

TOGETHER!

On the road to achieve gender equality



5

Years in
Review
2017 - 2021



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Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Gender
Cafe on Generation Equality, Jun 2021

About UN Women

UN Women is the lead UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Placing women's rights at the center of all its efforts, UN Women leads and coordinates the United Nations system's efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout the world. It provides strong and coherent leadership in support of Member States' priorities and efforts, building effective partnerships with relevant actors.

With this mandate, UN Women Rwanda has in partnership with government, private sector, civil society, and development partners, made significant contributions towards Rwanda's progress on gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE). UN Women Rwanda's support over the last 10 years has leveraged the triple mandate of the organization with normative, coordination and programmatic interventions of a strategic nature.

UN Women activities in Rwanda are situated within the United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP) and the framework of the One UN. UNDAP II 2018-2023, outlines the areas of all UN cooperation contributing to the national development agenda, under the leadership of the UN country team (UNCT). The UNDAP II is informed by and responds to national, regional and global normative frameworks, including the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), the African Union Agenda 2063, Rwanda's vision 2050 and National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024, the Beijing Declaration and Plan for Action, CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol.



Acronyms

ANSP+	National Association for Supporting People Living with HIV/AIDS
AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DASSO	Rwanda Correctional District Administration Security Organ
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
FFRP	Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum
GAD	Gender Accountability Day
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GES	Gender Equality Seal
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
GOR	Government of Rwanda
GMIS	Gender Management Information System
GMO	Gender Monitoring Office
IEMS	Integrated Electronic Management System
IOSC	Isange One Stop Centre
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
JPRWEE	Joint Programme on “Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women
LAF	Legal Aid Forum
MDA	Ministry, Department, Agencies
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINIJUST	Ministry of Justice
MINISPOC	Ministry of Sports and Culture
MINIYOUTH	Ministry of Youth
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NFPO	National Forum for Political Organizations
NGM	National Gender Machinery
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NFNV	New Faces, New Voices
NSF	National Strategy for Transformation
NWC	National Women’s Council
PSF	Private Sector Foundation
RALGA	Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities
RBA	Rwanda Bar Association
RCA	Rwanda Cooperative Agency
RCS	Rwanda Correctional Services
RCWE	Rwandan Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs
RDF	Rwanda Defence Forces
RIB	Rwanda Investigations Bureau
RNP	Rwanda National Police
RRLI	Rwanda Religious Leaders Initiative
RWN	Rwanda Women’s Network

SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDGC/A	Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDAP	United Nations Development Assistance Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNFPA	United Nations Population Agency
UNSR	UN Security Council Resolution
UNW	UN Women
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAW	Violence Against Women
WEP	Women Empowerment Principles
WLHV	Women living with HIV



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Foreword



Fode Ndiaye
UN Rwanda Resident Coordinator

Despite COVID-19 negative consequences, we are and should be the Generation Equality, as Paris and Mexico have committed all of us. It is therefore urgent to accelerate the race to achieving Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE), the sustainable development goal 5 and beyond by 2030.

We have a conducive environment in Rwanda: a strong political will and the right legal and institutional framework. GEWE is at the center of the National Strategy for Transformation for accelerating progress towards agenda 2030 and vision 2050. I am also convinced that all of us share the deep sense of responsibility to positively impact the lives of women and girls.

So, let us, day and night, leverage data, knowledge, analysis, to build new mindsets, open the sky of possibilities to women and girls, and together boys and girls, women and men, make gender inequality history and the world better for all. Indeed, there is no reason we are still struggling to secure women's rights and achieve GEWE, 45 years after the first world conference on women's rights -the Mexico Conference- and 25 years after Beijing.

It is in our hands, and we should, as individuals and as society, make a difference, leaving no one behind. We can and should do more, differently and better. The one UN is very proud to be your partner in this exhilarating journey. You can count on us and the entire One UN family.

Foreword



Fatou A. Lo
UN Women Representative, Rwanda

Today Rwanda stands out both in Africa and around the world for its efforts to achieve gender equality. As a key partner of the Government of Rwanda and the lead UN entity on gender equality, we would like to share our journey and contributions to the progress in Rwanda, which has involved strategic interventions to address both the key drivers of women's vulnerability and gender inequality.

