

Uncounted: the hidden lives of Batwa women

By Kathryn Ramsay

Despite being the original inhabitants of the equatorial forests of Africa's Great Lakes region, Batwa¹ are, in official terms, practically invisible. Facing ongoing discrimination resulting in poverty, unemployment and poor access to education and health care, their situation is compounded by a lack of acknowledgement of their struggles by their respective governments. It is extremely difficult, frequently impossible, to find statistics and data about the Batwa communities in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Uganda; it is even harder to find gender-specific data about the situation of Batwa women and girls.

Yet comprehensive and disaggregated data collection is vital to ensure that governments meet their obligations to protect minorities and indigenous peoples under international law, and that development programmes

respond sufficiently and appropriately to the specific needs of Batwa. The requirement is particularly great in relation to Batwa girls and women who, as previously documented by Minority Rights Group International (MRG),² suffer multiple forms of discrimination.

MRG has worked with Batwa non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to establish areas of particular importance, and highlight the need for more comprehensive official data to help inform outreach programmes and policies. The unique investigations conducted in four countries, albeit on a small scale, identify and analyse some of the problems Batwa women and girls encounter, as conveyed by Batwa communities themselves. In particular, they focus on lack of access to education and worrying proportions of gender-based violence.



BATWA WOMEN IN UGANDA. KATHRYN RAMSAY/MRG

Background on Batwa

Batwa are indigenous peoples traditionally inhabiting the forests in the Great Lakes region of Africa. No official figures exist, but estimates place the population in Burundi at 30,000–40,000,³ Rwanda at 33,000⁴ and the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at 90,000.⁵ Uganda is the only one of the four countries with census data; the 2002 census results showed Batwa numbered 6,705 or 0.03 per cent of the population.⁶ Batwa are poor and marginalized in all four countries. They have mostly lost their traditional forest lands through a combination of a long process of deforestation to make way for farming and herding peoples, conflict leading to forced displacement, or more recent expulsion from the forests in the name of development or conservation. As a result, their poverty has increased, while the discrimination they face from dominant communities has become further entrenched. Batwa live on the margins of society in poor-quality housing and have high levels of unemployment. Frequently, their only employment is low-paid occasional work as labourers for neighbouring communities. Child mortality is high, and access to health care is low. As this briefing paper discusses, Batwa also have poor access to education and suffer from high levels of violence. They are stereotyped by majority communities, and resulting segregation means that Batwa are often not permitted to eat or sit with other communities or use wells at the same time.⁷

Focus on Batwa women

Batwa women and girls suffer multiple or intersectional forms of disadvantage and discrimination. They are discriminated against for being Batwa, and experience gender discrimination as majority women do. They also suffer from particular discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity and gender combined, i.e. they have specific problems because they are both Batwa and women. The disadvantage faced by Batwa women comes both from outside the Batwa community, from majority communities (for example, a prevailing myth that sex with a Batwa woman cures backache has been cited in the studies as a factor leading to rape of Batwa women by non-Batwa men), and from within the Batwa community, from Batwa men (for example men deciding whether or not their daughters are sent to school).

The importance of data

As the UN Forum on Minority Issues heard in 2008, standard data collection tends to ‘only count those whom we care about’,⁸ often neglecting the specific experiences of minorities and indigenous peoples, and particularly women from these groups. The lack of information on the situation of Batwa women suggests scant concern about their plight on the part of governments, and little awareness or understanding of the problems and discrimination they face.

Without knowledge or consideration of their situation, government policies are likely to exclude them altogether, or initiatives will fail to adequately address their issues. The same is true for the efforts of development agencies. To create effective policies and programmes to improve the social and economic status of Batwa women, comprehensive information is required about the problem the policy aims to change. Without it, the existing situation could unintentionally be made worse. Accurate statistical data is therefore crucial in designing effective development policies, and is vital in measuring the impact of those policies and programmes on the beneficiary community.

Disaggregation of data

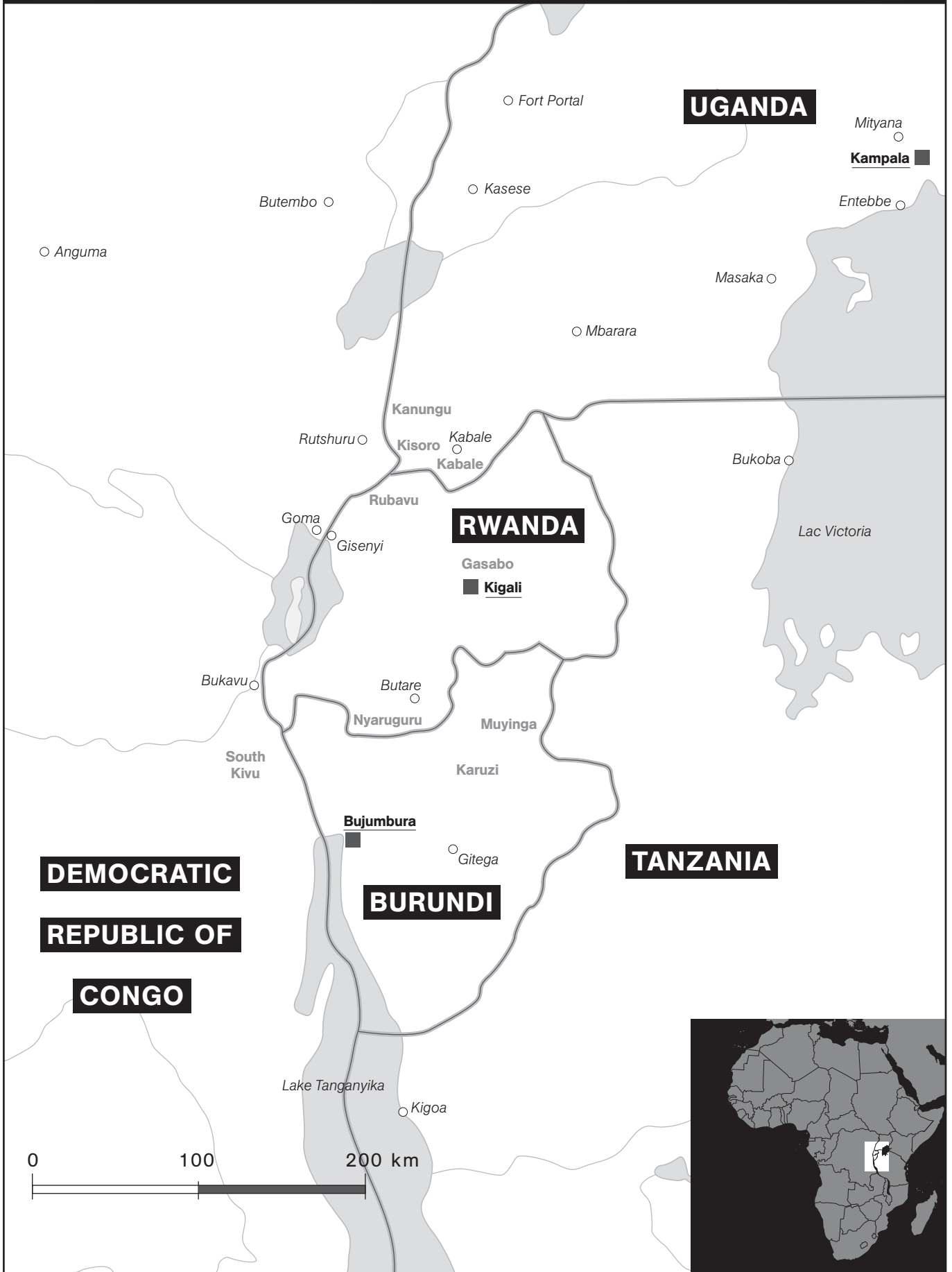
In a development context, disaggregation of data by sex is a well-established principle, even if its implementation is patchy. For example, the indicators measuring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should, as far as possible, be disaggregated by sex.⁹ This means that it should be possible to identify the ‘gender gap’ – where the goals are not being met for women and girls, or men and boys – and steps that can be taken to address it.

