



## **Strengthening citizen participation around sensitive issues in order to prevent conflicts in the Great Lakes region: The role and place of women in mediation in Gisagara District, Rwanda.**

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## Executive Summary

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### Project Background

In the *Great Lakes of Africa*, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) identified the resolution of land disputes as the most critical social issue to enhance governments' legitimacy and conflict prevention capacity in Burundi, Rwanda, and the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Given its vital economic value but also its important social and political implications, land is a main source of competition in the Great Lakes' region, where agriculture and land ownership constitute the major mean for survival for a great majority of the population. The power, cultural, and identity-related issues linked to land, as well as its centrality to socio-economic development highlight its significant relevance to peace. In the absence of alternatives to agriculture, land access and ownership have caused mounting tensions in all three countries. The region's high population density exacerbates the pressure on land. Rwanda is among the smallest countries in the world, with more than 250 inhabitants per square kilometer.

Land conflicts in the region emerge from a number of sources. The average size of agricultural plots has diminished over the years, as land is divided between heirs. Divisions among siblings can create intra-family conflict and violence, especially in polygamous situations, or in instances where extra-marital children claim parents' land. In Rwanda, consultations with different key stakeholders, including the Rwanda Natural Resources Authority's (RNRA) Department of Lands and Mapping, the Ministry of Justice, the Farmers' Union Imbaraga, and the NGO *RCN Justice et Democratie*, cited succession issues as a major factor affecting young people and their land use. Land disputes have also emerged as a result of the return of refugees and IDPs – many of them having competing claims to land dating as far back as the 1960s. Upon their return home, the displaced find that their parcel was sold and occupied by another family. Currently no government in the region disposes of sufficient resources to compensate the affected populations, not to mention retroactive compensation.

To help tackle land issues in a non-violent way, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice in Rwanda (MINIJUST) has been working to train *Abunzi* mediators in conflict resolution and mediation skills using peaceful methods as a part of its regional project "Terre d'Entente", supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands since July 2012. This case study focuses on the role of female mediators in resolving land related conflicts in Rwanda. It assesses the contribution of trainings and regional exchanges delivered by SFCG to support female mediators to achieve this goal.

## Methodology

### Case Study Objectives

This case study investigates the evolution of the role and place of women in land mediation in Gisagara District, Southern Province of Rwanda since the implementation of the project. This District was chosen to represent Abunzi in Gisagara who had received two rounds of trainings by SFCG and thus, started applying the skills acquired in their mediation work.

Specifically, the case study has the following objectives:

1. Compare the place, role and perception of women in land mediation before and after SFCG’s trainings;
2. Measure the contribution of trainings, radio programs and regional exchanges organized by SFCG as part of the ‘Terre d’Entente’ project on the ability of women mediators to mediate land-related issues in their community;
3. Draw lessons and recommendations on the place and role of women in land mediation in Gisagara District.

### Approach

The approach for this case study was qualitative, and essentially built on the organization of interviews with Key Informants (KII), and Focus Groups Discussion (FGD) with citizens in the targeted communities of the Gisagara District. In total, the research team conducted 10 FGDs with female and male mediators as well as female, male and youth community members, and 9 KIIs with informants from the Ministry of Justice, committees of mediators’ presidents and vice-presidents and executive secretaries of Cells of the Mamba and Ndora sectors. These interviews targeted individuals managing Abunzi or having a role in the management of land conflicts.

### Limitations

In this research, it was not possible to disaggregate the impact of the training on the basis of gender due to the nature of the selection process of Abunzi. Indeed, to select Abunzi who will mediate a dispute, each party of the dispute will select one mediator and both mediators will then choose the third one. As a result, women are often working alongside men due to the automatic composition of committees of three Abunzi for each conflict to be solved. Therefore, it was not an easy task to identify and select women-only committees.

## Case Study Findings

This report presents findings from the qualitative research conducted to highlight achievements in local mediation with an emphasis on the role of women. This report groups the findings in 4 categories namely: (1) the role of women in land mediation, (2) the perception of female local mediators “Abunzi” by the local population, (3) provision of trainings and SFCG regional

exchanges, and (4) unintended outcomes of SFCG’s work followed by a final section on lessons learned and recommendations

Regarding the role of women in land mediation, the study shows that women are increasingly contributing in land related conflict resolution and are gaining confidence and trust from citizens. Before the implementation of the project, female mediators reported being dismissed and sometimes even stigmatized by male mediators. Nowadays male mediators consider women to be capable and actually able to handle disputes without the support of men.

Regarding the perception of female local mediators “Abunzi” by the local population, it shows that the local population as mentioned by participants in FGD considers female mediators to be neutral, impartial, and less likely to be corrupted whilst resolving disputes.

Further, with regard to the provision of trainings and SFCG regional exchanges, the report also confirms that the training delivered by SFCG equipped female mediators with skills in conflict resolution, on land law, and on the legislation regulating mediators’ work and that female mediators managed to apply those skills during mediation sessions.

Finally, the study found that the project is having unintended effects on the family dynamics to be considered in the next activities scheduled before the end of the program. Specifically, in some areas, intra-household conflicts are decreasing because men can feel embarrassed; fear being found guilty and be punished by female mediators. As a result, males and the community have progressively adopted more peaceful behaviors. Other institutions, such as churches, are increasingly consulting mediators for support in conflict resolution. It is now widely accepted that mediation can bring about a lasting resolution to most disputes without the cost and acrimony of court battles. There is also a growing acknowledgment that, in addition to resolving disputes, mediation can help parties manage their future relationships in a positive way.

## Lessons and Recommendations

The role and place of female mediators in the Gisagara District has positively evolved since the beginning of the project. Women who are at the center of family stability in Rwanda are also highly trusted by residents due to their minimal implication in corruption, their qualities of good listeners and their awareness of conflict dynamics in families. As most intra-family conflicts in rural areas are closely linked to land conflicts, empowering women to become mediation’s ambassadors in their houses as well as for their community represents a crucial step in the promotion of peaceful conflict resolution practices.

However, a number of obstacles are still present in mediators’ work. These include the limitations of the role of Abunzi mediators, which is still too often misunderstood with the function of judges that originated during the *Gacaca* courts. Their role should be clearly defined during the trainings. Logistics also constitute a challenge, notably the lack of transportation

facilities or financial support for travelling to remote areas, the lack of human support for women with young children and the volunteer aspect of mediation work, which is sometimes underappreciated by the community.

Recommendations based on the findings of this study are addressed to Abunzi, SFCG, the Ministry of Justice and the government of Rwanda.