The documentation builds on a previous UN Women publication "Towards Gender Equality in Rwanda" (2012-2016) and captures the progress made from 2017 to 2021 across the different focus areas: Leadership and Political Participation, Women's Economic Empowerment and Ending Violence Against Women.

It also touches on cross cutting issues such as Data and Statistics, HIV/AIDS and the response to the unfolding crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the last five years, UN Women has been striving to amplify women's voices and choices by addressing structural and socio-economic barriers to gender equality in Rwanda. Our thrust has been addressing negative social norms and fostering attitude and behavioral change; increasing women's participation in leadership positions especially at local level and in private sector, strengthening women's economic autonomy, enhancing GEWE accountability and frameworks; and prevention and response to address GBV.

This report highlights some of our achievements, good practices and the lessons that we learned along the way, together with our national partners, development partners, colleagues from the One UN family and the many women, men, boys and girls that we are so privileged to serve.

1. Introduction



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Innovative Peer to Peer Mentoring Workshop, Oct 2019.



Photo / UN Women: Peer Learning Conference on Gender Equality Nov 2017.

Rwanda stands out globally for its efforts in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), and particularly in the area of political participation. Nearly two thirds of its parliamentary seats and 52% of cabinet positions are held by women. Significant progress has also been realized on other gender indicators; and in 2020, Rwanda was ranked among the top 10 countries that have significantly narrowed the gender gap (Global Gender Gap Report 2020). Rwanda's achievements include the notable decline of maternal mortality rates arising from women's

improved access to quality and affordable health care. Globally, Rwanda is leading the HeForShe Campaign with over 200,000 signatories; and three commitments to bridge the gender digital divide, triple girls' enrolment in TVET and eradicate gender-based violence in all its forms. More recently, the country took the lead on the Generation Equality action coalition on ICT and innovation and committed to closing the digital gender divide by 2026. A commendable move in a context where the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated digitalization of all services.

Gender Equality Gains



Women occupy **61.3%** of the seats in the Parliament



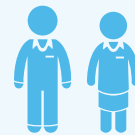
4 out of 7 Supreme Court Judges are women



93% of births are attended by skilled health providers



The maternal mortality ratio fell from **1071** per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 203 in 2020



Enrolment ratio of girls to boys in primary school is **102%**



Commitments to **13** regional & international conventions & protocols on GEWE

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Demographic Health Survey (DHS) 2020

Rwanda's impressive results are due, in large measure, to strong political commitment and institutional level accountability for Gender Equality. The government institutions that make up the National Gender Machinery (the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), the National Women's Council (NWC) and the Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum (FFRP) constitute a uniquely strong and effective mechanism for mainstreaming and monitoring of GEWE.



Multi-stakeholder partnerships between the different government entities and development partners have also contributed to the progress, by bringing in the much needed technical and financial resources. The UN, delivering as One, is a key ally on gender equality, serving as a hub for knowledge, good practices, and innovative ideas on GEWE.



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: International Women's Day March 2020

Despite a progressive policy and legislative framework, women and girls in Rwanda continue to encounter barriers that inhibit them from fully and freely participating in the economy and society. While women’s financial inclusion has improved, gender gaps in economic opportunity persist with women mostly in subsistence agriculture and vulnerable employment in the informal sector. This situation has been worsened by the disruptive effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on labor markets and the increase in women’s disproportionate burden of unpaid care work.

Gender-based violence also remains widespread as evident from the increasing rate of teenage pregnancies and cases of intimate partner violence which rose from 40% in 2015 to 46% in 2020 (DHS 2019-2020).

An analysis of the underlying causes of these disparities indicates that discriminatory social norms entrenched in economic and social institutions are the biggest obstacles to gender equality and women’s autonomy. Therefore, challenging harmful and patriarchal attitudes and transforming gender norms is critical for the attainment of inclusive socio-economic transformation in Rwanda.

