

AGBV QSN SEPTEMBER 2022 NARRATIVE REPORT

From June 2022 to September 2022, two main activities were done: A three-day retreat for 20 GBV accompanists at Centre Mugatutu in Gitega province and a three-day trauma healing workshop for 20 GBV most grave cases in Kibimba, Gitega province.

I. A three-day Retreat

- Participants: 8 men and 12 women
- Dates: 28-30 June 2022
- Venue: CENTRE MUGATUTU OF MIPAREC IN GITEGA PROVINCE
- Facilitator: AKIMANA Lionel

Objectives of the Retreat

- Bring together facilitators in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) to share and discuss the challenges encountered in the field
- Strengthen the capacities of facilitators in the fight against GBV in the field of conflict transformation
- Build a network of GBV survivors' accompanists

Methodology

Different methodologies were combined including brainstorming, role play, group work, questions and answers, exposition, participation, drawing and testimonies

The facilitator started by asking the participants certain Burundian proverbs related to conflict. These are some of them:

- Agasozi k'intahanurwa kahiye abagabo babona (A hill which doesn't listen to advice is burnt in the sight of people)
- Amazi iyo akeshe aheberwa umugabo (When there is no enough water, it is given to men)
- Wanka bangwe ntiwanka zana ndabe (You refuse mediation, you don't refuse people to come and see)

The facilitator asked the participants to share challenges or difficult cases they have met when they were dealing with conflicts in their different communities

Challenges when GBV accompanists are dealing with GBV cases

- To be beaten
- Hatred
- To be killed
- Conflicts that last for a long time
- To be imprisoned when you intervened in a wrong way (Example: Doing mediation in a case of sexual violence. Actually, this is forbidden by the Burundian law)

Therefore GBV accompanists need to avoid these challenges by being aside or run away if they feel threatened or be killed. They need to take care of themselves before taking care of the people they are helping. They are responsible for their own security. If they get difficult cases or cases which are beyond their capacities, they need to refer such cases to appropriate institutions.

One participant shared a story that he has been dealing these last months: it is about a husband who came from Bujumbura and found chicken in her home. As they were fighting with her spouse, and the GBV survivors' accompanist was called for help. He found out that the wife had a second husband. This second husband had bought the chicken for the wife. Now the GBV survivors' accompanist is still dealing with this case (**Celestin**)

After listening to this case, the facilitator underlined that when there is conflict, we need to identify **the positions, the interests and the needs**.

- **Positions.** They are what is being said. In the above conflict, positions are chicken. They speak about chicken
- **Interests:** They are between what is seen and what is hidden (In case of an avocado, interests is the part between the external part and the inside seed. Interest is what the person is looking for
- **Needs :** The root causes of the conflict

From the participants, we have learned that the most common conflicts in Kibimba are land conflicts. Most men sell the family properties without consent with their wives. Or you can find cases when after selling the family land, the wife takes and hides a part of the money.

Another main challenge is the community elected leaders who prefer beer or alcohol instead of doing justice. They are corrupted (from Concilie)

The facilitator used a role play where more than three people wanted to sit on one chair. They fought until the chair was about to be broken.

Interpretation: the one chair represents human needs such as food, shelter, clothes and so on. When someone wants to own something which is already owned by another person, there is conflict.

Question: Can you please share with us the causes of the conflicts here in Burundi? Some of the responses to this question were:

- Ethnicity
- Monopartism
- Oppression
- Injustice
- Impunity
- Discrimination
- Poverty
- Ignorance
- Bad governance

Origin of conflicts

Conflicts started since the creation: between Adam and God, between Adam and Eve, between Eve and the serpent. (Romans 5:12-21)

Some conflicts are there because of us. If for instance you marry a second wife, you are bringing conflicts to yourself. There are some people who are called “Barukwege, Nyamwiterimanza”. This means people who create their own conflicts. One example is marrying a second wife.

No one is preserved to meet conflicts.

Even though there are conflicts,

- The parts in conflict have to respect each other
- We need to differentiate the conflict from the people
- For conflict transformation, we need to make sure that those in conflict are willing to talk to each other

DAY TWO

On June 29, 2022, different topics were discussed. These are the stages of a conflict, the types of conflict, different attitudes before a conflict, communication and active listening and the qualities of a good mediator.