**To Abunzi Mediators:**

- Prior to their weekly mediation sessions, Abunzi could organize brief kick-off meetings to share information, mediation skills and techniques, as well as challenges for mutual advice.
- Set up a women’s mediators committee in each sector for female mediators to discuss challenges and work together to find solution to challenges they experience with mediation.
- During *Umuganda (community work)*, integrate awareness sessions led by female mediators targeting the population, more particularly men and youth, to support women’s mediation.
- Continue benefitting from the MAJ’s technical assistance (by using phones given by MINJUST for example) about mediators’ work procedures to maintain the positive cooperation initiated during the project.

**To SFCG:**

- Print and distribute mediators’ booklets (*Agatabo k’abunzi*) designed in partnership with SFCG and *RCN Justice et Démocratie* on Abunzi’s work regulations, mediation and conflict resolution strategies so that Abunzi sustain the knowledge acquired during the training.
- Continue to adopt a mixed-gender approach to training and programme activities to promote the inclusion of women by demonstrating that women are as competent as men during mediation and ensure that family dynamics is not negatively altered by the training.
- Prior to the next Abunzi’s election, organize restitution sessions so that recently trained females mediators have the ability to train, inspire and mentor potential candidates with regard to mediation techniques.
- Revise SFCG’s training and engagement in order to clarify the definition of Abunzi’s role and address the lack of awareness about their responsibilities.
- Raise awareness about the role of women in mediation amongst Rwandan youth.
- Continue supporting MAJ’s technical assistance to Abunzi mediators (by using phones given by MINJUST for example) about mediators’ work procedures to maintain the positive cooperation initiated during the project

**To the Rwandan Ministry of Justice:**

- Strengthen coordination through regular meetings between the Abunzi and the MAJ during mediation sessions to identify needs and share best practice and provide legal advice locally.
- Provide Abunzi with transport to enable them to reach remote areas in their cells.
- In addition to the healthcare compensation scheme, incentivize low-income female Abunzi with an additional monetary incentive. This would attract more underprivileged female in the

mediation field and alleviate the burden of poverty and unpaid work for existing female mediators. It would also allow underprivileged women who do not have access to formal legal processes to be represented by mediators who understand their situation.

- Provide resources to low income female mediators who encounter the most challenges to practice mediation.

**To the government of Rwanda:**

- Strengthen MAJ work by providing them with sufficient logistical support and transport means to allow them to go to the field more regularly and institutionalize interactions.
- Provide logistical means and transport to MINIJUST to visit mediators in the field.

## 1. Introduction and Context

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Mediation Committees (Abunzi) is a Rwanda Home Grown Solution. In the traditional Rwanda, Abunzi were individuals known within their communities for their personal integrity and were asked to intervene in the event of conflict. As per efforts to reconstruct Rwanda after the Genocide of 1994, the judicial system was reformed. That is how Mediation Committees (Abunzi) were reintroduced in 2004. It is a hybrid form of justice combining traditional with modern methods of conflict resolution. The idea to bring back this form of justice delivery was motivated in part by the desire to reduce the backlog of court cases, as well as to decentralize justice and make it more affordable and accessible for citizens seeking to resolve conflict without the cost of going to court. Today, Abunzi are fully integrated into Rwanda’s justice system. The Abunzi Committees exist at cell and sector levels (for appeals) in every District and its members are democratically elected by the members of the community. Each committee is comprised of seven members who elect their President and Vice-President. Their role is to act as mediators between parties in dispute for both civil and criminal matters rather than to be judge. For this, they have to be persons of integrity in their community. The Abunzi Committees have the jurisdictional powers to preside over civil matters whose value do not exceed three million (3,000,000) Rwandan Francs. Committees of Abunzi are governed by the Law N° 37/2016 of 08/09/2016 determining the organization, jurisdiction, competence and functioning of Abunzi Committees. The Government of Rwanda is providing incentives to support Abunzi, specifically through the Mutual Health Insurance “Mutuelle de Santé” to every Committee member and 4 members of his/her family. Additionally, the government has provided them with mobile phones and is paying airtime charges in order to facilitate communication between Abunzi. The tender process for transport facilitation is in progress and should allow Abunzi to conduct mediation in remote areas.

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is an international non-profit organization that promotes peaceful resolution of conflict. With headquarters in Washington, DC and in Brussels, Belgium, SFCG’s mission is to transform how individuals, organizations, and governments deal with

conflicts - away from adversarial approaches and toward cooperative solutions. SFCG seeks to help conflicting parties understand their differences and act on their commonalities. Since 2006, SFCG has worked in Rwanda to support the post-conflict society’s peaceful transition by encouraging dialogue and strengthening capacity for peaceful conflict resolution.

Since July 2012, SFCG and its partners are implementing a 48-month long project in three countries in the Great Lakes region of Africa - Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda. The overall objective of the project is to *support the legitimate governments of the Great Lakes, so they have the capacity to meet the essential functions of the State*. Specifically, the project is aimed at:

- 1) Strengthening and creation of mechanisms for citizen participation in decision-making on sensitive issues;
- 2) Strengthening constructive engagement between civil society and local authorities around sensitive issues and;
- 3) Building the capacity of peace actors at the national level through their participation in the project (transversal result).

In Rwanda, the project is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, more specifically the Coordination of the committees of Abunzi (traditional local mediators), the Rwanda Natural Resources Authority (RNRA), and three community radio stations: Radio Izuba (Eastern Province), Radio Isangano (Western Province), and Radio Ishingiro (Northern Province). The main target groups and beneficiaries of the project include: officials in charge of land issues in government institutions (Maison d’Accès a la Justice - MAJ), committees of mediators (Abunzi), active civil society actors on land issues in targeted areas, and community radio partners in the project. Activities include trainings to traditional mediators in peaceful conflict resolution and land law, training to community radio staff in conflict sensitive programming and radio programs.

This case study shows the importance of integrating women in land mediation especially in rural areas where residents depend on land exploitation. Indeed, land is the highest cause of conflict where over 90% of rural residents survive by cultivating their land.

## 2. Methodology

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### Case Study Objectives

This case study investigates the evolution of the role and place of women in land mediation in Gisagara District, Southern Province of Rwanda since the implementation of the project.

Specifically, the case study has the following objectives:

1. Compare the place, role and perception of women in land mediation before and after SFCG’s trainings;

2. Measure the contribution of trainings, radio programs and regional exchanges organized by SFCG as part of the ‘Terre d’Entente’ project on the ability of women mediators to mediate land-related issues in their community;
3. Draw lessons and recommendations on the place and role of women in land mediation in Gisagara District.

### Approach

The approach for this case study was qualitative, and essentially built on the organization of interviews with Key Informants (KII), and Focus Groups Discussion (FGD) with citizens in the targeted communities of the Gisagara District. More specifically, 10 FGDs with female and male mediators as well as female, male and youth community members were conducted. These participants were chosen to represent the committees of mediators who undertook the training as well as the population who indirectly benefitted from the training through mediation conducted by the Abunzi trained in peaceful conflict resolution. 9 semi-structured KIIs were conducted with key informants from the Ministry of Justice, committees of mediators’ presidents and vice-presidents and executive secretaries of Cells of the Mamba and Ndora sectors. These interviews targeted individuals managing Abunzi or having a role in the management of land conflicts in these communities.