Leadership & Participation



30%

of the top executive positions at local government level are occupied by women vs **70%** by men

Economic Autonomy



39.5%

Female-headed households live in poverty compared to **38%** of male headed households

Freedom From Violence



23%

Women have suffered sexual violence in their lives compared to **6%** of men

Source: NISR: National Gender Statistics Report 2019; EICV 2016/2017; and DHS 2020

Our Theory of Change

UN Women has over the last five years been working with government, development partners, civil society, and private sector organizations in Rwanda to close the above-mentioned gaps. To achieve change we are working towards transformational shifts in three areas:

- a) Women’s Leadership;
- b) Economic Empowerment; and
- c) Elimination of Gender Based Violence.

We believe that:

If women and girls participate and lead in decision-making processes;



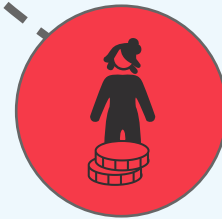
If gender equality commitments are translated into practice at national and local levels;



and if women and girls are free of violence;



then women and girls will be able to fully benefit from, and contribute to political and economic processes.



Strategies:

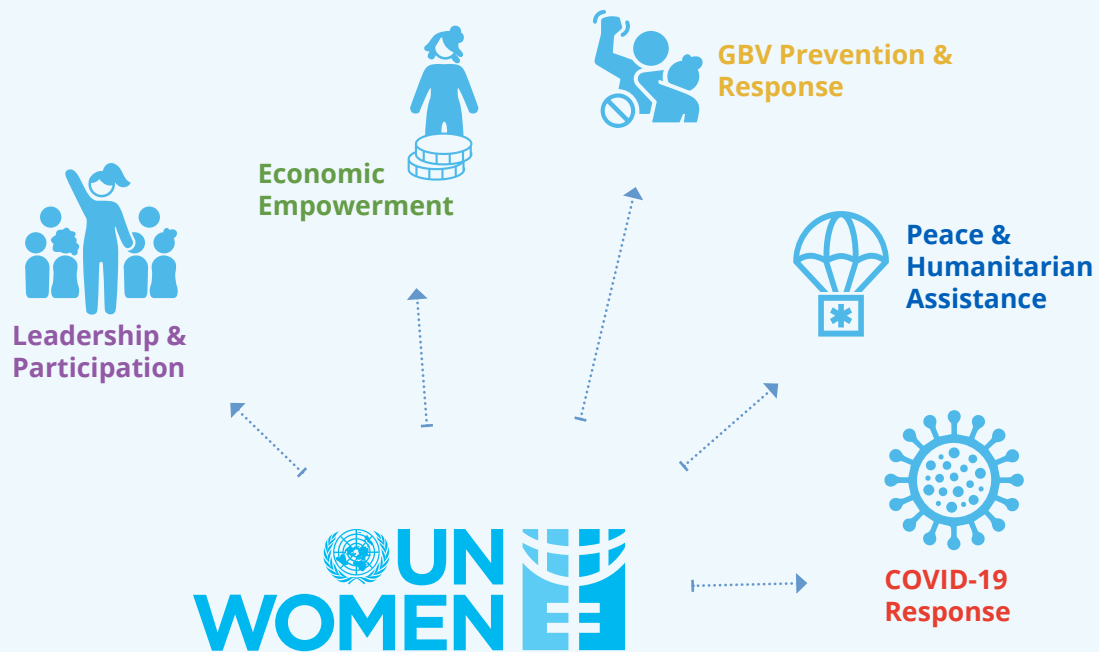
- Normative Support
- Capacity Development
- Programme Support
- Gender Statistics & Accountability
- Policy Advice & Thought Leadership
- Convening & Knowledge Sharing