No similarly established principle exists for the disaggregation of data by ethnicity. Disadvantaged positions of minorities and indigenous peoples, and, doubly, of minority and indigenous women, are, therefore, hidden unless states choose to disaggregate data in this way.

In the absence of disaggregated data, it is difficult to prove instances of discrimination, especially indirect discrimination (where apparently neutral provisions or practices have a disproportionate disadvantage for members of minorities or indigenous peoples). For example, a seemingly impartial requirement for all children to wear shoes to school could result in a disproportionate impact on a minority group that is poorer than other communities, leading to their children being unable to attend school. In such a case, statistics on the school attendance of different ethnic groups and data on reasons for non-attendance would demonstrate the discrimination and allow governments to improve the situation.

To date, the only legal instrument incorporating this principle of establishing indirect discrimination using statistics is in Europe.¹⁰ However, the four states under discussion in this briefing paper have a legal duty to ensure equality and non-discrimination under numerous

Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda



international instruments that they have ratified.¹¹ This duty to ensure non-discrimination should be interpreted to include a duty to collect and analyse data disaggregated by ethnicity so that inequality can be highlighted and addressed.

Ethnic data: governments' role

Across the four countries where Batwa live, lack of ethnic data is a common problem, though the reasons differ. Given past ethnic conflict, the government in Rwanda does not officially recognize the existence of any ethnic group, meaning that census data or other official surveys do not exist to produce statistics showing the problems experienced by Batwa. That Rwanda disavows the existence of any ethnic group also means that there is no official acknowledgement of the discrimination they face. Although the Rwandan government's sensitivity towards identifying ethnic differences is understandable in light of the 1994 genocide, its approach is counter-productive because it fails to address the deep-rooted tensions that continue to exist in Rwandan society, which may become exacerbated in the future.¹²

In Uganda, although the 2002 census included a question on ethnicity and provided figures on the number of Batwa, their relatively small population means that they were categorized alongside 18 other ethnic groups with fewer than 25,000 members in a group called 'others'.¹³ Therefore, where data on socio-economic status, for example, is disaggregated by ethnicity, it is still not possible to see the exact situation of Batwa.

Ingrained in Burundi is 'an institutional unwillingness to differentiate between Batwa and other poor non-Batwa communities',¹⁴ which similarly results in no official statistics on their situation. In the DRC, meanwhile, years of conflict have severely hampered any collection of data. Furthermore, logistical problems in all four countries render data collection challenging; many Batwa communities live in remote areas, making communication difficult.

The transparent collection of official ethnic statistics depends on the prior recognition of the existence of different ethnic groups by the government. As in the case of Rwanda, governments can fear that acknowledging difference or the existence of minorities may exacerbate historical conflicts,¹⁵ or that data showing inequalities may lead to resentment between ethnic groups over who is more disadvantaged.¹⁶ However, international law does not permit governments to deny the existence of minority and indigenous groups to avoid implementing their minority rights obligations.¹⁷ These stances also fail to take into account that discrimination and marginalization occur with or without ethnic data, for example due to long-held stereotypes; having no means of proving or disproving cases of discrimination could in itself cause problems.

Background to research

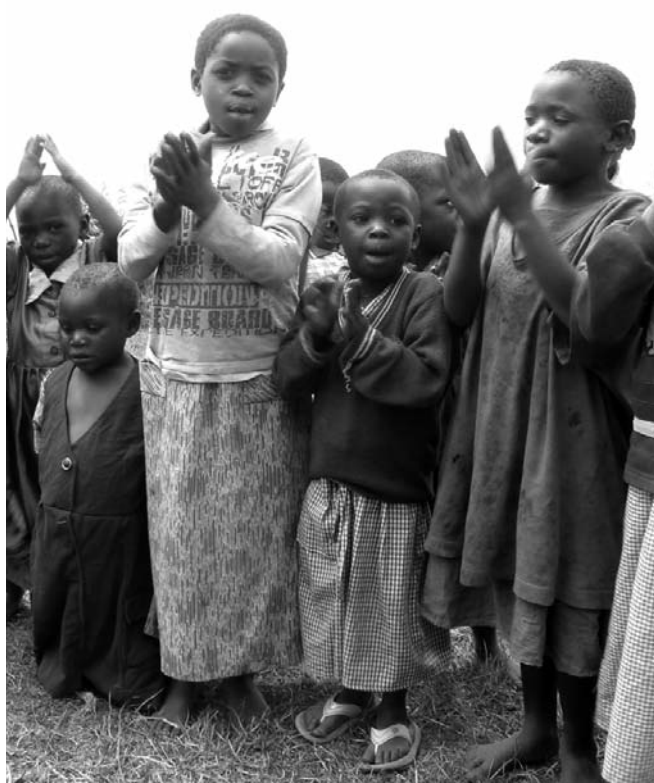
When MRG began discussions with Batwa NGO partners on designing a programme specifically to address the problems faced by Batwa women, a major obstacle was the complete absence of official data to help demonstrate the extent of the problem to potential donors. It seemed that the lack of information on Batwa women rendered them virtually invisible. The few figures that did exist came mainly from anecdotal evidence; however, such data did not necessarily address Batwa women specifically.

It was for this reason that MRG and its partners decided to focus their work on supporting Batwa NGOs and equipping them with improved skills to conduct research on an issue of importance to Batwa women in their respective countries. The Batwa NGOs working with MRG identified two priority research themes:

- education of Batwa girls
- violence against Batwa women.

Methodology overview

MRG worked with partners in Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda. The programme began with a regional workshop in September 2008 on data-collection methodology, whereby participants received training on the skills needed to design and carry out research. The sessions included research ethics, sampling, various data collection methods and data analysis. The NGOs from each country jointly designed studies tailored to the situation in their respective countries. This meant that they used different methodologies; however, it was not expected that the



BATWA GIRLS. MRG

results could draw regionally applicable conclusions. The teams surveyed villages, households, schools and individuals (Batwa and non-Batwa; adults and children) between the end of 2008 and mid 2009. Each country's methodology is explained in more detail below. Following the data collection and analysis, each project team produced a country-specific report. Their results are summarized and discussed below; the full reports are available at <http://www.minorityrights.org/6861/thematic-focus/gender.html>.

Education of Batwa girls

Background

MRG's partners in Burundi and the DRC chose to focus their research on education. They particularly wanted to examine the reasons for the low level of enrolment of Batwa girls in school and their high drop-out rates. Through a better understanding of the reasons for the problems, they hope to improve their strategies for tackling the issue and convince the authorities and development agencies of the need to address the problem by initiating work where nothing is being done, or improving the few initiatives that do exist.

