

<b>Institution:</b> University of Sussex		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 22 – Anthropology and Development Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Improving international development programming and policy to prevent gender-based violence and empower women and girls in Africa		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2009 – 2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Dr Lyndsay McLean	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Senior Lecturer in Anthropology and International Development	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2006 – ongoing
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014 – 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>The knowledge, skills and experiences of women and girls in the Global South are often insufficiently considered in the design of development programmes and policies intended to benefit them. McLean has used a range of participatory research methods to directly involve women and girls in designing and evaluating programmes on women's empowerment and gender-based violence. These have generated unique insights about women's and girls' lives and led to the following impacts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration of adolescent girls' and young women's priorities in national policy of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC);</li> <li>Implementation of UK-funded programmes by local NGOs which reduced violence experienced by women and girls in Rwanda and Ghana;</li> <li>Attitude change among key local and international stakeholders in DRC to see girls and women as capable and skilled and involve them more fully in their work;</li> <li>Individual women researchers, practitioners and participants in DRC have benefitted from empowering research and programme design processes that have built their personal and professional skills and capacities.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls is pervasive across the world. In the four countries in this case study, the latest data (UN Women Global Database on violence against women) shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Percentage of women aged 15-49 who have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime: DRC: 51% (2014); Ghana: 24% (2008); Rwanda: 37% (2015)</li> <li>- Gender Inequality Index (reproductive health, empowerment, labour market participation) rank out of 159 countries in 2015: DRC: 149; Ghana: 131; Rwanda: 84.</li> </ul> <p>McLean's work on gender equality, women's empowerment and preventing gender-based violence includes the development and application of innovative participatory research methods to shape programme and policy design, implementation and evaluation in the Global South. This enables participants and co-researchers to influence the research process and participate in ways that are safe, empowering and sometimes transformative. These research methods allow women and girls to engage and narrate their experiences on their own terms and also generate unique insights into: how they see their own lives; the attitudes, behaviours and norms that underpin their exclusion and experiences of violence; and how development programmes have impacted on them [3.1, 3.2].</p> <p>In 2014, McLean led a three-country research study to examine the impacts of projects funded by Womankind Worldwide that used community approaches to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG). She oversaw the Ethiopia and Zambia studies and led the Ghana evaluation of a programme called COMBAT. She co-designed an innovative visual story-mapping process which allowed women with limited literacy to narrate their experiences of violence in a safe, supportive environment and describe how the project impacted their lives, including experiences of violence and how survivors were treated within the community. She trained Ghanaian researchers to co-facilitate the participatory workshops. This research revealed a number of key insights including the critical role of local women's rights organisations, the importance of</p>		

working with traditional leaders and the positive impacts of training community members (rather than outsiders) to address VAWG [3.5].

From 2014-2017, McLean was Research Director for the DFID-funded *La Pépinière* programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which supported the development of policies and programmes to promote the empowerment of girls and women. She managed research studies working with local institute CERED-GL (Regional Centre for Research and Documentation on Women, Gender and Peacebuilding in the Great Lakes Region) and led a process to establish a 'Girl-Led Research Unit' (GLRU) comprising fifteen Congolese young women researchers aged 16-24 from different socio-economic backgrounds. She worked with a Congolese team to train, mentor and build GLRU capacity using a range of bespoke participatory and visual methods. The girl researchers worked with McLean and CERED-GL to design research studies, undertake peer research with girls, young women and adults in Kinshasa, and participate in data analysis, writing and dissemination. Placing girl researchers at the heart of the research process generated unique insights into sensitive issues such as intimate relationships and transactional sex, less possible with adult researchers [3.1, 3.2].



Women in Kumasi, Ghana, with their visual story maps about violence © Lyndsay McLean



'Girl Researchers' in DRC doing a role play as part of their training © Lyndsay McLean

From 2015-2018, McLean was co-PI for a DFID-funded research study to guide the design and evaluate the impacts of the *Indashyikirwa* programme to prevent intimate partner violence (IPV) in Rwanda. This included an initial research study on gender norms and violence [3.3] which directly informed the couples curriculum at the heart of the programme, and qualitative longitudinal research to look at how beliefs, behaviours and norms shifted as a result of the programme [3.4]. McLean co-designed innovative social vignette research tools used in interactive workshops with community members. This methodology allowed a nuanced understanding of the complexity of social norms and sanctions around gender roles and the acceptability of violence in the communities, which had not been possible through more traditional quantitative or qualitative interview methods.