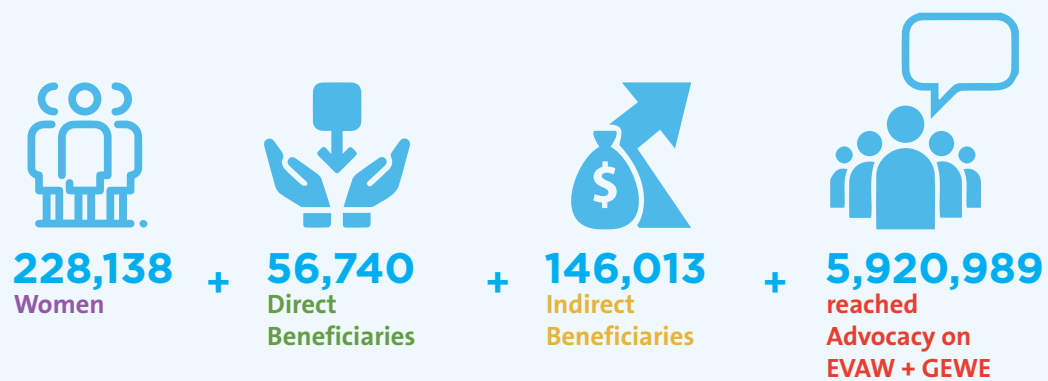
2. Our Impact

Photo / UN Women Rwanda: UN Women Rwanda team during the staff retreat, October 2021

► **Implemented Projects on:**



► **And we have reached:**



■ Including **23,290** among the most vulnerable (ex-combatants & their dependents, teen mothers, former street vendors, women refugees, women in informal cross border trade and sex workers etc) in keeping with the principle of leaving no one behind.

Gender Equality
Empowerment of Women

2. Amplifying Women's Voices



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: National Gender Machinery Open Day, Oct 2018

When more women are represented in decision making forums, policy decisions are likely to be more responsive to the diverse needs of society, and the wellbeing of women and families. As they have demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, women are more effective leaders during periods of crisis due to their agility, interpersonal skills and collaborative approaches that lead to more inclusive outcomes. Despite their potential, women must contend with discriminations, and attitudes that restrict their leadership and full participation in public life.

Making the Numbers Count

With more than two thirds of its parliamentary seats and 52% of cabinet positions occupied by women, Rwanda stands tall both globally and on the African continent, in terms of women's political representation. These impressive gains are the results of the country's bold vision and a culmination of decades of collaboration between the UN, the National Gender Machinery and Civil Society in Rwanda. For over two decades, UN Women, and its predecessor UNIFEM, have been at the vanguard of supporting a gender responsive governance system in Rwanda. And the gains have been many, the most prominent being the landmark constitutional reforms that embedded gender equality clauses in Rwanda's 2003 Constitution. Following the incorporation of a 30% gender quota in the constitution, the number of women parliamentarians has risen dramatically and has reached an average of 60% in successive elections.

While laudable, translating women's numerical strength into greater influence and substantive representation is an even more critical task and one in which UN Women and other stakeholders continue to invest significant resources. Together with UNDP, UN Women has worked closely with the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians (FFRP) to strengthen women's legislative skills and cross-party collaboration for the pursuit of a common agenda that addresses women's priority concerns. These efforts have progressively strengthened FFRP's oversight role, and the women MPs' capacity to initiate and influence the passage of gender sensitive legal reforms.

In a period of ten years, the Rwandan Parliament has passed legislation addressing several critical areas of concern for women i.e. equal inheritance and succession rights for women and men; gender discrimination in political parties; and equal land rights. Legal reforms addressing equal pay; discrimination and sexual harassment at work; prevention and punishment of GBV and violence against children (VAC), have also been passed. More recently, the Gender Committee in Parliament initiated the repeal and amendment of Law n° 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing family and persons, and specifically the discriminatory restrictions on child custody, parental leave, and remarriage.

Whereas enforcement is not consistent, these laws have laid a strong foundation for Rwanda's progressive movement towards gender equality and women's empowerment. For example, since the enactment of the law on land ownership, 58% of married women now co-own land with their spouses (GMO, 2019) and have gained access to collateral property.

FFRP's ability to influence progressive legal reforms has been enhanced by its collaboration with GMO and UN Women in monitoring Rwanda's compliance with global normative standards on GEWE. For example, the recent amendments were triggered by a study commissioned by UN Women and conducted by the Legal Aid Forum (LAF) under the Equality at Law Initiative. The study reviewed 235 laws in force to identify those that are discriminatory based on gender.

Some of the gender-sensitive legal reforms in Rwanda;

1. Law No 001/2020 of 02/02/2020 now states that “A widowed spouse has the rights to remarry.” The law also states that only the best interest of the child shall be the benchmark in deciding which parent should have child custody.
2. Law No 68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offences and the punishment of GBV in all its forms
3. Organic law No 001/2018 of 25/03/2018 states that at least 30% of positions in political parties are reserved for women.
4. Law No 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family; and Law No 27/2016 of 08/07/2016 governing matrimonial regimes, donations and succession provide for equality in property and inheritance rights.

