This would have the advantage of standardising the training to a certain extent, as there is great variability in quality, efficacy and method.

All of the above recommendations are dependent on a strategy worked in partnership with rural Batwa themselves.

4.2

Literature

The reading material disseminated by MRG has been fairly useful in raising awareness among non-Batwa, but it is unevenly distributed and some of it remains unread. Strategies should be found to create discussion and debate around the subject matter addressed. Also, many of the Batwa themselves are unable to read this material. Ways should be found for non-literate Batwa to discover what has been written about them. They should be given as full a role as possible in the production of this material.

4.3

Batwa profile

More work needs to be done to raise the profile of the Batwa and increase awareness of their situation. The partial census of the Batwa population in south west Uganda proved very valuable in persuading government and non-government bodies of Batwa's needs. This could be emulated in other parts of the GLR. The film produced by Insight Films gave Batwa control over how they represented themselves to the world. Such initiatives should be encouraged as they are a successful form of advocacy.

4.4

Grassroots representatives

Attention should be given to widening the range of grassroots representatives. Many of the leaders are young, slightly educated men. There needs to be a solid strategy for empowering women in advocacy skills and group representation. This is difficult given the demands of pregnancy and childcare, so they will need to be consulted in this. The advantage of having women as group representatives is that their childcare obligations make them less likely to become distanced from their people. A wider range of grassroots contact with authorities takes the strain off the project managers. Stories of successful lobbying and advocacy can be modelled by one Batwa group to another.

4.5

Batwa networking

There is a need for a monitoring and evaluation of Batwa systems of networking at grassroots level, both within associations and independent of them. What prevents networking? What encourages it? Then strategies need to be found to promote networking in contexts and environments that Batwa find comfortable, supportive and non-threatening. How can travel problems be overcome?

4.6

Attendance at conferences

At the moment, attendance at international conferences is dominated by certain project leaders. Procedures should be put in place to enable more competent and active community leaders to attend international conferences. This should include programme of pre-event preparation and training, and in some cases the provision of translators.

4.7

Lack of ethnic recognition in Rwanda

Specific strategies should be developed in close consultation with local Batwa representatives on the most effective means to lobby the Rwanda government to recognise the special situation of the Batwa and address it at the local, regional and national levels. CAURWA's proposition to organise workshops with authorities on how they perceive the Batwa and what rights Batwa have, may be one avenue to open a more constructive dialogue with government. The experience of the Ugandan Batwa in making a film to explain their situation and distributing this widely among decision-makers, in conjunction with providing accurate censuses data, seems to be another promising avenue to explore.

It is worth noting that the Rwandan Human Rights Commission recently submitted a report to the government making strong recommendations on how to address the problem of historically marginalized communities, including the Batwa. However, the report failed to recognize the Batwa as a distinct ethnic group. MRG should consult with partners in Rwanda as to how they can support them in their pursuit of recognition as an ethnic group without endangering their very existence.

4.8

Problems specific to Batwa women

The MRG report *Twa Women, Twa Rights in the Great Lakes Region of Africa* by Dorothy Jackson can serve as a very useful base for future MRG interventions. This document apart, the evaluation found little evidence to back the claim made in the original project proposal that 'women will receive particular attention in keeping with MRG's gender policy' (p.7). That is to say, much more could have been done to respond to the needs and incorporate the skills of Batwa women in the project implementation.

Future interventions should seek to address the factors that keep women out of the realm of political discussion and awareness. These include women's daily struggle to feed their families, fear of attack when travelling, childcare obligations, and lack of education. One approach would be to find ways of relieving daily burdens or perceived risks so that women become available to attend workshops and information-sharing opportunities. Prior to such events women should be consulted as to what format and timetabling would enable their participation. Since Batwa men tend to be more confident about speaking in public it may be worth considering conducting gender-specific sessions.

4.9

Use of translators for evaluation purposes

As evaluators need to probe the possible weaknesses of a project it can be problematic to use project staff as interpreters. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, the interlocutors may feel constrained in how they answer the evaluator's questions. Secondly, the interpreter's perspective may unconsciously (or consciously) colour their translation.

In future, MRG may wish to consider encouraging and supporting evaluators to use independent interpreters in their interviews with target populations. These can often be identified on location and need not add significantly to the evaluation budget. When visiting minority populations it would be ideal if the interpreter belonged to that minority. It is almost certainly problematic if the interpreter belongs to the dominant majority community. This recommendation is made in the knowledge that finding a Batwa interpreter may not always be realistic amongst a population with such low levels of education.