I. STAGES OF THE CONFLICT

The metamorphosis of the conflict presents the stages of the conflict. A conflict is conceived, born, grows and sometimes dies. This means that a conflict can be nurtured to last for generations. It also means that the life of a conflict can end at any time if the appropriate mechanisms are put in place.

There are 4 (four) phases of a conflict:

(1) Latent stage

(2) Open stadium (climbing)

(3) Crisis Stage

(4) Post-crisis stage

(1) **Latent stage:** This is the stage of formation of a conflict. Here the conflict is hidden, but the parties involved are aware of the problem.

a) Examples include a history of state repression, exclusionary ideologies, and low levels of democratic experience, growing disparities in income and economic opportunity, strong cohesion and external support for aggrieved groups, soil desertification, and growing population pressure. In case of a married couple, the husband no longer talk to his wife; he comes back home very late at night

b) Such conditions increase the likelihood that crisis may occur at some point years or decades into the future, thus calling for preventive peacebuilding initiatives and long-term planning.

(2) **Escalation stage:** Here, the existence of a conflict is no longer questionable. Tensions are rising and several parties are interested in the conflict and the problems are no longer specific.

a) Examples include weapons or resource acquisitions, new discriminatory and repressive policies, crop failures, and major currency devaluations.

b) These are rapidly unfolding events that provide the basis for early warning: indicating the likelihood of a crisis in the coming months or weeks thus calling for last minute preventive interventions.

In a case of a married couple, the wife finds in her husband's cell phone a whatsapp message from her concubine.

(3) **Crisis stage:** This is the violent stage of the conflict. This stage is also marked by anarchy, despair, destruction, and several times immeasurable catastrophes.

a. In the married couple case, the husband and the wife fight every day or the wife is beaten every day; neighbors and family members know that the home is going through hard conditions.

b. At this stage, the opportunity for prevention is over, but the need for relevant information and (comparatively high-risk, high-cost) response is no less urgent.

(4) **Post-conflict stage:** This is the time for reconciliation, rehabilitation, education and development programs

II. TYPES OF CONFLICTS

There are several types of conflicts depending on the actors involved.

1) Intra-personal conflict: A conflict within a person

2) Interpersonal conflict: A conflict between two people

3) Intra-group conflict: A conflict within a group

4) Inter-group conflict: A conflict between groups such as religious groups, ethnic groups, political parties

Among these conflicts we can find 3 types of conflicts: simple; underlying and rooted conflicts

Examples:

- **Simple conflicts:** land boundary conflict

- **Underlying conflicts:** land boundary conflict but in reality it is not this conflict rather there is the one who is jealous of the other saying that his harvest is always minimal compared to that of his neighbor

- **Rooted conflicts:** A concrete example is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

III. ATTITUDES OF PARTIES IN CONFLICT

In a conflict situation we have seen ten attitudes that people face in conflict. These attitudes are represented by the animals. But for this second level, we have also added the others.

Conflict transformation is the ability to anticipate, recognize and resolve conflict effectively.

Faced with a conflict, a few attitudes are generally adopted: avoidance by reducing cognitive discordance, denial, resignation, authoritarian or oppressive response, and finally the positive attitude of seeking a solution:

□ **Avoidance.** We do not want to be involved for many reasons, such as the fear of losing the esteem of others or the attraction we have for them, whether imaginary or real. We are not ready to admit that there is a conflict, although we perceive the real reasons.

□ **Denial.** It is a defense mechanism against unmanageable situations. When we are unable to face a reality that is too painful, we simply deny it. Denying the conflict and avoiding confrontation in no way prevents the situation from deteriorating. The person tries to protect himself because he does not want to believe in an imminent confrontation and because he hopes that the "small" problem will solve itself. Often we do not feel concerned by a conflict, we find it useless, low level or we want to avoid adding to the existing controversy. It should be known that a real conflict which is not resolved tends to fester, and the more it is the case, the more difficult it is to ignore it.

□ **Resignation.** It is a fairly widespread attitude towards conflict. It consists of diverting situations, postponing, evading a discussion. It is often an attitude of submission. It goes through an abandonment of its positions, of its interests. This approach leads to a devaluation of oneself or at least to a lack of affirmation of oneself, of one's ideas, of one's opinions, even of one's values. The renunciation of one's rights, one's authority, one's own power characterizes this attitude. Resigning also means wanting to spare susceptibilities, smooth things over and promote relationships rather than trying to resolve the conflict. Of course, you have to be conciliatory and respectful of people, remain correct and try to control your emotions. But we must not give in on an essential point, on the substance of the problem.