Leveling the Playing Field

If women’s participation in leadership is to be transformative, their voices must be heard at all levels of decision making. While Rwanda’s performance at the parliamentary and cabinet levels is commendable, progress has been uneven at the lower government levels where women are scarcely represented in the executive positions. The gender gap in leadership at this level is worrisome as it increases the risk of women’s concerns being overlooked or given

low priority in development programmes and budgetary allocations. It could also reduce the pool of women ready for higher leadership positions over time. As part of its efforts to sustain the gains achieved by Rwandan women, UN Women has supported interventions that seek to promote a diverse cohort of women leaders by expanding the pool of women willing and able to contest for electoral positions.



For many Rwandan women in the community, standing for elections is a scary prospect. Apart from the negative attitudes towards women aspirants, women running for office experience significant challenges in financing their campaigns and speaking at rallies.

In the run up to the 2020 local government elections, UN Women partnered with the National Forum for Political Organizations (NFPO), the National Women Council (NWC)

and FFRP to organize training and confidence building sessions for women leaders and aspirants from different political parties at district and regional level. Under the theme “Women can do it,” 500 women political aspirants/candidates in all 5 provinces were mentored by their peers – the women MPs - and given tips on effective techniques for fundraising, campaigning and communicating with voters.

Nurturing Young Women Leaders

Research shows that fostering leadership early in life is pivotal to shaping leaders and endowing women with confidence in their ability to lead (KPMG, 2015). Young women in Rwanda as in other parts of Africa experience double discrimination on account of their gender and age. School completion rates for girls at secondary and tertiary levels remain very low. For example, only **30%** of young women aged **15-24** years had completed lower secondary school in 2015 and the DHS 2020 indicates that among women population aged **15-24** years old only **7.6%** have a secondary level of education. There were **2748 girls STEM graduates** in **2017/2018** academic year as compared to **4837 boys** (source: Education Statistics Yearbook 2019). As a result, young women often lack the skills and mentorship that they require to realize their leadership potential.

To mark International Women's Day 2019, UN Women Rwanda initiated the "Girls Take Over" initiative – a mentorship programme designed to inspire and develop a pipeline of women leaders ready to fulfill the vision of gender equality and sustainable development by the year 2030.

The "Girls Take Over" is one of several initiatives being undertaken by UN Women to engage, empower and nurture young women's leadership capabilities, by linking them with prominent women and men leaders in the public and private sector.

Other support initiatives for young women's leadership include the professional internship initiative for young women graduates, under the Joint Programme on Gender. The programme is being implemented with Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), and the Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA) and targets 100 young women graduates who have been attached to mentors in local government with the aim of exposing them to careers and leadership opportunities at that level.

In 2018 and 2019 UN Women and UNDP joined the Ministry of Youth to co-host the Youth Connekt Africa Summit. The events included the "Connekted Girls Hub" which discussed ways of fostering the empowerment of young women and girls and had the participation of over 4000 people. YouthConnekt is an initiative that connects youth to government employment, private sector as well as entrepreneurship opportunities and off-farm jobs.

These efforts have been bolstered by the Rwanda Career Women Centre which offers programmes on leadership; entrepreneurship; coaching and mentorship as well as life skills i.e., financial management, digital literacy and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Centre which was established in 2020 by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), with support from UN Women, aims to improve female participation in the labor force by equipping young women with the necessary skills to access employment or establish profitable businesses. So far, 174 young women have benefitted from this initiative.