The target areas for this case study included the district of Gisagara, Ndora and Mamba sectors. This District was chosen to represent Abunzi in Gisagara who had received two rounds of trainings by SFCG and thus, started applying the skills acquired in their mediation work. Additionally, the ratio of female mediators in these two sectors was higher and the coordinator of the MAJ recommended targeting the Gisagara District for the conception of this case study.

The development of the case study was overseen by SFCG’s Project Focal Point and the Design, Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) Coordinator in Rwanda. SFCG’s DME Coordinator was responsible for the data collection, data analysis and reporting in collaboration with external enumerators (FGD facilitators) and with the support of the Institutional Learning Team (ILT).

### Target Population and Sampling

The target groups for this case study were the community - youth and adult male and female indirect beneficiaries of the project through mediation and traditional mediators. The table below shows number of participants in the 10 FGDs:

	<b>Adult men</b>	<b>Adult women</b>	<b>Youth (male and female)</b>	<b>Male mediators</b>	<b>Female mediators</b>	<b>Total</b>
Ndora sector	9	7	10	9	10	45

Mamba sector	10	10	10	9	9	48
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Additionally, we interviewed 9 key informants out of 10 scheduled. This includes:

At District level: 1 MAJ official

At Sectors level: 2 MAJ in charge of Abunzi in Ndora and Mamba sectors who had co-delivered the training with SFCG on the legal implications of the role of Abunzi in Rwanda.

4 Presidents or Vice-presidents of Abunzi (1 man and 1 woman in Ndora Sector and 1 man and 1 woman in Mamba Sector).

2 Executive secretaries of Cells (1 in Mamba and 1 in Ndora sectors).

These KIIs were held with officials who work with mediators on a daily basis. Therefore, by being the ones to the one to provide advices and support to mediators, they are well placed to know about the successes and challenges mediators face.

### Research questions

The research questions were jointly developed by the program team composed of SFCG’s Project Focal Point in Rwanda, the Regional Project Coordinator, the DME Coordinator in Rwanda as well as the Regional DME Associate. These questions are intended to guide the development of data collection tools and are available in the Annex section of this report. Overall, the broader research question of this case study was: *What is the evolution of the role and function of women in land mediation since the beginning of the project?*

### Limitations

In this research, it was not possible to disaggregate the impact of the training on the basis of gender due to the nature of the selection process of Abunzi. Indeed, to select Abunzi who will mediate a dispute, each party of the dispute will select one mediator and both mediators will then choose the third one. As a result, women are often working alongside men due to the automatic composition of committees of three Abunzi for each conflict to be solved. Therefore, it was not an easy task to identify and select women-only committees.

## 3. Case Study Findings

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This report presents findings from the qualitative research conducted to highlight achievements, challenges and unintended impacts of the project on the role of women in local mediation. This report groups the findings in four categories: (1) the role of women in land mediation, (2) the perception of women by local population, (3) the impact of the provision of trainings and SFCG

regional exchanges, and (4) unintended outcomes and consequences of SFCG’s work, followed by a final section on lessons learned and recommendations.

### **3.1 Evolution of the role of women in land mediation since the project started**

This section describes the role of female mediators in Gisagara District (Ndora and Mamba sectors). Participants in FGDs composed of mediators and citizens reported on how they perceive the evolution of the role of female mediators in the resolution of land related disputes.

Prior to the 2-day training organized by SFCG, female mediators who participated in the study’s FGDs admitted that they lacked the necessary knowledge in conflict resolution techniques and in land law. The training, by a mix of class-like and practical application sessions attempted to equip women with skills in conflict analysis, active listening and mediation.

Before the training, mediators did not systematically know how they were expected to act and what their responsibilities entailed, and sometimes would be tempted to act as if they were judges as in the traditional *Gacaca* courts. Through increased awareness of the responsibilities of their work and their role in mediations, participants became more confident in their ability to solve conflict as mediators rather than as judges. However, participants in FGD, and specifically mediators, confirmed a lack of awareness of their responsibilities, at times considering themselves as judges rather than mediators.

Additionally, before the implementation of the project, female mediators reported being dismissed by male mediators in certain areas. Sometimes, when a male mediator would find himself in a committee composed of women mediators only, he would postpone the resolution until other male mediators are available. Other men would even seek the support of former mediators to avoid working with female mediators. *“Before the training of SFCG, there were times where men mediators consulted male non-mediators who were present in the audience in decision making for simply denying the ideas of women mediators”* Man mediator, Ndora sector.

To understand the role of women in land mediation, we assessed the following key elements:

- a) Resolution of land conflicts;
- b) Impartiality and neutrality;
- c) Types of land conflicts;
- d) Obstacles for female mediators.

#### **a) Resolution of land conflicts by female mediators**

All participants, at the exception of youth unanimously agreed that female mediators are more actively participating in land conflict resolution than they were in the past. According to a male mediator participant, women were rarely or not at all involved because their colleagues thought that they did not have the capacity to solve conflicts and engage in mediation work. For instance, one young participant was not aware that female mediators were participating in land resolution: *“We did not have enough information on the functioning of mediators committees 3 years ago”*.

This can be attributed to the fact that this research exclusively selected single youth who, at times, are not involved in land disputes as they are not yet leaders of a household and are still living with their parents. Nevertheless, this also suggests that more awareness could be raised amongst youth.

Almost all participants of this study said that they were satisfied with the role of female mediators in land conflict resolution. This finding confirms that women’s position in land mediation has improved since the beginning of the project. Additionally, this study found that the role and place of female mediators has become outstanding since the number of women in the cells’ committees of mediators is now often equal or greater than the number of men. Beyond the 30% quota for women’s participation in policy making position in the public service in Rwanda<sup>1</sup>, women’s have successfully managed to increase the gender representation in Abunzi committees. Therefore, their peers are now valuing their ideas and suggestions. *“Their place is outstanding. This year I went in the mediation work and I found that they are able and provide ideas and suggestions as well as men.”* Man mediator, Ndora Sector.

#### **b) Impartiality and neutrality**

Both male and female participants including youth claimed that women are more impartial and neutral than men in their decision-making. Many said that this was due to the fact that, unlike their male counterparts, women are constantly busy with household work and have very little time to go to bars and pubs meeting with people who may bribe them.

Participants said that women are always selected by parties in conflict because the level of trust in women is higher than it is in men: *“in subcommittees of three mediators chosen to resolve the dispute, often two are women because they are impartial, they don’t ask something to the persons in conflict, in short, people trust them”* said a female mediator from Ndora Sector.