□ **The authoritarian or oppressive response.** In this approach, only the victory over the other counts. It is about reasserting one's power without considering the needs or interests of the other. In this register, we often enter into a kind of symmetry, an escalation between the parties, hoping that the other will give in, capitulate. Since the triggering element of the conflict is not really examined, there is a focus on the adversary to be defeated. Violence, whatever its guise (sweet tone, diplomatic, etc.), never brings a solution to the problem posed. The risk is that an unresolved problem will resurface in one form or another. If one thinks that by force one can

close the debate at some point, this is often only a temporary illusion. No one accepts for a long time a constraint imposed by force. Moreover, this oppressive attitude maintains the win-lose logic. In a team management that requires the active participation of everyone, their cooperation and their commitment. This logic has disastrous effects.

□ **The search for solutions.** This is certainly the most realistic attitude. People feel fully involved in the conflict and try to remove all prejudices about the situation. For them, the conflict must lead to increased gains for each party involved. Seeking to establish trust is one of the bases of this attitude. Depending on the nature of the conflict, the responses can be of several orders: negotiation through compromise, collaboration or cooperation.

IV. COMMUNICATION AND LISTENING IN CONFLICT

We proceeded to a game illustrating communication. The person gives information from ear to ear. The last person receives diluted information which is contrary to the reality of things. So we have seen that we must not transmit information that is not real, sure and verified so as not to increase the level of conflict for simple gratuitous assertions.

V. PERSONAL QUALITIES FOR GREAT MEDIATORS

The mediator is a specialist in relational quality. The mediator respects, as part of his mission, three fundamental rules of communication whose purpose is to secure and enhance the parties, accepting their values and finally by being pedagogical and positive. Here are 10 qualities required to be a good mediator.

1. Knowing how to **listen** is certainly the first quality of the mediator. He must disregard his opinions or personal values which must not weigh in the mediation process.
2. The mediator **makes every effort to create a climate of trust**. He remains calm, confident, optimistic and attentive.
3. He shows **empathy**, trying to understand each of the parties, their positions, their problems, their interests.
4. He transmits his understanding through **reformulation**, and ensures the reciprocity of information.
5. It facilitates communication and **encourages the parties to listen to each other by respecting the pre-established and validated rules of communication**.

6. He **looks for relevant information**, the basic data of the conflict, the underlying **interests**, the points of convergence and the possibilities of resolution by questioning.
7. He manages the interaction between parties and can **deal with intense emotions, personal attacks and manipulative strategies**.
8. It sparks **creativity** by asking open questions that will prompt the parties to find a variety of solutions or by using the technique of brainstorming.
9. He **stimulates a productive discussion of the solutions envisaged** by studying their feasibility using objective criteria and ensuring that they meet the needs and expectations of each party.
10. **He ensures** that the negotiations remain active and positive so that **the parties can come to an agreement**.

DAY 3

A short sketch: As most of the conflicts encountered by FWA GBV accompanists are related to domestic violence, the sketch was about domestic violence. It is about a man(X) who has a concubine called Mathilde. The husband of Mathilde (Y) will spend three months in a training organized by FWA at MIPAREC. Mathilde sent a whatsapp message to the man (X) inviting him to enjoy/stay together with her in the absence of her husband for three months. When the man (X) went for shower, he forgot his cell phone in his bedroom. His wife took the cell phone and saw the message from Mathilde. She invited her daughter to read well the message together. When the husband came back from bathroom, they started quarrelling. As there was much noise, FWA GBV survivors' accompanists came running for help. They listened to the husband, the wife and the daughter. After listening to the story, they called a local community elected leader for support. He came together with another community local leader. This means that they came as two community elected local leaders. They showed the whatsapp message from Mathilde to the local community elected leaders. The local leaders advised them to call Mathilde as the husband was saying that Mathilde doesn't exist; she is instead a voice form LEO (A communication agency). Mathilde came and was surprised to find both the FWA GBV survivors' accompanists and the two local community elected leaders at X home. The local leader also called the husband of Mathilde (Y). Meanwhile, the husband (X) wanted to beat both his wife and his daughter, and they ran away. As for the husband of Mathilde, he wanted to send away his wife. But, both the FWA GBV survivors' accompanists and the local community elected leaders asked Mathilde to ask her husband for forgiveness. In addition, the man (X) was asked to ask for forgiveness to both his wife and his daughter. The wife of the man (X) gave conditional forgiveness: we want peace in our home, we ask him that when he wants to respond to a phone call, that he will no longer hide himself in the toilet. Even Mathilde asked for