The methodology of each study was designed according to the information that partners felt was needed in each country, and while some similar conclusions can be drawn, the results of the studies are country-specific and therefore not completely comparable. Resource constraints meant that both the Burundi and DRC research focused solely on the Batwa community, and did not ask the same questions about other ethnic groups. This means that using the data to compare the disadvantaged position of Batwa girls with that of other sections of society in the study areas is difficult. Any comparisons between Batwa and other dominant ethnic groups must be made using national education statistics.

Burundi

In Burundi, two NGOs – Unissons-nous pour la promotion des Batwa (UNIPROBA, or Together for the Promotion of Batwa) and Union chrétienne pour l'éducation et le développement des déshérités (UCEDD, or Christian Union for the Education and Development of the Disadvantaged) – carried out the research between December 2008 and July 2009.

They selected two provinces, Muyinga and Karuzi. They chose these areas because: they are geographically enclosed; larger numbers of Batwa live there; and they lack systematic development assistance. A preliminary survey formed the first stage of the process, namely to establish the number of Batwa households in those areas, numbers of Batwa children, and numbers of Batwa boys and girls attending and not attending school. For the main survey, the research team selected five communes

within the two chosen provinces that showed a lower number of children attending school (two in Muyinga and three in Karuzi).

The second part of the study involved interviews with selected respondents in the five communes. Respondents were Batwa girls, their parents, neighbours from other ethnic groups, teachers at the schools attended by Batwa girls, and administrative and religious authorities. The aim of the interviews was to gather detailed information showing the reasons Batwa girls do not attend or complete primary and secondary education.

DRC

The DRC research project was conducted between January and June 2009 by a team representing five NGOs – the Batwa women's organization Union pour l'émancipation de la femme autochtone (UEFA, or Union for the Emancipation of Indigenous Women), Action pour la promotion des droits des minorités autochtones en Afrique centrale (APDMAC, or Action for the Promotion of the Rights of Indigenous Minorities in Central Africa), Association pour le regroupement et l'autopromotion des pygmées (ARAP, or Association for the Regrouping and Self-Promotion of Pygmies), Centre d'accompagnement des autochtones pygmées et minoritaires vulnérables (CAMV, or Support Centre for Indigenous Pygmies and Vulnerable Minorities) and Collectif pour les peuples autochtones au Kivu/RDC (CPAKI, or Collective for the Indigenous Peoples of Kivu).

The research focused on five specific geographical areas in South Kivu province (Bunyakiri, Kabare, Kalehe, Kalonge and Uvira), since they have higher concentrations of Batwa than other parts of the province. The first stage involved mapping all the schools in the five areas to find out the numbers of Batwa boys and girls attending school. The research team visited 22 villages and 18 schools in total.

In the second part of the research, a questionnaire was used to collect qualitative information on factors affecting Batwa girls attending school. Focus-groups of up to eight people were held, and between four and six people per school or village were interviewed. Respondents were teachers, Batwa and non-Batwa pupils, Batwa parents and key individuals (local leaders). The names of key individuals to be interviewed were suggested by other respondents during the course of the study.

Poor access to education

In Burundi, the preliminary survey found 614 Batwa households in the two provinces with 1,683 school-age children. Only 58 per cent of the school-age children were attending school, and of these children, 65 per cent were Batwa boys and only 35 per cent Batwa girls. UNICEF reports that the net primary school attendance ratio for boys overall in Burundi (2003–8) was 72 per cent and girls 70 per cent. They also state that the net primary

school attendance (2003–8) figure for girls as a percentage of boys is 97.¹⁸

These statistics show that school attendance by Batwa children (and especially girls) is significantly lower than national averages, and the gender disparity much greater. In both provinces, the drop-out rate of Batwa girls was approximately twice that of Batwa boys (on average 67 per cent of Batwa girls had dropped out of school compared with 33 per cent of Batwa boys).

Figures for the numbers of children who have never attended school showed more variation between the provinces. In Muyinga, of the 650 school-age Batwa children, 248 (or 38 per cent) have never been to school and, of those, 82 per cent are girls. In contrast, in Karuzi, of the 1,033 school-age children, a slightly smaller percentage of children (34 per cent, or 348 children) has never been to school; however, more boys than girls have never been to school (57 per cent of boys compared to 43 per cent of girls).

It is interesting to note that the figures in Karuzi do not follow the general expectation that fewer girls than boys are enrolled in school; however, it should also be highlighted that more girls than boys dropped out of school in both Muyinga and Karuzi. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of the study to investigate in more detail why the enrolment situation for Batwa girls in Karuzi was so much better than for those in Muyinga, where Batwa girls were far more likely than boys to have never attended school.

In the DRC, fewer Batwa girls were in school than Batwa boys. The difference was greatest in Kalonge, where 84 per cent of Batwa children at school were boys and only 16 per cent were girls. Most parity was found in Bunyakiri, where 57 per cent of Batwa children at school were boys and 43 per cent were girls. In the other areas, attendance of Batwa boys was between 59 and 61 per cent. Overall, 39 per cent of the Batwa children at school in the five areas were girls. The study found that the 18 schools surveyed had 6,593 pupils, of which 235 were Batwa (144 boys and 91 girls).

Survey results: girls in education

- Batwa boys are almost twice as likely to attend school as Batwa girls in Burundi, while girls nationally are twice as likely to go to school as Batwa girls.
- The drop-out rate of Batwa girls is twice that of Batwa boys in Burundi.
- In the DRC, 39 per cent of the Batwa children at school were girls.

This means that Batwa children make up 3.6 per cent of the school population (boys 2.2 per cent and girls only 1.4 per cent). The lack of accurate data on the overall ethnic composition of the population of the DRC, and in particular the ethnic make-up of South Kivu, means that it is impossible to draw conclusions as to whether Batwa children are attending school in numbers proportionate to their total

in the population of the region. Fewer national statistics are available for the DRC too, which renders it more difficult to put the figures from the study into context. The available data shows that lack of education is a general problem in the DRC: World Bank figures state that only 51 per cent of children in the DRC complete primary school.¹⁹

UNESCO data from 2007 show enrolment of girls in primary school to be 39 per cent, which is almost equal to the average percentage of Batwa girls enrolled at school across the five study areas; however, without drop-out rate or attainment figures, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions on whether Batwa girls are really achieving levels of education on a par with the national average.²⁰

Causes of Batwa girls' lack of access to education

There were close correlations between the reasons for Batwa girls not accessing education in both Burundi and the DRC. The Burundi study produced mainly quantitative data showing the opinions of the various categories of respondents, whereas the DRC study produced more qualitative information in the form of quotes from various respondents illustrating their views. Despite the different methodology of the two studies, it is clear that the main reasons why Batwa girls lack access to education are largely the same in both countries: poverty, the attitude of Batwa parents and early marriage.