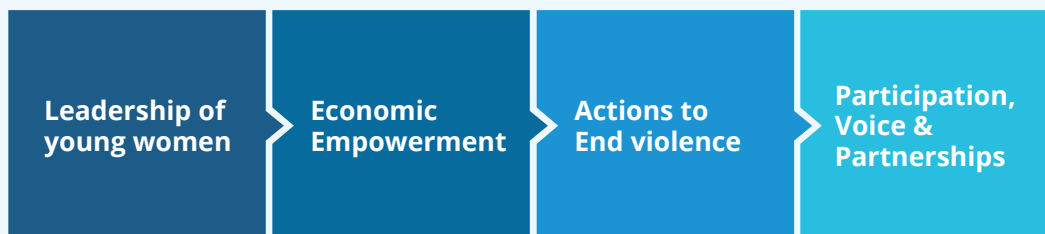
Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Youth Connekt Africa, Oct 2019

|| *If we are really serious about development, we must put more power in the hands of young people, girls, because of their creativity, their passion, their commitment, but also because the future is their future. The agenda 2030 is envisioned for them, to make sure they push the boundaries of development and secure that hope for everyone.*

*- Fode Ndiaye,
Resident Coordinator, UN Rwanda*



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: UN Resident Coordinator during the Girls Takeover initiative, Mar 2019



EMPOWERED YOUNG WOMEN AND YOUNG MEN AS PARTNERS IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY

The above interventions are part of UN Women’s youth strategy: L.E.A.P. The “LEAP” framework advocates for investment in young women’s Leadership in all spheres; Economic empowerment and skills development for young women; Actions to end violence against young women and girls; and strengthening

Participation, Voice and Partnerships with young women and their organizations, Partnerships with young men as partners of gender equality; and Intergenerational Partnerships throughout the life cycle to achieve a gender transformative society.

Challenging Stereotypes

Ensuring that women are equally recognized as legitimate and effective leaders across all spheres of society, is at the core of UN Women’s engagement with the broader community. Under the HeForShe solidarity movement, UN Women and the National Gender Machinery are mobilizing men and boys as ‘allies’ for GEWE.

Since it was launched in 2015, Rwanda has signed up over 200,000 boys and men as ‘allies’; and is leading the way as one of 10 countries in the world that have committed to bold, game-changing action to promote GEWE through the IMPACT 10x10x10 program. Led by H.E. Paul Kagame, one of the 10 Heads of State who are Global Impact Champions.

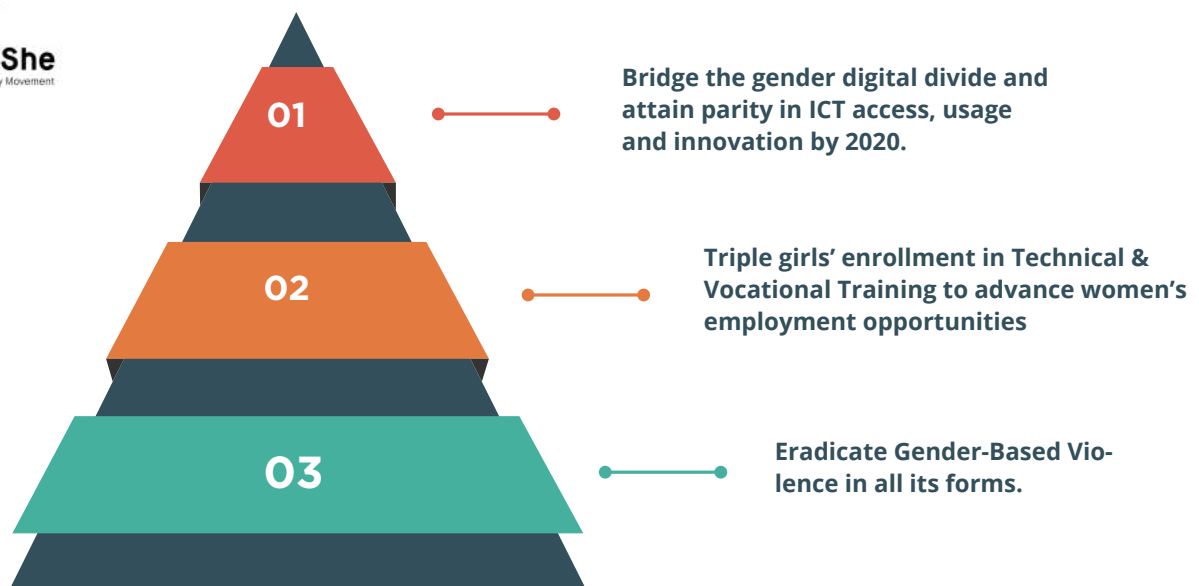
Rwanda is also the co-lead of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Innovation and Technology, which was launched in 2020 to coincide with the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing

Platform for Action. Leading this coalition presents Rwanda with the opportunity to leverage emerging opportunities in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) sector to close gender gaps in economic opportunity.