### 3. References to the research

- 3.1 McLean, L, Mpongo, T, Tshiyamba, N.K, and Sumaili, M.S, (2021, in press) "Using empowering methods to research empowerment: Peer research by girls and young women in Kinshasa, DRC." in Bell, Aggleton and Gibson (eds) *Peer Research in Health and Social Development* (Routledge) ISBN 9780367321390 <https://www.routledge.com/Peer-Research-in-Health-and-Social-Development-International-Perspectives/Bell-Aggleton-Gibson/p/book/9780367321390>. Publication delayed by COVID. Open access pre-pub version (2020): <https://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/94526/> Also available on request.
- 3.2 McLean, L, and Modi, A, (2016) "'Empowerment' of adolescent girls and young women in Kinshasa: research about girls by girls" in *Gender and Development* vol. 24(3): 475-491 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2016.1239777>
- 3.3 Stern, E, Heise, L, & McLean, L, (2018). "The doing and undoing of male household decision-making and economic authority in Rwanda and its implications for gender transformative programming" in *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 20(9): 976-991 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2017.1404642>
- 3.4 McLean, L, Stern, E, and Heise, L, (2020) "Shifting and transforming gender-inequitable beliefs, behaviours and norms in intimate partnerships: the *Indashyikirwa* couples programme in Rwanda" in *Culture, Health and Sexuality* : 22(1) 13-30 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2019.1679394>
- 3.5 McLean Hilker, L, (2014) "Prevention through Community Mobilisation: The Role of Women's Rights Organisations in Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in Ethiopia, Ghana and Zambia". Policy Synthesis Report for Womankind (also used for 5.8a). Available on request.

Peer-reviewed funding inc. DFID Rwanda - 'What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls' programme, via South African Medical Research Council (2014-2019) (~£500k) <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-203709> and <https://www.whatworks.co.za/global-programme-projects/care-international-rwanda>

#### 4. Details of the impact

##### i. Integration of adolescent girls' and young women's priorities in DRC national policy

In DRC, collaborative research with *La Pépinière* project's girl researchers helped to shape the priorities for the new Government of DRC National Action Plan (NAP) on Security Council resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) 2018-2022, which sets out national level government commitments on integrating gender into security policies. A senior official [text removed for publication] states: *"[McLean and Modi] did an amazing job of training and building the capacities of these girls. In 2014, these girl researchers conducted an important and interesting research study on the lives of their peers, which provided key data on the everyday realities of adolescent girls and young women in Kinshasa... I was so impressed with the capabilities of these young women from La Pépinière... I invited five of them and other young women to participate in a workshop to work on the new 1325 National Action Plan. We secured specific objectives for adolescent girls and young women in the plan and a specific annex about their needs."* [5.1]

This is the first National Action Plan in Africa with specific objectives on the needs and priorities for adolescent girls and young women. Six of the main objectives refer specifically to adolescent girls and young women [see translation on p2, 5.2] and the Annex contains further commitments and a results framework with multiple commitments specifically on adolescent girls and young women [p6, 5.2]. The policy also establishes an ongoing consultation platform with adolescent girls and young women for the Secretariat for the National Action Plan 1325 [5.1, 5.2].

##### ii. Implementation of programmes that reduced violence experienced by women and girls

In Rwanda, the research conducted by McLean and colleagues directly influenced the design of the couples curriculum at the core of the DFID-funded *Indashyikirwa* programme on intimate partner violence (21 sessions over five months). This was used by the NGO Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC) to train 840 couples in healthy relationships and violence prevention in three provinces of Rwanda: *"[W]e directly used the information generated by this research to help design elements of the Indashyikirwa couples curriculum... this helped us to develop a curriculum well-adapted to the Rwanda context, which was then successful in terms of improving couples relationships and reducing intimate partner violence... this participatory research has generated unique types of data that surveys could not provide... to generate insights that are crucial to designing programmes that work to prevent violence."* [5.3].