Poverty

'They [Batwa parents] find it hard to pay the school fees because it's parents who pay the teachers' salaries in the DRC.' (Teacher, DRC)

In Burundi, despite the fact that free primary school was implemented in 2005, resulting in an immediate 30 per cent increase in enrolment according to the Minister of Education in 2006,²¹ the study found that an average of about 30 per cent of Batwa girls across the five communes cited lack of materials (for example exercise books and clothing) as a reason for them not going to school. A lack of food was also cited by between 3 per cent and 9 per cent of Batwa girls as a reason in three communes, but two communes reported high figures of 32 per cent and 20 per cent respectively. More Batwa parents cited lack of food as a reason. In all communes except one, more than 30 per cent of parents thought this factor constituted a serious barrier. In the final commune, the figure was 15 per cent.

The DRC study found that poverty was mentioned as a reason for lack of education by an overwhelming number of interviewees of all categories across the geographical area of the research. Teachers in the DRC noted that Batwa parents do not have the ability to pay school fees. Article 43 of the 2006 Constitution abolished school fees;²² however, they continue to exist in practice. One teacher stated of Batwa parents, 'They find it hard to pay the school fees because it's parents who pay the teachers'

salaries in the DRC.’ In addition, as in Burundi, other costs are associated with school, such as suitable clothing and books. A lack of food also emerged as a problem in the DRC, with one parent saying, ‘The children also contribute in providing daily meals instead of going to school because they say in order to be able to study well you have to eat.’ A key individual (local leader) stated of Batwa families, ‘In a family with five children only two children at most are at school and they must be the youngest, i.e. those who are not yet able to work and bring in something for the family.’

The responses also underlined how gender plays a crucial role in decisions about which children to educate when resources are scarce. Teachers in the DRC repeatedly said that Batwa girls were more likely than boys to be sent to work to earn money for the family. One teacher said, for example, ‘Girls drop out of school more often than boys because girls are often sent to well-off families where they serve as maids.’ This situation also makes girls more vulnerable to exploitation. In Burundi, 12 per cent of Batwa parents in one commune mentioned that household tasks take up girls’ time, preventing them from going to school. Interviews with Burundian administrative authorities also identified that girls have to do household chores that boys do not, and that where food is a problem, girls must work to help the family.

Attitudes of parents

The DRC study found that teachers and key individuals frequently cited the lack of awareness of parents as a reason for Batwa girls not attending school. Teachers said of Batwa parents, ‘They don’t see the point of going to school because they don’t see immediate results,’ and, ‘There is not enough awareness among the pygmies as to why they should bring their children to school’. For one key individual, ‘Pygmies themselves discriminate in a way between their children because they do not accept that they should educate their girls ... because they say that girls disappear and go and start other families elsewhere,’ a comment that reflects the patriarchal inheritance system where only boys inherit from their father.

In Burundi, both Batwa girls and Batwa parents were asked how interested they were in school. In all communes, more than 92 per cent of Batwa girls had a ‘great interest’ in school, with two communes at 98 per cent and one at 99 per cent. Batwa parents in two of those communes also showed strong interest in Batwa girls’ education (90 and 92 per cent ‘great interest’). In the three remaining provinces, 10 to 15 per cent of parents were indifferent to school for Batwa girls.

Yet despite the high percentage of parents claiming a great interest in Batwa girls’ education, significant numbers agreed with the statement, ‘School is not good for Batwa girls.’ For example, in Buhiga commune, 78 per cent of parents reported a ‘great interest’ in school for Batwa girls; however, 49 per cent also stated that school is

not good for them. Batwa girls reported the ‘ignorance of parents who do not recognise the benefit of school’ as a barrier to their education in approximately the same proportions as parents in the same communes felt that school was not good for them.

Early marriage

‘Women were created to be married, have children and to look for food and not to spend time in front of men studying.’ (Mutwa parent, DRC)

The attitude of Batwa parents in the DRC to education of girls is closely tied up with attitudes towards marriage and the role of girls in society. One parent said, ‘Women were created to be married, have children and to look for food and not to spend time in front of men studying.’ Another parent’s response was, ‘According to the Pygmies, a girl who goes to school and reaches secondary level is considered a free woman, i.e. a whore, because she might not get a husband within the community.’ The responses of other parents and teachers indicate that the financial implications of marriage, i.e. a dowry given to the girl’s family, encourage early marriages and discourage education. According to one parent, ‘Pygmy parents don’t expect to live long so their daughters must get married quickly for fear of being abandoned by the young men in the villages but also so as to use up the dowry before they die.’ Another parent said, ‘The more a girl studies, the less chance she has of getting married,’ and a teacher’s view was, ‘Women encourage their daughters to get married quickly so that they can get a few goats to eat as a dowry.’



BATWA WOMEN SINGING. KATHRYN RAMSAY/IRMG

In Burundi, the statistical data confirms that early marriage is a barrier to Batwa girls' education. In two communes, more than 40 per cent of Batwa girls cited it as a reason preventing them from going to school and, in the same two provinces, 35 per cent and 38 per cent of parents mentioned it. In one commune, Mwakiro, only 6 per cent of parents thought early marriage a problem in contrast with 25 per cent of Batwa girls. In all communes, Batwa girls thought early marriage a greater problem than the parents did. School administrators in Burundi confirmed that early marriage disadvantages Batwa girls and prevents them from completing their education.

Other factors

The distance between home and school can be a factor discouraging girls from going to school.²³ However, the Burundi study concluded that it was not a major problem in their sample area. In three communes, only 1 per cent of pupils had more than 10 km to travel every day, and although in the other two communes, 11 per cent and 90 per cent of pupils had 11–20 km per day to travel, this distance was not thought to be a major barrier to Batwa girls attending school. In the DRC, the more precarious security situation means that, although distance was not mentioned in every area, it did emerge as a bigger problem than in Burundi. A DRC parent explained, 'The distance between the village and the school scares children, especially girls who are afraid of being raped on the way by armed gangs.'

In addition, a few respondents in both countries referred to nomadism as a barrier. Traditionally, Batwa, as hunter/gatherers, moved within the forests; however, the loss of their lands has changed this practice. In Burundi, the study found that in almost all communes, nomadism no longer exists. Isolated cases of a nomadic lifestyle affecting educational opportunities were seen in one commune, where it was highlighted as a barrier to education by 2 per cent of Batwa girls.

It is revealing to note discrepancies in responses of administrative authorities/key individuals compared to teachers and Batwa themselves, which highlight discriminatory attitudes towards Batwa. The DRC study found key individuals with very negative opinions of Batwa children, for example stating, 'They're generally layabouts,' and, 'Some say that Pygmy children are good for nothings.' In contrast, teachers stated, 'With regard to the issue of application and the level of these Pygmy children in class, the teachers of this school always said that these children are among the best in the school and are always among the top in their class.' However, the way teachers phrased their responses shows that they are aware of the stereotypes of Batwa, for example one said, 'Even those who left school did quite well compared to other children, considering their reputation.' It is, of course, impossible to know whether that teacher's view of the 'reputation' of Batwa children had any influence over the way that s/he treated

them in the classroom before they proved themselves to be as good as other children.

It is clear, therefore, that the stereotypes held about Batwa children by society in general, including possibly by their teachers, are inaccurate. However, those discriminatory attitudes may negatively affect their experience of school. A parent cited 'discrimination and marginalization at school' as a barrier to girls' education.²⁴ In Burundi, the design of the study did not focus on negative stereotypes; however, as with the DRC, responses from teachers clearly show that when they have the opportunity to study, Batwa girls do as well in class, have the same IQ level as other children, and mix well with their peers.