According to participants, this level of trust in female mediators has generated a greater respect for their work believed to be of higher quality than that of men. Nowadays, the verdict delivered by women is systematically respected and implemented, a practice not always followed in the past. An adult participant from Mamba Sector points out: *“From my observations I have seen that people have much more trust in them [women mediators] than men in the committees of mediators, and their ideas and advice are respected”*.

Female mediators were also seen as being strongly committed and determined to achieving their objectives despite day-to-day challenges and numerous logistical obstacles. *“They are engaged in their work even if they encounter a problem of transport”*, noted a youth participant from the Mamba sector.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.accord.org.za/publication/the-abunzi-mediation-in-rwanda/>

Finally, the findings demonstrate that women have started being placed on equal footing with men when working on land mediation in their communities: “*Women are like men, they are courageous and capable*” stated a male mediator from the Mamba Sector.

### c) Types of Land Conflicts

This subsection describes the nature of conflicts resolved by mediators and aims at identifying whether female and male mediators have a tendency to focus on different types of conflicts. As the organization of the selection of committees restricts our ability to completely disaggregate these findings by gender, we relied on testimonies to orient the debate. At the cell- and sector-levels, a committee of mediators is composed of seven mediators elected by the population. To resolve a conflict a subcommittee of three mediators is selected by the parties in conflict. This subcommittee is selected as follows: each party in conflict chooses one mediator and the two mediators choose the third one jointly. Therefore, committees would rarely be entirely composed of female mediators and, as a result, women and men would often work together.

Participants were aware that mediators have the responsibility to resolve different kinds of conflicts over topics such as land boundaries, inheritance, and land documents. According to the MAJ responsible for the Gisagara District, mediators have the mandate to resolve any land conflict of a value not exceeding 5 million Rwandese francs (\$6,500), according to the law governing the Abunzi mediators’ work.

In the case of intra-family conflicts, women are more often solicited for two reasons. First, women are perceived as more complainant than men and represent the largest proportion of individuals at the origin of a mediation process when it comes to intra-family disputes. Second, women having started a mediation procedure are often more trusting of women, whom they believe will have more empathy for their situation and understand the difficulties they are facing. Moreover, as female mediators are also housewives, they have largely gained the trust of their neighbors since they are aware of the realities of keeping a household. A female mediator from Ndora Sector states: “*In my cell in Dahwe a man named Niyomugabo was selling part of the harvest but gave nothing in return to his family. This created a conflict between him and his wife. I was one of the mediators who did mediation in this family*”.

Women who have disputes with their husbands, especially in the case of polygamy, also prefer female mediators to handle their case. A female mediator from Ndora Sector shared her testimony “*In the same cell in Dahwe, Nsabimana left his wife Nyirabasinga Mediatrice to live with another woman. The legitimate wife appealed to the mediators’ committee asking for advice on how to obtain a divorce. Myself, as a female mediator and my colleagues have taken a step towards this family, we gave them advice and the issue was resolved without a divorce. The man returned to his family and I have continued to be close to this family to give them the necessary advice*”.

### 3.2 Perception of women mediators by the population

Citizens who participated in FGDs largely reported that they could notice a positive impact of the project on the perception of women mediators by the population, and more globally improved their perception of mediation as a valuable mean to solve local disputes. The study found that most people now refrain from calling the police or going to courts following a dispute and prioritizing resolution by mediators at the cell level. Some participants are aware of the training given to the mediators. A male participant from Ndora Sector: *“We noticed a positive change because mediators have benefited a lot from the training and can solve many conflicts”*.

In order to assess if the mediation work made by women mediators after the SFCG’s training over the last three years, participants reported the following key elements:

- (a) Confidence and trust
- (b) Skills and knowledge of land law
- (c) Perception of women’s mediation services

#### a) Confidence and trust

Participants reported that over the past 3 years, female mediators have gained confidence overtime and have been successfully able to put their skills into practice. This is in part due to the training received, which encouraged them to be more self-confident and allowed them to gain knowledge and skills on land laws and conflict mediation. As mentioned above, the population has also greater confidence in trained female mediators because they are more cautious, patient and less easily corrupt.

The current committees of mediators contain a large number of women. Since the 2015 elections, the total number of Members of Abunzi committees is 17,941 among them men are 9,988 (56%) and women are 7,953 (44%)<sup>2</sup>. Thanks to this higher level of citizens’ confidence in female mediators, many women were elected in the previous election held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2015. One female mediator participant in Ndora Sector testified: *“the participation rate of women mediators in mediating land disputes has been a positive change because many disputants choose women mediators to resolve their disputes”*.

#### b) Skills and knowledge of land law

The findings show that before the training, female mediators used to resolve minor land conflicts whereas now they regularly resolve complex land and domestic conflicts, which typically fall within the competency of the police or basic courts.

The MAJ of Gisagara District agreed that the training equipped mediators with skills in conflict resolution techniques, land law, and that is why mediators gained self-confidence and are now trusted by citizens. This statement was confirmed by a female mediator in Mamba Sector who noted that: *“During this period there has been a positive change following the training received*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.minijust.gov.rw/services/abunzi/abunzi-achievements/>

*on the land law and resolving conflicts peacefully, because before we felt like a person without ideas, incapable and thus let the ideas of men prevail. Today a committee composed by women can solve a land dispute without complex obstacles or other problems”.*

### **c) Perception of women’s mediation services**

All adult FGD participants and few youth said that they had already asked a woman to mediate for them. However, many of them were not aware of the existence of the training conducted by SFCG, as noticed by a youth participant from Ndora Sector: *“Yes I did use women mediators’ services in the last 3 years to mediate a land dispute, but I do not know if they were trained by SFCG. I was satisfied that the problem was solved very carefully, so that we all accepted the conclusions made by the mediators”.*

Participants who used mediators’ services said that they were satisfied with the way women resolved their disputes due to their neutrality, active listening and empathy. *“Once I did use a woman mediator when I had a land dispute with a brother and the matter has been fully resolved and I was satisfied, but I did not know whether the woman had been trained by SFCG”*, female participant, Mamba Sector.

When asked to rate the extent to which they were satisfied with the decision made by female mediators, a large number of participants provided an average rate of 85%. As mentioned by participants, this was due to the fact that citizens are not appealing against the decisions made by Abunzi and disputes cases referred to the court are decreasing: *“Trust is full today because the population is satisfied with their resolutions in mediation, because the number of cases of conflicts sent in courts are limited”* said a male participant from Mamba Sector.