The research informed modules on: healthy relationships; gender, power and sexuality; triggers of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV); and cooperation for household economic development. The second study conducted by McLean *et al.* confirmed the centrality of these specific curriculum sessions to positive changes in behaviour, including reduction in IPV [3.4]. *Indashyikirwa* was also evaluated by a high-quality randomised control trial which demonstrated strong positive results for 840 couples 24 months after the intervention, including: women reported a 55% reduction in experience of physical and/or sexual IPV in the intervention vs. the control communities; men reported a 47% decrease in perpetration of IPV; men and women reported improved relationships, reduced depression, improved household economic development and reduced use of physical discipline against their children [5.4].

McLean's 2014 evaluation study [3.5] of the Community-Based Action Teams (COMBAT) programme for the NGO Womankind Worldwide led their partner The Gender Centre in Ghana to adopt these methodologies and improve their programme; this helped them to secure DFID funding from the 'What Works' programme, to scale up and evaluate the COMBAT programme via a randomised control trial, which showed strong positive results including a reduction by more than half of physical and sexual IPV [5.6]. The Centre's Director confirms: *"The participants embraced the methodology... it allowed the women to bring out and share more of their experiences than they would have done in a focus group discussion... the methodology was most appropriate for the participants, who were mostly illiterate or semi-literate... we now use the methodology in our community reflection meetings to see how our work is impacting our*



*beneficiaries... The evaluation report was very useful to us as an organization as it gave us evidence to showcase our work... and valuable lessons to improve our programme... [It] eventually led us to get... the DFID What Works grant which has led to... an impact evaluation that has proven the effectiveness of our programming to reduce violence against women.” [5.5].*

Both the Rwanda (*Indashyikirwa*) and Ghana (COMBAT) programmes to which McLean’s research contributed have been featured as effective programmes in the ‘RESPECT implementation package’ developed by the World Health Organisation and UN Women (endorsed by 12 other UN Agencies and partners) to support programming to prevent violence against women [5.7]. Womankind Worldwide also drew directly on McLean’s research to demonstrate the important role of national-level Women’s Rights Organisations in preventing violence against women [5.8a which is based directly on 3.5]. This formed part of a wider civil society campaign to lobby for more funding for women’s rights organisations [e.g. 5.8b].

### **iii. Changing attitudes of key stakeholders to see girls and women as capable and skilled**

In DRC, McLean’s integration of adolescent girls and young women into the research cycle (by setting up the Girl-Led Research Unit, GLRU) and their active engagement with stakeholders about the research, has shifted views about the capabilities of adolescent girls among representatives of national (Ministry of Gender, University of Kinshasa, NGO Si Jeunesse Savait) and international organisations (DFID, UN Women) as testified to McLean in multiple interviews [5.9]. For example, [text removed for publication]: *“I was very much influenced by seeing how the GLRU interacted with... their families, communities or DRC and international policy makers – and how this changed... the traditional way in which research dissemination and uptake works. I found there was value in this type of research as a behaviour change communication strategy in itself – for both participants and the social environment within which they are able to operate and evolve.” [5.9]*

The girl researchers also shifted attitudes and became role models in their neighbourhoods. [text removed for publication] *“After the first research study... the girls [researchers] returned to Kimbanseke to disseminate the research... that day I understood the strong foundation of this project... there were neighbourhood leaders, parents, young people, everyone... there was a positive influence... these girls became role models.” [5.9].*

Congolese and international NGOs have also used McLean’s methods to engage young researchers in their own programming. Save the Children engaged four of the GLRU researchers to train and mentor adolescents to conduct peer research on sexual and reproductive health. [text removed for publication] *“The approach to work with girl researchers was very innovative... our programme targets adolescents aged 10-14 years and we reflected on how they could have a leading role in a participatory evaluation with their peers... The girl researchers helped to train and mentor the young adolescents and supervised them to collect data.... a good experience.” [5.9]*

The international NGO Search for Common Ground engaged three of the GLRU researchers to support them to design a new programme for adolescents in Kinshasa. [text removed for publication] *“I realised they were a rich and inestimable resource... It was amazing to have young Congolese girls in front of me who could share their structured, broad knowledge, not personal opinions... I started to see them as valid interlocutors to develop our programme.” [5.9]*

Some GLRU researchers were invited by media outlets to discuss the research – the first time that young women have done this in Kinshasa. One featured in a series on young women role models called “Moseka La Brave” (a courageous woman in Congolese mythology), aired on the national TV channel CNTV [5.10a]. Another girl researcher was interviewed on national Radio Okapi about the research and the situation of young women in Kinshasa [5.10b].