Conclusions

The studies conducted in Burundi and the DRC have resulted in new insights into the problems Batwa girls face in accessing education. The invisibility of Batwa women and girls in the majority of surveys and national statistics means that for the first time, detailed data on their school attendance and drop-out rates is available to highlight their situation. The investigations – both quantitative and qualitative – into the barriers to education faced by Batwa girls have also resulted in more nuanced understanding of how several factors interlink to prevent Batwa girls achieving their full potential. The qualitative information illustrates attitudes of the different actors and starkly outlines what challenges there are in addressing the situation.

Both studies make recommendations for action to improve the educational prospects of Batwa girls. Recommendations include ensuring that education for Batwa girls is free in reality, and providing assistance to families so that they can pay for other costs associated with school, such as books, uniforms and pens. Ensuring food security through provision of livestock, seeds or land is considered important in both Burundi and the DRC, so that Batwa families will not need to withdraw girls from school to help provide for the family. Promoting income-generating activities for Batwa families is suggested for the same reasons.

The studies make recommendations on raising the awareness of Batwa parents on the importance of education for their daughters and encouraging them to prioritize education. Regular monitoring to ensure all Batwa girls of school age are attending school and do not drop out was also suggested.

The recommendations do not refer directly to preventing early marriage; however, awareness-raising of parents should also include discussion on the disadvantages of early marriage,²⁵ while efforts to tackle poverty within Batwa families should reduce the financial demand for girls to marry early to produce a dowry.

Although the studies provide a valuable new insight into the realities of life and lack of educational opportunities for Batwa girls in Burundi and the DRC, they are small-scale, conducted with limited resources. A

larger-scale comparative study, covering a wider geographical area and other ethnic groups would be extremely useful to highlight the relative situation of Batwa girls compared to other girls in society. Both studies revealed discriminatory attitudes from teachers, administrative and other local authorities, but it was beyond the scope of the studies to investigate the impact of these negative attitudes on the education of Batwa girls. Social attitudes are known to impact on the educational attainment of children and on their feelings towards school;²⁶ a subject that should be further examined.

Violence against Batwa women

Background

MRG's partner organizations in Rwanda and Uganda selected violence against Batwa women as the theme for their research. Anecdotal evidence suggested that violence, both from inside and outside the Batwa community was a frequent problem for Batwa women. The aim was to discover more about the prevalence of violence and its causes in order to suggest strategies for tackling the issue. The sensitivities surrounding the subject of violence against women, in particular sexual violence, meant that the methodology of the research needed to be designed extremely carefully in order to encourage respondents to feel comfortable in revealing information, to ensure confidentiality, and avoid any negative consequences for women taking part in the research.

Uganda

The United Organization of Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU) and the African International Christian Ministry (AICM) conducted the research in Uganda between November 2008 and April 2009. The Batwa population in Uganda live in the south-west of the country; the study concentrated on three districts – Kabale, Kanungu and Kisoro – interviewing 120 people in total, with Kisoro providing a higher number of respondents because of the larger number of Batwa living there.

A list of names of all Batwa living in those areas was drawn up. Respondents were selected to take part in focus-group discussions, an individual interview or a key informant interview. Fifty-six Batwa were randomly selected for focus-group discussions. Of these, 27 were women and girls and 29 men. Girls' focus-groups were run separately from the others, with a different set of questions, to ensure that the subject was addressed in a way suitable for their age.

A large part of the study involved individual interviews. Forty-four Batwa women aged over 17 were randomly selected for individual interviews about their views on violence in their community and their own personal experiences of violence. To provide some context, questions were asked about their background and level of knowledge

of women's rights. Of these 44 Batwa women, 89 per cent were married and 60 per cent had never been to school; 60 per cent of them said they knew about some women's rights. When respondents were asked to name those rights, 58 per cent knew about the right to property, 12 per cent mentioned the right to education and the right to access justice from law courts; however, other responses included 'the right to do housework', 'the right to make mats' and 'the right to take care of the husband', clearly showing that some women were confusing rights with gender roles.

Twenty 'key informants' (persons of influence) – 15 of whom were non-Batwa – were identified to give their perspectives on violence against Batwa women; 16 were men and only 4 were women. It proved difficult to find women key informants. Key informants' positions were government employees (11), local councillors (2), NGO employees and community resource persons (3), teacher (1) and Batwa leaders (3). The small numbers of women and Batwa among the key informants reflects the power dynamics in society; few Batwa, few women and fewer Batwa women have the level of education needed to take up positions in local governance or obtain government employment.

Rwanda

The Rwanda research was conducted between the end of 2008 and mid 2009 by African Initiative for Mankind Progress Organization (AIMPO), Communauté des potiers du Rwanda (COPORWA, or Rwandan Potters' Community) and Association pour le développement global des Batwa du Rwanda (ADBR, or Association for the Global Development of Rwanda's Batwa). It focused on three districts – Gasabo, Nyaruguru and Rubavu – selected because they have higher numbers of Batwa resident there.

The research team selected 95 Batwa women and girls, aged over 13, to interview, with slightly more coming from Nyaruguru and Gasabo. The majority of the women were married (57 per cent) with 23 per cent widowed and 20 per cent single. As with Uganda, their level of education is low: 54 per cent had not been to school; 46 per cent had received some primary education, although may not have completed primary school. They were asked about their understanding of what constitutes violence against women.

The most frequently mentioned form of violence was rape, with physical violence and marginalization the next most numerous responses. In contrast to the Ugandan study, the Rwandan research focused on the respondents' beliefs and views on the prevalence and causes of violence against Batwa women. The team decided not to ask the women about their own personal experiences of violence because of the sensitive nature of the subject.

Types and prevalence of violence

Uganda

A shocking statistic emerged from the study in Uganda. Of the Batwa women responding to individual interviews, 100

per cent had experienced some form of violence. The study found that for the majority of respondents (64 per cent), the violence was ongoing or had taken place within the past 12 months. In comparison, a survey from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics on health in 2006 found that 70 per cent of women had experienced either physical or sexual violence at some time since the age of 15.²⁷ The data is not disaggregated by ethnicity; however, the national and regional averages indicate that Batwa women experience more violence than women from other communities.

The UOBDU/AICM study asked the individual interview respondents about the type of violence they had experienced. Fifty-seven per cent had been sexually abused at some time, with 46 per cent having suffered marital rape; 93 per cent had been slapped or hit; and 52 per cent beaten or kicked. Other forms of violence they mentioned included being threatened with a weapon (36 per cent), dowry-related violence (25 per cent), forced marriage (21 per cent) and being detained against their will (18 per cent). The results of the national survey found that 39 per cent of women had experienced sexual violence²⁸ and that 36 per cent had experienced marital rape.²⁹ In south-west Uganda, where Batwa live, the figure from the national survey of those experiencing sexual violence was slightly higher at 41 per cent. Again, the results suggest that Batwa women suffer from more sexual violence than women from other communities.

Violence against Batwa women in Uganda

- A staggering 100 per cent said they had experienced violence; for the majority, the violence was ongoing or had taken place in the past 12 months.
- Fifty-seven per cent had been sexually abused at some time, with 46 per cent having suffered marital rape.
- The participants in focus-group discussions and the individual respondents all concluded that alcoholism and poverty were major causes, with husbands the main perpetrators.