### **3.3 Trainings and Regional Exchanges**

The trainings provided to the mediators in Gisagara District helped male and female mediators to cooperate and to work together as mediators. It also helped build and strengthen the relationship between mediators and the MAJ. Almost all mediators who participated in the FGDs confirmed that they had attended SFCG’s training, but only a few reported having participated in the regional conferences for mediators organized by SFCG. Few participated in the regional conferences because a limited number of mediators from each of the project countries (Rwanda, Burundi and DRC) was invited to each of the five conferences that have taken place so far. Also, in some occasions the Abunzi did not receive authorization to travel for these regional conferences.

To understand the progress achieved through the activities implemented by SFCG and the Ministry of Justice, this research identified the following theme:

- (a) Improved knowledge and technical skills
- (b) Relationship between men and women mediators
- (c) Relationship between the MAJ and Abunzi mediators

## **a) Improved knowledge and technical skills**

### ***SFCG Trainings***

Mediators asserted that their knowledge in conflict resolution, conflict analysis, mediation techniques, impartiality, neutrality and active listening improved over the course of their training. Trained mediators also noted that their knowledge of land law and procedures supported them significantly, as the majority of disputes they deal with are related to the land; this was confirmed by a male mediator from Mamba Sector: *“Before participating in the training organized by SFCG, we were not aware of Land Laws, so, mediation procedures, and decisions that were taken often included errors. At the moment we don’t make many mistakes”*.

Participants said that the training methodology -combining theory and practical exercises- helped them better understand what they were learning, notably the exercises and activities they participated in, which helped them put their knowledge into practice. Additionally, prior to the training, only a handful of mediators were aware of the selection process for the resolution of disputes: *“Before the training organized by SFCG, I knew that all seven members of the committee of mediators present have to sit in a mediation session and also wear headscarves [uniforms]. During the training we learned that people in conflict choose a subcommittee of three persons to solve their problem, and only these three mediators wear headscarves”*, female mediator Ndora Sector.

### ***Regional Exchanges***

A woman mediator who participated in the regional exchange noted that she saw a difference in the way disputes are resolved in Burundi and the DRC and was pleased to observe that Rwandan mediation is formalized and that mediators have a special legal mandate to exercise their authority. Indeed, Abunzi are democratically elected by members of their community in their Cell or Sector every five years on the basis of personal integrity. Additionally, and exclusively to Rwanda, there is a possibility of appealing a mediator’s decision to the court level leaving an alternative for unsatisfied parties in conflict: *“When in the mediation, I noticed that there is a big difference because in Burundi, for example, decisions made by the mediators are irreversible, we cannot appeal”* said this female mediator from Ndora Sector.

## **b) Relationship between men and women mediators**

Both male and female mediators agreed that before the training their collaboration was limited and relationship somewhat nonexistent, notably because female mediators were neglected and consequently, their views and ideas were not considered as worthy.

Male mediators would even consult other men who were not mediators during mediations because they would not accept women mediators’ ideas. This is confirmed by a male mediator from Mamba Sector: *“I was chairman of the committee of mediators in our cell and in mediation when we went to the stage to make a decision, and I found myself alone with women mediators, I had to arrange to suspend this activity to wait for another man mediator to be back. But today a sub-committee composed of women alone may be able to resolve a conflict and make decision”*.

During the training, the fact that they were learning and doing exercises together, male mediators found that women were able to properly mediate and resolve conflicts: *“The collaboration was not good in general because the men did not give great value to women's suggestions, except for a lady whose suggestions were accepted by men because she was educated”*, said a female participant in Ndora Sector.

By involving both genders in the project activities, men now perceive women mediators as able and value their ideas and advice: *“After training it was shown that there needs to be complementarity between men and women in mediation, and we saw that we have the same abilities and powers”*, said a male mediator in Ndora Sector. As a result, the cooperation between men and women has relatively increased: *“Today the level of collaboration between men and women has evolved amongst mediators”* noted a male participant from Ndora Sector.

### **c) Relationship between the MAJ and Abunzi mediators**

Youth and more widely members of the community are not aware of the relationship between mediators and the MAJ, with the exception of those who have been elected as Abunzi in the previous committees. However, community members both interact or have knowledge of mediators and the MAJ individually.

More importantly, the study found that the trainings had improved mutual trust and coordination between Abunzi mediators and the MAJ. Prior to SFCG’s trainings, mediators considered the MAJ as officials who were only able to criticize their decisions when people appealed to their decisions. A male mediator from Ndora Sector admitted: *“Before training we had many problems with the MAJ because this one could only be seen as someone to look for our reports errors, irregularities, mistakes, [...] well if these trainings were not organized some of us were about to abandon mediation work. But after training mediators and MAJ have become very good partners. We complement smoothly.”*

The fact that the trainings were co-facilitated with two MAJ officials (a lawyer and the Abunzi coordinator) allowed for better coordination and improved relationship with the mediators. Coordination between mediators and the MAJ has considerably increased, as they are now accustomed to each other and work well together. Mediators at the training were informed that the MAJ is there to support them in their work by providing advice and guidance. Since then, mediators are consulting the MAJ when they face a challenge in the dispute resolution. Out of the three existing MAJ members for each district, one is responsible for coordinating mediators’ work; however he/she doesn’t have logistical means and transport to visit mediators in the field.

*“Before training, we did not feel comfortable with the MAJ, we could not see the MAJ to ask advice, we took the MAJ as a body where people would accuse us, or a unit to contradict our decisions”*, said a male mediator from Mamba Sector.

## 4. Unintended outcomes and consequences of SFCG’s work

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This report shows that, in some areas, intra-household conflicts are decreasing because men fear being found guilty and then punished by female mediators, which they would find embarrassing. As a result, they have progressively adopted more peaceful behaviors: *“Violence of all kinds decreased in families because the men are ashamed to be judged by women mediators”* revealed an adult woman, FGD Ndora Sector. Whilst a decrease of domestic conflicts can be seen as a positive effect, the unintended impact on family dynamics cannot be ignored and should be accounted for in the next training sessions delivered by SFCG until the end of the project. Indeed, trainers should give special attention to the way men are affected by the raising of women profile as a result of the training.

Other institutions, with which they are affiliated, such as churches, are increasingly consulting mediators for support in conflict resolution. One female mediator from Mamba Sector stated: *“In ADEPR, in our church, the pastor always calls me whenever a problem arises among church members, or family members, so they call me “the Church’s Ombudsman”*.

## 5. Conclusions

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This study shows that female mediators are working in solving land related disputes and their contribution has improved over time. Particularly, SFCG’s trainings have equipped women mediators with knowledge, skills and conflict resolution techniques, as well as land-related laws. As a result, women mediators have gained self-confidence and trust from citizens and their fellow male mediators alike. The trainings also helped women (and men) mediators understand the extent and specificities of their responsibilities as Abunzi mediators.

The findings of this case study indicate that in some areas, intra-household conflicts are decreasing and that men tend to adopt more peaceful behaviors, demonstrating impact at a wider community level. However, unintended impact on family dynamics cannot be underestimated and a social elevation of women needs to be acknowledged and considered in future program activities. Furthermore, the study encountered a limitation in how to identify the results of the project on female mediators alone because they are working with their fellow male mediators.