forgiveness to both the wife and the daughter of the man (X). The community elected leaders' chief gave the final advice and said that he hopes there will be no more fighting in that home.

Lessons from the role play

- We need to be careful when using our cell phones
- To be successful, GBV survivors' accompanists need the local administration support
- GBV survivors' accompanists need to work as a team (When a soldier is going alone during war, he might die at 100%). The advice is to go as two GBV survivors' accompanists at least.
- We sometimes transform conflicts in a bad way because we have wrong information. That's why we need to go beyond boundaries by listening to those who are not involved in the conflict. Therefore, GBV survivors' accompanists need to do active listening)
- GBV accompanists must be nonpartisan or avoid taking sides
- GBV accompanists have limited rights in their communities. For instance, they don't have the right to take a cell phone by force from someone else to read the messages written in the cell phone
- Alert through crying is also a way for conflict transformation

What to do when you fail to transform conflicts?

- Go back to find out the real root cause of the conflict
- What are the strengths of the parts in conflicts: Why to look at those strengths? (If for instance the conflict is between a civilian and the governor or a high level soldier, you need to find out if there no hidden interests in the conflict)
- Look at the relationships between the two parts in conflict (If they are brothers who are fighting for a family land) and the background of the conflict. GBV survivors' accompanists should not be involved in dealing with conflicts which are already in courts because they can be imprisoned
- You write down the whole process (Minutes) and underline where you failed
- Think of other people or appropriate institutions who can help
- Take a decision for the conflict closure

Questions in small groups

1. What are the initiatives have you already done in you communities as GBV accompanists and what are the changes that came through
2. What are your commitments after this three-day retreat?
3. What are your recommendations?
4. Share a strong testimony as a GBV accompanist

Commitments

- We will work as a team in case of GBV
- We will keep on being nonpartisan in case of conflicts
- We will collaborate with the local administration for effective results

Recommendations

1. More training on human rights, and women economic empowerment (savings and credits, entrepreneurship)
2. Organize Learning visits for GBV survivors' accompanists
3. Organize GBV basic trainings for community elected leaders in 2020. Actually, most of them have not yet benefited from the training on how to address the GBV issue
4. Strengthen the capacities of the GBV survivors' accompanists on the approach of faithful homes for the prevention of GBV
5. FWA supports or accompany us for effective conflict transformation
6. That FWA makes regular field visits for coaching GBV Survivors' accompanists
7. Signs for those who don't have
8. Warm clothes because most of the time we go for conflict transformation at night
9. FWA gives to the GBV survivors accompanists both communication and transportation means

Testimonies

My husband committed a sin which gave birth to a conflict. He got a child outside marriage. And recently, the child was brought to us at 10 years old. My husband refused to accept the child as his own. At night, I asked my husband “Do you think that someone can say that she has a child with you while you have never done sex with her. The local elected leaders gathered to listen to the case. As myself, I called one of my GVB survivors’ accompanists colleagues to accompany me to listen to the case. And people who were present shouted that the child was looking like her father. But, my husband refused saying that he cannot accept the child after 10 years of birth. And after few days, I told my husband that I’m ready to take the daughter as my own. Then after, I called both my religious leader and the community elected leaders. All of them counselled my husband to recognize the child. Then the child came to our home and lived happily with us for few months. Unfortunately, her mother came back and took the child by force. But now, she is legally registered as one of my husband’s kids (Concilie, GBV survivors’ accompanist)

A married man got an accident. Consequently, he started living with disabilities. The husband was no longer able to work and feed his family. Then, the wife changed and was no longer accepting to do sex with her husband. It was when I listened to both the husband and the wife that the situation changed. Now, they have called me and thanked me for being their good advisor. (Aster, GBV survivors’ accompanist)

PHOTOS



An example of a mediation session



Closing remarks from the FWA coordinator



A short sketch illustrating a family conflict



A group photo at the end to the three-day retreat





II. Report of the trauma healing workshop made in Kibimba on 24-26/8/2022

The objective of this activity was to provide psychologically assistance to serious cases of gender-based violence survivors in Kibimba and Kibogoye where FWA has GBV survivors' accompanists since 2014.