Rwanda

The design of the Rwandan study means that there are no similar statistics on Batwa women's personal experiences of violence. However, it produced figures on perceptions of Batwa women regarding violence in their communities. When asked if they had heard of instances of violence against Batwa women in their local area, 80 per cent said they had heard of cases. Only 7 per cent gave a definite 'no' response, with 13 per cent preferring not to answer the question. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents had heard of instances of violence against Batwa women during the previous two weeks; 51 per cent had heard of cases during the previous 12 months. A 2004 survey by the Rwandan Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) found that 32 per cent of respondents had experienced 'community violence' (violence perpetrated by someone not belonging to the victim's family) in the

previous five years, and that 31 per cent had experienced physical domestic violence.³⁰

The Rwandan study asked respondents about the types of violence they thought Batwa women and girls experienced in their local area. Fifty-four per cent mentioned physical violence, 38 per cent psychological violence, 35 per cent marginalization of natural resources, 24 per cent rape, 23 per cent exploitation and 22 per cent sexual violence. Four per cent did not believe violence against Batwa women happened in their area. It is interesting to note that 'marginalization of natural resources' was the third highest mentioned form of violence, reflecting the fact that Batwa have lost their land and other resources (for example, access to areas to gather clay for making pottery), and subsequently struggle to survive.

A survey by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in 2008 of four districts in Rwanda found that 26 per cent of women had been slapped, beaten or otherwise physically abused by their husbands, and 43 per cent had suffered marital rape.³¹ Again, direct comparisons of the data cannot be drawn, because the NGO study did not cover personal experiences; however, if the 54 per cent of Rwandan Batwa women citing physical violence are describing violence within the family, it could be that Batwa women suffer higher levels of domestic violence than other communities. The perception among Batwa women is certainly that they suffer from more violence than other women in Rwanda: 61 per cent believe the level of violence against Batwa women is greater than for other women, and only 5 per cent believe it is less.

Context of violence

In Uganda, to the question of where the violence took place, responses included the home (67 per cent), bars (33 per cent), fields/bushes (17 per cent) and schools (3 per cent). Domestic violence was located in the home (86 per cent), bars (33 per cent) and fields/bushes (6 per cent) according to respondents. In Rwanda, the domestic sphere was also the place mentioned most by respondents, with 56 per cent saying they thought violence against Batwa women occurred in the family, and 55 per cent saying it occurred within a couple. Forty-five per cent mentioned that violence happened in public places; 44 per cent specified schools; and 28 per cent reported that violence took place in the community.

When questioned about perpetrators of violence against Batwa women in Uganda, answers from the individual interviews corresponded with responses from focus-group discussions. Respondents to individual interviews were asked who had perpetrated the violence that they had cited in the interview.

One hundred per cent of respondents said that husbands perpetrated violence; 5–7 per cent also mentioned each of the following categories – other family

members, the police, local defence personnel or delinquents – as perpetrators, showing that some Batwa women had experienced multiple occurrences of violence perpetrated by different people. The Ugandan national survey found that for 63 per cent of married women who had experienced physical violence, the perpetrator was her husband/partner, and for 23 per cent it was a former husband/partner. These figures suggest that Batwa women are more likely to experience violence from their husbands/partners than women in other communities.

The national survey found that 17 per cent of married and unmarried women had experienced violence from a teacher, 0.5 per cent from an employer, and 0.4 per cent from the police or soldier. These figures suggest that Batwa women experience higher levels of violence from local authorities (7 per cent from police or local defence personnel) than women from other communities. The absence of Batwa women reporting violence by teachers could reflect their general lack of access to education. It is difficult to compare the figures with complete certainty, though, because the UBODU/AICM study asked about perpetrators of violence in general (i.e. it included physical, sexual and psychological violence), whereas the national survey specified physical violence.

The qualitative data obtained through the Ugandan focus-group discussions revealed a more nuanced picture of the way Batwa women and men understand the situation. Participants in all focus-group discussions agreed that perpetrators of violence were Batwa and non-Batwa, and that Batwa husbands were the main perpetrators. One group discussed how local council leaders indirectly perpetrated rights violations through not responding adequately to Batwa women's reports of violence. One participant stated:

'Some time ago women in our community used to report their husbands to the chairman [of the Local Council first level (LC1)]. When the chairman LC1 met the husbands, they gave him some money and he kept on dodging the women until the time when the women gave up; the husbands again violated the rights of their wives because they had not been punished.'

The issue of reporting of cases of violence will be discussed in more detail below.

The Ugandan study asked the individual women respondents about the effects of the violence on their health. Sixty-eight per cent reported some physical health problems, mainly related to sexual violence, including unwanted pregnancy; 77 per cent reported psychological problems. Those psychological problems included fear or worry (47 per cent), shame (47 per cent), humiliation (32 per cent) and feeling life is useless (6 per cent).

Forty per cent of respondents had sought medical help after experiencing violence. Of those who had not sought medical help, all felt they did not need medical attention.

However, 43 per cent also mentioned that they did not have any money for medical fees or transport to take them to medical facilities. Furthermore, 14 per cent said they did not know where to go, and 14 per cent felt that medical care would not be beneficial.

Causes of violence

'When we go home from school, we find there is no soap, no food and other things, so when boys or men promise to give us these things some of us end up giving in.' (Mutwa girl, Uganda)

Both studies examined the views of respondents on what caused cases of violence against Batwa women. In Rwanda, the perception of respondents was that extreme poverty was the main cause. Sixty-seven per cent cited poverty, while 44 per cent said violence occurred because of contempt for Batwa women. A number of other responses showed interesting connections to the position of the Batwa community as a whole in Rwandan society. These included 'bad historical antecedents' (26 per cent), 'because we are less in number' (25 per cent) and 'because we are not recognised as a people' (25 per cent). The respondents also cited a lack of education as a cause of violence (31 per cent), and myths about Batwa women, in particular that having sexual relations with a Batwa woman will cure backache (15 per cent).

In Uganda, the participants in focus-group discussions and the individual respondents all concluded that alcoholism and poverty were the major causes, with 82 per cent of individual respondents citing alcoholism and 62 per cent poverty. Respondents in the focus-group discussions reported that men were more likely to beat or rape their wives when drunk, and that drunkenness made women and girls more vulnerable to abuse because they were less able to resist advances from men.

Some of the other reasons cited by respondents show that there is a tendency for both women and men to blame Batwa women victims for the violence they experience. For example, individual interview respondents suggested as causes of violence, 'wife refusing to give food to the husband' and 'women refusing to look after children'. Focus-group participants suggested that alcohol consumption by women meant that they failed to do their domestic chores, which led to violence from their husbands.

In contrast, alcoholism did not emerge as an issue in the Rwandan study. The reason may be because respondents were not directly asked about it. It is unlikely to be because it is not an issue at all, because the MIGEPROF study found that 43 per cent of women who had experienced domestic violence attributed it to abuse of alcohol by the perpetrator,³² while the UNIFEM study found that of the incidents of sexual violence experienced by respondents, in 22 per cent of cases the perpetrator had drunk alcohol.³³

The Ugandan focus-group discussions around poverty as a cause of violence revealed that a lack of basic necessities, such as food, forced Batwa women and girls to accept advances from men. One Mutwa girl reported, 'When we go home from school, we find there is no soap, no food and other things, so when boys or men promise to give us these things some of us end up giving in.' The girls also said that those who were able to generate income through selling items, such as avocados, clothes or handcrafts, were less vulnerable to violence because they could resist the advances of men and boys exploiting their poverty.