Women were nevertheless found to be the center of family stability and as it was demonstrated, they are also highly trusted by residents due to their minimal implication in corruption, their qualities of good listeners and their awareness of conflict dynamics in families. As most intra-family conflicts in rural areas are closely linked to land conflicts, empowering women to become mediation’s ambassadors in their houses as well as for their community represents a crucial step in the promotion of peaceful conflict resolution practices.

## 6. Lessons and recommendations

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In spite of the increasing role and space for women in mediation in the Gisagara district of Rwanda, the study also found a series of **obstacles** still constraining the work of women mediators. Whilst the SFCG trainings have solved some, others are still relevant. This includes finding affordable means of transportation to and from the mediation sessions, especially to access remote areas. Specifically, the following remaining obstacles have been identified:

### *(a) Lack of time and resources*

Many participants claimed that because women are often busy with domestic work it is sometimes difficult for them to be on time or even participate in the sessions, often leading to delayed mediations. A man from Ndora Sector complains: “*When they have other things to fix or make for their family, they can be absent or be late on mediation day knowing that they earn nothing*”. Similar situations can be observed amongst female mediators from poor families struggling to juggle between mediation work and providing food for their families: “*The poverty of their families [is a constraint]; as they may prefer to spend time looking for food for their families instead of going into the mediation work*” Male participants, Ndora Sector.

Indeed, participants saw poverty as a great obstacle for female mediators as they have to pay for their transport and food whilst in the field. It is worth noting that the Ministry of Justice and MAJ both support Abunzi logistically by providing them with mobile phones and airtime to communicate with each other, as well as with the parties in conflict. In an effort to decrease transport time and expenses, bicycles should be made available from late 2016.

### *(b) Lack of financial and human support*

As mentioned above, the volunteer aspect of mediation has an impact on the prioritization of tasks for which women are responsible. In addition to this, female mediators’ husbands are often not supportive and complain that their wives are working for free without any payment or compensation. This was reported by a male participant in Ndora Sector “*Being voluntary, their husbands do not support the time spent on this work without winning anything*”.

That being said, the Government of Rwanda covers Health Insurance scheme “Mutuelle de Santé” for every committee member and four members of his/her family. A number of Abunzi mention benefitting from the wider impact of their work amongst their community in terms of social cohesion.

Additionally, when women are pregnant or have young children, absenteeism at mediation sessions is frequent and their work is not systematically covered by a replacement. When they bring their breastfeeding infants, female mediators are sometimes perceived to disturb the mediation process when standing up to take care of their children. A male mediator from Ndora Sector said that “*women mediators when pregnant or breastfeeding baby lack time to attend the*

*mediations sessions*”. To maintain participation of women with young children, a system of support and solidarity could be developed between mediators and the community. Additionally, the training should include a component on awareness-raising about women’s challenges which could be debated during training sessions.

Based, on the findings of this case study, and the aforementioned obstacles that remain, SFCG has formulated the following **recommendations**:

**To Abunzi Mediators:**

- Prior to their weekly mediation sessions, Abunzi could organize brief kick-off meetings to share information, mediation skills and techniques, as well as challenges for mutual advice.
- Set up a women’s mediators committee in each sector for female mediators to discuss challenges and work together to find solution to challenges they experience with mediation.
- During *Umuganda (community work)*, integrate awareness sessions led by female mediators targeting the population, more particularly men and youth, to support women’s mediation.
- Continue benefitting from the MAJ’s technical assistance (by using phones given by MINJUST for example) about mediators’ work procedures to maintain the positive cooperation initiated during the project.

**To SFCG:**

- Print and distribute mediators’ booklets (*Agatabo k’abunzi*) designed in partnership with SFCG and *RCN Justice et Démocratie* on Abunzi’s work regulations, mediation and conflict resolution strategies so that Abunzi sustain the knowledge acquired during the training.
- Continue to adopt a mixed-gender approach to training and programme activities to promote the inclusion of women by demonstrating that women are as competent as men during mediation and ensure that family dynamics is not negatively altered by the training.
- Prior to the next Abunzi’s election, organize restitution sessions so that recently trained females mediators have the ability to train, inspire and mentor potential candidates with regard to mediation techniques.
- Revise SFCG’s training and engagement in order to clarify the definition of Abunzi’s role and address the lack of awareness about their responsibilities.
- Raise awareness about the role of women in mediation amongst Rwandan youth.
- Continue supporting MAJ’s technical assistance to Abunzi mediators (by using phones given by MINJUST for example) about mediators’ work procedures to maintain the positive cooperation initiated during the project

**To the Rwandan Ministry of Justice:**

- Strengthen coordination through regular meetings between the Abunzi and the MAJ during mediation sessions to identify needs and share best practice and provide legal advice locally.
- Provide Abunzi with transport to enable them to reach remote areas in their cells.

- In addition to the healthcare compensation scheme, incentivize low-income female Abunzi with an additional monetary incentive. This would attract more underprivileged female in the mediation field and alleviate the burden of poverty and unpaid work for existing female mediators. It would also allow underprivileged women who do not have access to formal legal processes to be represented by mediators who understand their situation.
- Provide resources to low income female mediators who encounter the most challenges to practice mediation.

#### **To the government of Rwanda:**

- Strengthen MAJ work by providing them with sufficient logistical support and transport means to allow them to go to the field more regularly and institutionalize interactions.
- Provide logistical means and transport to MINIJUST to visit mediators in the field.

## **7. Annexes**

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### **7.1 Tools**

#### **Questionnaire for focus groups with the population**

Province:

District:

Number of participants: ... (M,F)

Type of participants:

Date:

Notes taker:

Facilitator:

#### **I. The role of women then and now**

1. Could you introduce yourself please?
2. In your opinion, what was the role and place of the woman in land mediation 3 years ago? Was it satisfactory or not? Why? What obstacles was the woman mediator facing?
3. When was the first time you called on a woman mediator for land mediation? What type of land mediation? What did you like? What did you dislike?
4. How do you assess the participation of women in land mediation over the past two years? Have you seen a change, positive or negative? Have women mediators overcome any obstacles? Which ones?
5. Have you used women mediator’s services for land mediation over the last two years? Was it a woman mediator trained by SFCG? What did you like about it? What did you dislike?
6. What do you think of women's participation rate in land mediations over the last two years compared to men? Has it evolved?

7. What types / themes of mediations are women mediators involved with?
8. How do you judge the quality of mediation provided by women mediators trained by SFCG over the last two years? Have you observed a change?
9. When you look at the place and role given to women mediator in resolving land issues today: what are you proud of, and what obstacles remain to be overcome?