### **iv. Individuals have been empowered by participation in research processes that have built their personal and professional skills and capacities**

In DRC, the fifteen girl researchers that McLean’s team trained and mentored (2014-2017) experienced significant personal and professional transformations, supporting them to become more empowered socially and economically. A series of video and audio testimonies from the girl researchers testify to the positive impact of their involvement in *La Pépinière* [5.11a & b]:

*“Before La Pépinière, I didn’t know who I was and what I could do in life. With the project, I learned that even if I was a girl-mother, my life was not ruined and I could still do something with my life. I became an example for other girls in my family and my neighbourhood.” [Belle-Fanny]*

*“I learned to save and be more professional. I am a hairdresser, but I also bought a fridge and I sell fizzy drink. My next plan is to rent a stall at the Marché de la Liberté [market] ... Thanks to the little money I have earned at La Pépinière and the skills I have learned, I have contributed in my family... I am responsible for my family... and I have grown my business.” [Fanny]*

*“I have learned so many things... Firstly how to speak in front of people... I learned professionalism and how to work hard... through my experience with La Pépinière... I see that I am autonomous now... I also have decision-making power, if I say ‘no’, it’s ‘no’... with the small money I earned from La Pépinière and the mentoring, I started selling jewellery. I have saved and I have opened a shop where I sell electronic goods like play stations, telephones... I am saving to do more studying... I dropped out of university due to a lack of money. Now I want to restart university.” [Triphène]*

*“La Pépinière has been an amazing professional opportunity... many people have contacted me and asked me to come for training and workshops... I was consulted by Fonds pour les Femmes Congolaises (FFC)... I went to a conference... we then organised training on the elections at Goma... Now, people want my opinion... I have been consulted many times due to La Pépinière ... sometimes voluntary, sometimes paid work...” [Naomie]*

In 2018, the girl researchers established their own organisation and continue to offer advice to key Congolese and international actors on programmes and policies for girls and young women.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

5.1 Testimony [text removed for publication].

5.2 Ministère du Genre, Enfant et Famille (2018) “Plan d’Action National de La République Démocratique du Congo pour La Mise en Œuvre de la Résolution 1324 du Conseil de Sécurité de Nations Unies sur Femme, Paix et Sécurité” [French + PDF translation supplied]

5.3 Testimony - Ritha Nyiritunga, National Projects Manager, RWAMREC, Rwanda. PDF.

5.4 Dunkle, K., Stern E., Chatterji, S. and Heise L. (2019) “*Indashyikirwa* program to reduce intimate partner violence in Rwanda: Report of findings from a cluster randomized control trial” <http://careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Indashyikirwa-evaluation.pdf>

5.5 Testimony. Dorcas Coker-Appiah, Executive Director, The Gender Centre, Ghana. PDF

5.6 Ogum-Alangea, D, *et al.* (2020) “Evaluation of the Rural Response System to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls in Ghana” *Global Health Action* 13:1

<https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2019.1711336>

5.7 UN Women and WHO (2020) RESPECT Women: Preventing violence against women – Implementation package <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/07/respect-women-implementation-package> PDFs supplied of a. on *Indashyikirwa* Rwanda; b. on COMBAT Ghana.

5.8a Womankind Worldwide (2014) “Prevention is Possible: The role of women’s rights organisations in ending violence against women and girls in Ethiopia, Ghana and Zambia”, PDF (based on 3.5); b. *The Guardian* op-ed (2014) <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/nov/25/gender-inequality-domestic-violence-womankind-worldwide>

5.9 Audio testimonies [text removed for publication]

5.10a “Moseka La Brave” with Belfany <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1HRWko6ROc> [French]; b. Nadège interview on Radio Okapi [PDF transcript supplied]

<http://www.radiookapi.net/2016/04/19/emissions/femme-actuelle/nadege-ngoyi-la-societe-est-plus-dure-envers-les-filles-queunvers>

5.11a Video of girl researchers’ training and conducting first study <https://vimeo.com/335720293>; b. Audio testimonies available on request [French], translated excerpts (PDF) supplied.