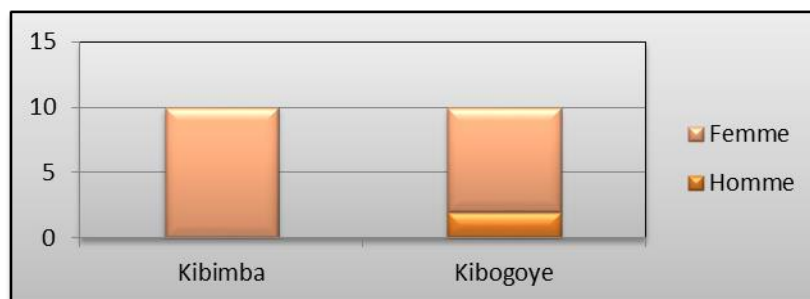
Burundi GBV context

Gender-based violence in Burundi (GBV) takes on disturbing proportions. Different laws were adopted and others revised in order to promote women's empowerment and gender equality since 2014. However, we still have cases of GBV. The Humura center recorded a high number of GBV victims (6,210) hosted in this center during the period from 2014 to 2018.

Participants at the three-day workshop

Community Name	General	
	Male	Female
Kibimba	0	10
Kibogoye	2	8
Total	2	18
Grand total	20 (2+18)	

Graph



The graph above describes the numbers of People who attended the trauma healing workshop. In total 20 participants were present in this training; 10 participants came from Kibimba while another 10 were from Kibogoye.

Note that the two men were GBV perpetrators who were assisted by the GBV survivors' accompanists and have seen that it is right to invite them among the participants.

Trauma healing workshop strategies

The strategies used in the workshop were:

➤ **Create a space where victims can talk about their problems without fear**

One participant said: " *I was ashamed to speak about my case of violence because it is sexual violence and it is shameful to say it. The day I told to my husband that I am pregnant; he beat me in our marital room. My baby is one month old and he has refused to recognize him as his child. He rapes me every time we have sex because I'm too afraid of this man and the sexual desire has disappeared since that day. What can I do?* (She was crying when she said it)

➤ **Connecting with others who are facing the same problems helped them to reduce their sense of isolation, and hearing how others cope helped them to inspire their own recovery:**

"*I was in a corner alone thinking that I live an inexplicable situation but in this workshop I understood that I am not the only one and that there are women who have gone through worse situations than me*"

➤ **Joining a support group;**

Support groups helped them to feel less isolated and alone.

After the training, the participants organized themselves into two savings groups (Kibimba et Kibogoye) to continue to be connected and to continue group counseling.

One woman said: "*I don't know what strategy I can use to go home today because I forced to come in this workshop. My husband told me that if I go I won't come in his house.*

Then, Kibogoye group accompanied her to home so that her husband would not chase her away.

➤ **Information's on how to cope with symptoms of trauma and work towards healing.**

"*In this training I understood through the symptoms of trauma that my husband was also traumatized and when you have injuries you hurt others. I think I would manage to create sessions to listen to him maybe he will change*".

Another woman says: *Regarding the consequences of the trauma, I understood that I am doing violence to my children because of the pain that my husband makes me endure. Last night I was able to sit down with my children; I told them what I learned and I asked them to forgive me. It was a good time to heal.*

- **Relaxation games:** games were used as a way to relax during the three-day workshop

Stories

“My name is Concilie I am a victim of gender-based violence caused by my husband and my mother-in-law.

I gave birth to a girl and my mother-in-law told to my husband “you see that this woman came to destroy our family by giving birth to girls”. My husband gave me nothing and I had to endure this pain.

One day, He gave me an activity to and I didn’t be able to do this because of the rain. When he came back, he did not listen to me. I had a big abscess in my back filled with pus. He took a stick and beat me in the abscess until it crushed. I cried only one time and I lost consciousness.