## **II. Perception of women by the local population:**

10. How do you judge citizens’ level of trust in women mediating sensitive land issues (high, medium, lower, low, very low)? Why? Have you noticed a change between the last 3 years and today?
11. Do you have more trust in women mediators today than 3 years ago?
12. Do you think the change in women mediators’ role in resolving land issues has impacted the perception/role of women in other aspects of life (cultural norms, gender equality, etc), i.e. outside of mediation? How?

## **III. Provision of training / SFCG exchanges**

13. Can you describe the cooperation that existed between the women and men Abunzi mediators before the training of SFCG here in Gisagara?
14. How would you rate the knowledge and expertise of women mediators over the last two years in your community? Why? How has the quality of their mediations improved ?
15. Over the past 3 years, how would you rate the successful mediations made by women mediators trained by SFCG? What are their trends over the last three years?
16. How would you rate the level of satisfaction of people who benefited from land mediations conducted by women trained by SFCG? High, why? If not why?
17. Can you describe the cooperation between Abunzi and MAJ before and after the training of SFCG here in Gisagara?

## **III. Lessons and Recommendations**

18. What are your expectations for women mediators in the future? Should they be more/less involved in mediating land disputes? How can they better serve your needs as a citizen?
19. How do you propose to strengthen the level of knowledge and technical skills of land mediation for women mediators?
20. What advice can you give to Abunzi mediators in your sector, on how they could strengthen the role and place of women in land mediation in your community?

## **FGD guide for women and men mediators**

Province:

District

Number of participants:... (M,F)

Type of participants:

Date:

Notes taker:

Facilitator:

### **I. The role of women mediators**

1. How long have you been an Abunzi mediator for?
2. How can you describe the role and place of women over the past 3 years in land mediation? Was it satisfactory or not? Why? What obstacles women were facing in mediating?
3. How do you assess the participation of women in land mediation over the past two-three years? Have you observed a change, positive or negative? has it increased at all in the past three years?
4. What do you think of women's participation rate in land mediations over the last 3 years compared to men's? What types / themes of mediations are they involved in?
5. Over the past two years, how has the frequency of land mediations conducted by women evolved? Has the type of conflicts in which they are involved changed?
6. How do you rate the level of trust citizens place in women to mediate sensitive land issues (high, medium, lower, low, very low)? Why? Have you noticed a change between -three years ago and today?
7. When you look at the place and role given to women mediator in resolving land issues today: what are you proud of, and what obstacles remain to be overcome?
8. Do you think the change in women mediators' role in resolving land issues has impacted the perception/role of women in other aspects of life, i.e. outside of mediation? How?

**II. Unintended outcomes and consequences of SFCG's work:** 9. How have women mediators shaped other aspects of local life and/or perceptions of women more generally (if at all)?

### **III. Provision of training / SFCG exchanges**

10. Can you describe your experience in mediation / resolution of land conflicts in your community, before participating in the training and the regional conference organized by SFCG? Has this experience changed after having participated in either or both activities?
12. Can you describe the existing relationship between men and women , and between mediators in general and MAJ, before the training delivered by SFCG here in Gisagara? Has this relationship changed after your participation?
13. What skills have you acquired during the training and / or regional exchanges organized by SFCG in land mediation?
14. How have these skills helped you improve your mediations?
15. Are you satisfied with the services you provide as part of land mediation? Why?
16. After the training and / or exchange provided by SFCG, have you noticed a change in your role and your place in the land conflict mediation?

17. How would you describe the frequency of your participation in mediation / peaceful resolution of land disputes before vs. after SFCG trainings or the regional exchange?

### **III. Lessons and Recommendations**

18. In your opinion, how can we further strengthen the knowledge and techniques of land mediation of women mediators?

19. Are there other any challenges ahead? Can you name them?

20. What opportunities do you see for women mediators in relation to your work in land mediation? What are the risks?

21. What (s) advice (s) can you give to other women mediators, who are not trained by SFCG in Gisagara District?

22. How can women mediators (and / or men mediators) trained by SFCG help sharing good practices and / or innovations?

23. Do you have any comments, suggestions, and concerns about the project and / or evaluation to share with us? Do you have any questions, if yes explain.

Thank you for responding to our invitation!

## **KII guide for official/MAJ**

### **I. The role of women in land mediation then and now**

1. In your opinion, what was the role and position of the woman in land mediation within your organization 2 or 3 years ago?

2. Was this position satisfactory or not? Why?

3. How do you assess the participation of women in land mediation over the past 3 years? Have you seen a change, positive or negative? Have obstacles been overcome? Which ones and how?

4. What do you think of women's participation rate in land mediations over the last two years compared to men? What types / themes of mediations were they involved with?

5. During the past 3 years, has the frequency of land mediations conducted by women changed?

### **II. Perception of women by the local population**

6. (As an official), how do you rate the level of trust citizens have in women mediating sensitive land issues (high, medium, lower, low, very low)? Why? Have you noticed a change between the last 3 years and today?

7. When you look at the place and role given to women mediators in resolving land issues today: What are you proud of, and what obstacles are still to be overcome?

8. Do you think the change in women mediators' role in resolving land issues has impacted the perception/role of women in other aspects of life, i.e. outside of mediation? How?

### **III. Provision of training / SFCG exchanges**

9. Did you participate in SFCG's trainings and/or regional exchanges organized as part of the project, as co-facilitator or participant? If yes, which ones?

10. In your opinion, what was the added-value of training and / or the regional exchange in which you participated? What has been the contribution to the work of your institution?
11. Can you describe the relationship that existed between men and women mediators, and between mediators and your organization, before the trainings of SFCG here in Gisagara? Have these relationships changed after the training?
12. How do you judge the quality of mediations led by women mediators trained by SFCG in your community during the past two years?
13. Have you noticed more successful mediations by women mediators trained by SFCG than those that have not been trained? What have been the developments in the last two years?
14. How would you rate the degree of satisfaction of persons having benefited from land mediations conducted by the mediating women trained by SFCG? if high, why? if not why?

#### **IV. Unintended outcomes and consequences of SFCG’s work**

15. According to you, how have women mediators shaped other aspects of local life and/or perceptions of women more generally (if at all), in the past two years?

#### **V. Lessons and Recommendations**

16. What lessons / lessons have you drawn from the mediation done by women who participated in SFCG training and exchanges?
17. What obstacles do women mediators continue to face?
18. What advice would you give to strengthen the role and place of women in land mediation in your institution?
19. Do you have any comments, suggestions, and concerns about the project and / or evaluation to share with us? Do you have any questions, if yes go ahead.

Thank you for responding to our invitation!