Justice and assistance for victims

In Rwanda, 47 per cent of respondents said, when asked about possible measures to stop violence, that reporting methods should be improved. This figure suggests that there is a serious problem with Batwa women accessing effective justice when they are victims of violence. One respondent mentioned that in a Batwa community that had a woman as head, women and girls had sometimes sought her help after experiencing domestic violence, upon which she intervened on their behalf with their partners.

The study in Uganda asked the individual respondents whether they had sought help after experiencing violence. Eighty-four per cent had approached the authorities, another agency or a member of their family. The majority of respondents (57 per cent) had approached the Local Council. In the areas where Batwa live, Local Council first level (LC1) officials are the only representatives of the authorities nearby. No police are based in Batwa villages; it is the responsibility of the LC1 to deal with minor cases and refer more serious cases to the police. Respondents also mentioned approaching the church (25 per cent), the *Abataka* or village council, NGOs and the police (each 18 per cent). Sixteen per cent of respondents did not approach any agency or individual (including family members) for help. Of those, 71 per cent were too scared to ask for help, 29 per cent were concerned about confidentiality and 14 per cent did not know what help was available. In contrast, the national survey found that the majority of victims of violence approached their family (48 per cent), with only 18 per cent going to a social service organization and 6 per cent the police.

The responses of Batwa women suggest that they are aware that they should be able to live free from violence, and that they are trying to use available mechanisms to improve the situation. However, other respondents in focus-group discussions commented that Batwa women are shy and do not report violence because they have low self-esteem and education. A further barrier to women reporting violence included corruption by local authority representatives, who charged prohibitive 'fees' to take up cases even though it is illegal to do so. They therefore either do not attempt to report instances of violence in case they are asked to pay, or are frustrated in their attempts to access justice.

On a more optimistic note, of the Ugandan respondents who had sought help, 78 per cent had experienced some positive change afterwards, such as their husband not beating them again after he was fined or had received counselling. One woman noted in a focus-group that, after reporting her husband, 'He was arrested and taken to the sub-county during broad daylight. Taking him to the sub-county while everybody was looking at him made him feel embarrassed and by the time he reached the sub-county he was already a changed man.'

Conclusions

This research is unique. No other studies into violence against women in either Rwanda or Uganda have focused on Batwa women and the specific violence they experience as a result of belonging to an indigenous community and being women.

The statistic that 100 per cent of Ugandan Batwa women had experienced violence – significantly higher than national averages – should inspire immediate strategies to tackle gender-based violence to include Batwa women, and be specifically tailored to address their situation.

Many respondents from both studies suggested awareness-raising on the issues of gender-based violence would help reduce the levels of violence suffered by Batwa women and girls. Fifty-two per cent of respondents in Uganda indicated that mass sensitizations on gender-based violence were needed. In Rwanda, 38 per cent thought men should be educated about violence against women, and 42 per cent suggested women should be trained on their rights.

Some suggestions focused on improving the justice system for victims. Almost half of Rwandan respondents proposed improving the methods for reporting violence; Ugandan respondents suggested a variety of measures: punishing wrongdoers (9 per cent), culprits to pay heavy fines to their victims (5 per cent), imprisoning wrongdoers (2 per cent), and reducing court fees (2 per cent). Other suggestions for reducing violence included: training teachers on violence against girls (Rwanda 25 per cent), providing more safeguards for girls at school (Rwanda 33 per cent), stopping alcoholism (Uganda 14 per cent), and providing more understanding for women who report violence (Rwanda 20 per cent).

Several suggestions from respondents reflect the general tendency for victims of gender-based violence either to be blamed for the violence they experience or to be blamed for failing to prevent it. Respondents in Uganda indicated that 'girls should protect themselves' (although they did not give details of exactly how they should do so) and that 'women should stop moving at night'. A participant in a men's focus-group said:

'Government should help us in these problems because we as parents have tried our level best and failed. We have young girls who disrespect us as their parents and also move at night and we have failed to handle them,

maybe if police can arrest them, they can learn and behave better.'

Violating women's freedom of movement by preventing them from going out at night does nothing to change the attitudes of those men who see any woman out of the house as a legitimate target for violence. Instead, it risks further stigmatizing women who go out after dark for any number of reasons, e.g. work, visiting friends, attending a sick relative, as 'deserving' of any violence they experience.

It is very important that strategies to tackle domestic violence against Batwa women be implemented; however, they must be done in a sensitive manner without causing further prejudice against a community already stigmatized by the majority. That violence against Batwa women in Rwanda and Uganda also takes place in public spaces, including schools, shows that attention must be paid both to violence from majority communities and from within the family.

Since the studies reported here could only cover limited geographical areas, further research is needed for a fuller picture to emerge. A comparative study of other ethnic groups in Uganda would show whether there are similarly high levels of violence in other communities in that geographical area, or whether the rates of violence against

Batwa women are significantly higher. It would also be useful to have comparative data on whether women from other ethnic groups experience similar problems to Batwa women when reporting violence to local authorities, or whether the marginalized position of Batwa in society leads to increased difficulties for Batwa women in accessing justice.

For a clear picture of the situation to emerge in Rwanda, the sensitive issue of asking respondents about their own experiences of violence would need to be addressed. More qualitative data would also help clarify the reality for Rwandan Batwa women.

Next steps

These four new NGO studies on the experiences and problems faced by Batwa women and girls are a move towards ensuring their visibility through reliable data. However, they are only a small first step. Small-scale NGO studies on specific issues are no substitute for official, large-scale surveys, conducted sensitively, respecting confidentiality and the principle of ethnic self-identification, and used to tackle exclusion and discrimination.

It is clear from the results of the research in all four countries that Batwa women and girls are marginalized



BATWA WOMAN AND CHILD IN BURUNDI. AJANTA KAZA/MRG

and suffer discrimination and worrying levels of violence; therefore, it is imperative that governments and development agencies recognize that, since their exclusion is disproportionate to that of other communities in the area of education, and they suffer high levels of violence, they are also very likely to suffer increased marginalization in other areas of life for which there is not yet any data. Robust official data must, therefore, be collected and disaggregated to ensure a full understanding of, and suitable responses to, their particular problems.

Recommendations

Data Collection

- Governments in the region should acknowledge that accurate data disaggregated by ethnicity and gender is essential to develop and monitor effective programmes to improve the situation of minority and indigenous women and tackle discrimination against them. A prerequisite for this work is for governments to recognize the diversity of the population within their territories and acknowledge the existence of minorities and indigenous peoples.
- Governments in the region should collect ethnic data sensitively and should work on a consultative basis with minority and indigenous communities in order to build their confidence in the process. Governments should collect and use ethnic data in accordance with basic principles. The reason for the data collection, the process, and what will happen to the data collected should all be transparent.
- International development agencies should collect and disaggregate data by gender and ethnicity to ensure that their programmes are effective in benefiting minority and indigenous women. Development agencies should systematically require such data in all their fields of work, thus encouraging improved data collection across the region.