Normally my husband lives in Bujumbura, He comes in village to impregnate me only because he knows that I am a woman who knows how to search for money. I did family planning to avoid birth because I have 2 children who are on special medical assistance because of their malformation. When he saw that I was no longer conceiving He came in the village on the advice of his mother and He multiplied the violence. He beat me until I stopped the contraceptive methods. When he found out that I was pregnant, he went back to Bujumbura.

I was doing avocado business. I used to send avocado to Bujumbura with a driver. My mother-in-law informed my husband about my business. My husband took my Avocados and sold them. He gave me 100 BIF only.

I bought a pig, and I raised him until he became very big. My mother-in-law informed my husband. My child was hospitalized and I was with him in the hospital. My husband came and he sold my pig. After a few weeks I was informed that my pig had 12 little piglets. It was too much for me and I lost consciousness. I became foolish. It was the people who told me that I spent three days being mad. They took my children accusing me that I'm mad then. I ran to see that a car could crush me but in vain. I had an idea to buy poison to kill myself. Fortunately the people who saw me running accompanied me to see what I was doing. They took the poison away from me.

I had psychic crises many times because of these two people. The FWA GBV survivors’ accompanists helped me to calm down and the crises stopped. I no longer cry in my life. My heart has become too hard because of life problem.”

“My name is Jacqueline, we were fine with my husband; He changed when he went to work in Bujumbura.

He stayed in Bujumbura for a long time; it was when he learned that our children died that he came back to the village. He came back at night passing through the window. I saw someone with a knife wanting to kill me and I shouted out. My child opened the door and I realized that he was my husband. He accused me that I sleep with other men.

He did a job of making the tiles the people gave him the money for tiles and he drank alcohol. I was asking here and there for money to pay these people's money. Sometimes we used to sell a plot of land to pay back the money.

One day a person came to claim his money and he gave him the tiles of our house. We only had three rooms left with tiles. When he saw that the house no longer had any cover, He returned to Bujumbura. I stayed in the house with my children without tiles. If the rain fell at night we did not sleep.

After a year and eight months, he returned to the village and destroyed the house to sell the bricks. At this level I felt depressed, and I went to Bujumbura leaving the children but my heart was not at peace because I left the children. I returned to the village. I found disaster; I found that He sold my 3 goats and my cow.

He gathered family members and convinced us that we accept that He sells a plot of land to rebuild our house, and we accepted thinking of getting out of this situation. He sold this plot. We do not know where he put this money.

I twice bought materials to rebuild the house and he sold them all. He refused me to go to the women's saving groups. But I used to go by force. I have eight children, and all of them are studying. I am the one who supports them financially.

The accompanists used to advice my husband. As result; He lets me do my business and was able to rebuild the house, but he doesn't give any support to the family; I live like a widow.

I had psychic crises many times because of my husband. The FWA peace attendants helped me to calm down and the crises stopped. I am a woman who considers her husband as someone who is dead."

4. Challenges

- The time was not enough especially for the listening session
- It's difficult to recover from trauma when you live with the author of the GBV

Recommendations:

- Organize a trauma healing workshop for their spouses
- Organise a trauma healing workshop for couples who have GBV problems

Lessons applied

Some of the participants said that:

- *I learned that in the stages of healing you have to choose to live. I choose life no matter the situation, suicide is not an option*
- *I have learned that there are women who live the worst but who try to support their children. This has helped me feel that I'm able too.*
- *I feel calm because I am surrounded by other women who have the same problem. We thank the people who were able to think of people forgotten like us.*

Photos



The pictures above show the trust walk. This means that when you are traumatized, you need to find someone whom you trust to listen to you.



As a way to relax, participants were dancing at the end of the three-day workshop

PLAN FOR 2023

After looking at the recommendations above, the FWA plans to organize the following activities in 2023:

1. Organise one workshop for 20 GBV survivors' accompanists on human rights
2. Strengthen the capacities of the GBV survivors' accompanists on the approach of faithful homes for the prevention of GBV
3. Organize GBV basic trainings for community elected leaders in 2020.

4. Support income generating activities initiated by GBV survivors
5. Organize regular field visits for coaching GBV Survivors' accompanists
6. Organize Learning visits for GBV survivors' accompanists
7. Organise trauma healing workshops for couples who have GBV problems

Notice: All the activities above will be done according to the availability of funds.