## **7.1 Terms of Reference**

Case Study on the role and place of women in land mediation in Rwanda’s Gisagara District

## 1. Context

### About Search for Common Ground

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is an international non-profit organization that promotes peaceful resolution of conflict. With headquarters in Washington, DC and a European office in Brussels, Belgium, SFCG’s mission is to transform how individuals, organizations, and governments deal with conflict - away from adversarial approaches and toward cooperative solutions. SFCG seeks to help conflicting parties understand their differences and act on their commonalities. Since 2006, SFCG has worked in Rwanda to support the post-conflict society’s peaceful transition by encouraging dialogue and strengthening capacity.

SFCG is conducting a case study as part of its project "**Strengthen citizen participation around sensitive issues in order to prevent conflicts in the Great Lakes regions**". This case study will highlight particularly the engagement of female mediators in resolving land conflict as a result of the project

### About the project

Since July 2012, SFCG and its partners are implementing a project of 48 months in three countries in the Great Lakes region of Africa - Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The overall objective of the project is to *support the legitimate governments of the Great Lakes, so they have the capacity to meet the essential functions of the State.*

### Specific Objectives

- 4) Strengthening and creation of mechanisms for citizen participation in decision-making on sensitive issues;
- 5) Strengthening constructive engagement between civil society and local authorities around sensitive issues and
- 6) Capacity building of peace actors at the national level through their participation in the project (transversal result).

In Rwanda, the project is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, more specifically the Coordination of Abunzis (traditional local mediators), the Rwanda Natural Resources Authority (RNRA), and three community radio stations: Radio Izuba (Eastern Province); Radio Isangano (Western Province); and Radio Ishingiro (Northern Province). The main **target groups** and beneficiaries of the project include: officials in charge of land issues in government institutions, community mediators, actors of active civil society on land issues in targeted areas, and community radio partners in the project. The final beneficiaries of the project include an estimated 1 million men and women, listeners of the project’s radio programs, in Rwanda.

### About this case study

This case study is designed to investigate the evolution of the role and place of women in land mediation in the Southern Province, Gisagara District. This District was chosen because all abunzi in Gisagara have received the second round of the training and they started to use the skills learned from the training in their work.

Specifically, the case study has the following objectives:

4. Compare the place, role and perception of women in land mediation before and after SFCG’s trainings.
5. Measure the contribution of training, radio programs and regional exchanges organized by SFCG as part of the project on the ability of women mediators to mediate land-related issues in their community.
6. Draw lessons and recommendations on the place and role of women in land mediation in Gisagara District.

The case study report will be shared with the Rwanda Ministry of Justice and the Embassy of Netherlands in Rwanda, as well as with other relevant stakeholders active or interested in the field of land mediation in Rwanda.

### Research Questions

The research questions were developed jointly by the program team, composed of the Project Focal Point in Rwanda and the Project Regional Coordinator, the DME Coordinator in Rwanda as well as the Regional DME Specialist. These questions are intended to guide the development of data collection tools.

The general research questions will find out how:

**Role of women in land mediation:**

- How has the participation of women in land mediation evolved in the Gisagara District over the past three years?
- How confident are women mediators in solving land-related conflicts, what types of land conflicts are they active on and how is the local context affecting their mediation role?

**Perception of women by the local population:**

- How has the perception of women by the local population evolved over the past three years? Can this change be attributed to SFCG’s trainings?
- How has the level of trust between citizens and women mediators in the resolution of sensitive land issues evolved over the past three years?
- What remain the barriers to perceiving women as capable mediators of land issues (if there are any)?

**Provision of training / SFCG exchanges:**

- What is the contribution of regional trainings and exchanges organized by SFCG in empowering individual women mediators and build their capacity as mediators in the Gisagara District (self-confidence, knowledge and technical skills; recognition by their pairs and citizens)?
- How have SFCG’s trainings contributed to transforming the relations between women and men mediators, and with MAJ, in Gisagara district?
- What is the contribution of regional training and exchanges organized by SFCG on the successful mediations of land conflict by women in the Gisagara District?
- What is the degree of satisfaction of citizens who received land mediations conducted by women trained under the project?

### **Unintended outcomes and consequences of SFCG’s work:**

- How have women mediators shaped other aspects of local life and/or perceptions of women more generally (if at all)?

### **Lessons and recommendations:**

- What advice can the trained women and men mediators provide to strengthen the place and role of women in land mediation in Gisagara District?

## **Methodology**

### **Approach**

The approach of this case study will be qualitative, and essentially build on the organization of interviews with key Informants, and focus groups discussion with citizens in targeted communities in the District of Gisagara. The development of the case study will be overseen by the Project Focal Point and DME Coordinator SFCG in Rwanda. DME will be responsible for data collection in collaboration with external enumerators (facilitators for FGD) who will be hired.

### **Data collection area**

Data collection target Gisagara District, where SFCG has already organized training and coaching sessions for Abunzi mediators. 2 sectors will be selected after discussion with MAJ at Gisagara District. We will choose sectors that have many women Abunzi mediators.

### **Target groups**

The following groups will be targeted by the case study:

#### **10 interviews with:**

#### **In each sector:**

- 2 trained mediators: Especially 1 president or vice president (1 woman and 1 man)

- 1 Executive secretary of cell
- 1 Functionaires in charge of Abunzi at sector level (in charge of Etat Civil)
- And at the District: 2 MAJ at Gisagara District office (in charge of Abunzi and the coordinator)

10 focus groups with:

In each sector:

- 1 FGD with women mediators trained by SFCG
- 1 FGD with men mediators trained by SFCG
- 3 FGD with citizens:
  - o 1 adult men
  - o 1 with adult women
  - o 1 with youth (18-25 years mixed male / female singles who are not heads of household)

**Data collection tools**

Interview guides and guides for Focus groups discussions will be developed by the DME Coordinator SFCG in Rwanda based on the research questions developed as part of this methodology and reviewed by the ILT regional team.

**Work schedule**

Activities	Date/Deadline	Responsible
Elaboration of ToRs	27 May 16	Mugisha, Kalisa, Melanie, Gabrielle, Adrienne
Finalisation of TOR and development of FGD and KII guide	31 Mai 16	Mugisha, Kalisa, Melanie, Gabrielle, Adrienne

Recruitment of enumerators (FGD facilitators)	3 June 16	Mugisha, Kalisa
Data collection in the field	5-11 June 16	Mugisha
Data entry and data analysis	13- 22 June 16	Mugisha
Draft of final report	24 June 16	Mugisha
Comments from SFCG colleagues	30 June 16	Kalisa, Gabrielle, Melanie, Mugisha, Adrienne
Final version of the report	5 July 16	

**Staffing:**

To conduct this Case study the following persons will be needed in data collection and data entry:

- DME Coordinator: he will lead the processes of this case study
- Enumerators: two facilitators of FGD will be hired. They have to have laptop to do data entry for their transcript and translate it into English (because the discussions will be done in Kinyarwanda)