Education

- As members of one of the poorest and most marginalized communities in the Great Lakes Region, Batwa children, especially girls, should be identified and systematically supported by governments to start school at the same age as other children, and to continue to the level they choose. This should include implementation of awareness-raising schemes to ensure that Batwa parents understand the importance of education for their daughters and discourage early marriage.
- Lack of school materials and hunger often causes Batwa girls to drop out of school. Governments and international agencies should implement specific programmes to provide them with school materials and food to prevent them leaving early, and ensure their inclusion in existing programmes, for example the World Food Programme (WFP) scheme currently ongoing in all four countries, which provides school lunches for poor children.

Violence

- Governments should ensure that their strategies on violence against women include, and are culturally relevant to, Batwa women. Programmes should be implemented in conjunction with Batwa communities, Batwa organizations and women's rights organizations to educate Batwa women about their rights, and Batwa men about women's human rights. Public education programmes should also address discrimination and violence against Batwa women perpetrated by majority communities.
- The operation of the justice system at the local level should be reviewed to ensure that Batwa women have full and effective access to justice. Monitoring should take place at the local level to ensure that Batwa women are not denied access to the justice system because of lack of money or official corruption. Judges, police and government officials should receive training on women's rights and violence against women, including domestic violence.

Notes

- 1 MRG uses the term *Batwa*, which is the plural form of *Twa* or *Mutwa*. Pygmy is the term ordinarily used in the DRC, and thus appears in quotes from the DRC research, although in other contexts it is considered derogatory.
- 2 See, for example, Jackson, D., *Twa Women, Twa Rights in the Great Lakes Region of Africa*, London, MRG, 2003.
- 3 UNIPROBA Burundi estimate from 2000 in MRG, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, URL: www.minorityrightsgroup.org/directory
- 4 CAURWA Rwanda survey in 2004 in MRG, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, URL: www.minorityrightsgroup.org/directory
- 5 MRG, *Erasing the Board*, London, MRG, 2004, p. 9; 30,000 in each of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri.
- 6 Uganda Bureau of Statistics, *Uganda Population and Housing Census*, Kampala, Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2006 (based on 2002 information), p. 26, retrieved April 2010: <http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/pdf%20documents/2002%20CensusPopnCompostionAnalyticalReport.pdf>
- 7 Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
- 8 'Speaking truth to power', statement to the UN Forum on Minority Issues, 1st Session on 'Minorities and the right to education', by Daniel Losen, Civil Rights Project, University of California, Los Angeles, retrieved April 2010, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/minority/oral_statements_forum_minority_2008.htm
- 9 UN Statistics Division, 'Millennium Development Goals Indicators', January 2008, retrieved April 2010, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Indicators/OfficialList.htm>.
- 10 The EU Race Directive provides that states may provide for 'indirect discrimination to be established by any means including on the basis of statistical evidence', Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2009, retrieved April 2010, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L>
- 11 For example, the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights.
- 12 Rwanda has a history of ethnic conflict between the Hutu majority and minority Tutsi populations (with Batwa often caught in the middle). The country experienced ethnic violence, including massacres of Tutsis, during the 1960s and 1970s. Tensions were not addressed and resurfaced in the 1994 genocide. Failure to recognize the existence of ethnic groups allows a situation to develop in which one group can enjoy a de facto situation of privilege, but no-one is allowed to challenge it. For more, see MRG shadow report on Rwanda submitted to the UN Human Rights Committee for its 95th Session, March 2009, retrieved April 2010, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/ngos/MRGI_Rwanda_HRC95.doc
- 13 Uganda Bureau of Statistics, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
- 14 Warrilow, F., *The Right to Learn: Batwa Education in the Great Lakes Region of Africa*, London, MRG, 2008, p. 21.
- 15 Third Periodic Report submitted by Rwanda to the UN Human Rights Committee, UN Doc. CCPR/C/RWA/3, 95th Session, March 2009, para. 289: 'Given the factors that led to the Rwandan genocide of 1994, however, the Government refuses to recognize as a category communities seeking to identify themselves as ethnic minorities or groups that claim to have been born with rights denied to the rest of the population.'
- 16 This position is not only held by the Rwandan government. According to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, a government representative, 'referring to the issue of disaggregated data on ethnicity, said that the government's policy was to avoid measures that fuelled sectarian fragmentation. Therefore, the government did not publish statistics on ethnicity and religion because such data would prompt people to make comparisons and draw distinctions between various ethnic and religious groups.' See UN doc., CERD/C/SR.1714, 2005.
- 17 UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment 23 on Article 27: 'The existence of an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority in a given State party does not depend upon a decision by that State party but requires to be established by objective criteria.' UN Doc CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.5, para. 5.2, retrieved April 2010, [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/fb7fb12c2fb8bb21c12563ed004df111?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/fb7fb12c2fb8bb21c12563ed004df111?Opendocument)
- 18 UNICEF, Country Statistics for Burundi, retrieved April 2010, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/burundi_statistics.html
- 19 World Bank, Country Statistics for DRC, retrieved April 2010, http://ddpext.worldbank.org/ext/ddpreports/ViewSharedReport?&CF=&REPORT_ID=1305&REQUEST_TYPE=VIEWADVANCED&DIMENSIONS=62
- 20 UNESCO, *Education for All, Global Monitoring Report*, data for the DRC, retrieved April 2010, <http://gmr.uis.unesco.org>
- 21 Voice of America, *Burundi struggles to implement free primary education*, 16 May 2006, retrieved April 2010, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2006-05-16-voa52.html>
- 22 Constitution of the DRC, Article 43 includes 'L'enseignement primaire est obligatoire et gratuit dans les établissements publics' (Primary education is obligatory and free in public schools), retrieved April 2010, <http://www.presidentrdc.cd/constitution.html>.
- 23 Ramsay, K., 'The gender dimension of minority and indigenous education', in MRG, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2009: Events of 2008*, London, MRG, 2009, p.
- 24 For more information on the impact of discrimination on the education of Batwa children, see Warrilow, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–19.
- 25 These include negative health consequences of early pregnancy for mothers and babies; psychological impacts of lack of choice in marriage and sexual relations; vulnerability to violence especially when the husband is older; vulnerability to HIV/AIDS when he has multiple partners; denial of education leading to fewer job opportunities in future; a lack of knowledge of rights; and low self-esteem. See UNICEF, *Early Marriage: Child Spouses*, Innocenti Digest no. 7, March 2001, retrieved April 2010, <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/digest7e.pdf>
- 26 Ramsay, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–77.
- 27 Uganda Bureau of Statistics, *Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2006*, p. 293, retrieved April 2010, <http://www.measuredhs.com/pubs/pdf/FR194/FR194.pdf>
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 290.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 294.
- 30 Rwanda Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, 'Violence Against Women', Kampala, 2004, pp. 27, 48, retrieved April 2010: <http://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/4897/4005.pdf?sequence=1>
- 31 UNIFEM, *Baseline Survey on Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Rwanda*, 2008, p. 31, retrieved April 2010, http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/baseline_survey_on_sexual_and_gender_based_violence_rwanda.pdf
- 32 Rwanda Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
- 33 UNIFEM, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

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Uncounted: the hidden lives of Batwa women

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