UN Women has seized this opportunity to promote girls’ uptake of STEM. Working closely with Edified Generation Rwanda and the African Institute of Mathematical Science, UN Women recently sponsored 400 girls’ participation in the Edified Generation National Mathematics & Robotics Challenge. In June 2021, in the lead up to the Generation Equality Forum in Paris, UN Women organized a Gender Café on “Bridging the Gender Digital Divide,” during which young innovators were given the opportunity to pitch innovative technological solutions with the potential to contribute towards Gender Equality.



HeForShe
UN Women Solidarity Movement
for Gender Equality





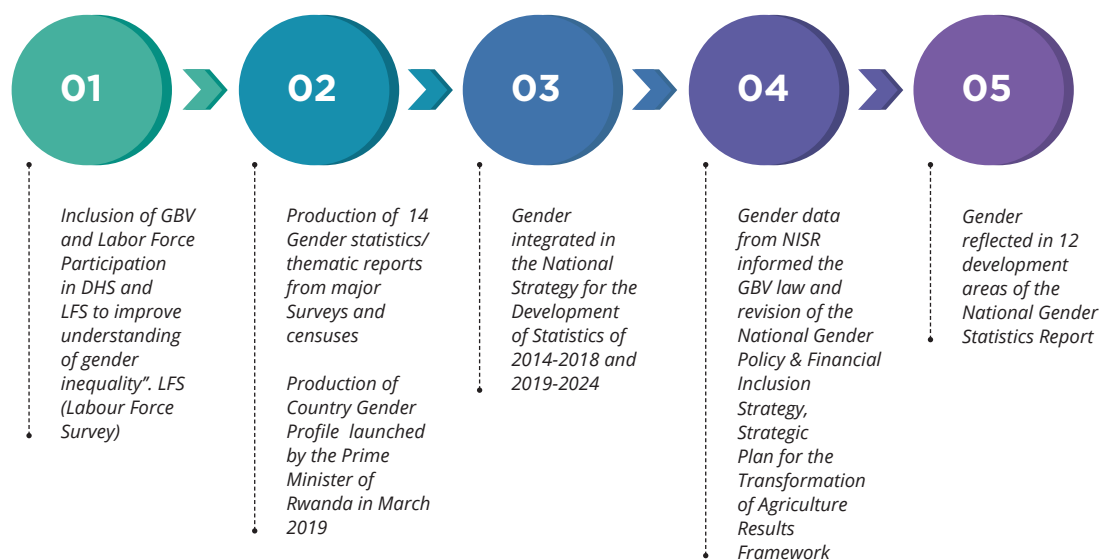
|| One of Gashora Girls' young innovators presented 'Humidity ZEN', a system that stabilizes the humidity in a room to the optimal range of 60%-80%. The innovation could alleviate some of the hurdles experienced by small-holder women farmers by improving post-harvest management, reducing production losses, and thereby increasing women's incomes.

- Orlyse Ineza

Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Second Gender Cafe on Generation Equality - 17 Jun 2021

Making Women and Girls visible: Gender statistics, Data & Evidence

A progressive and gender-responsive policy and legal framework are one of Rwanda's biggest achievements but translating goals into concrete actions remains a challenge for many public and private institutions. Limiting factors include resource constraints, gaps in gender analysis skills and gender-disaggregated data to guide programming efforts and budgetary allocations.



UN agencies including UN Women have been supporting the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) to fill these critical gaps, since 2011. Ten years later, a lot has changed for the better. The production, quality and timely availability of gender data have improved tremendously. NISR has progressed from just collecting sex-disaggregated data to producing gender statistics reports that cover specific gender issues about women and girls. With technical assistance from UN Women, NISR has also developed instruments to collect data on previously invisible gender issues i.e., violence against women (VAW) which is fairly widespread in Rwanda. Despite its sensitivity, NISR is now able to collect reliable information on the prevalence and forms of VAW, as well as reporting patterns.

In 2019, NISR achieved the gold standard with the integration of gender in the 3rd edition of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS

2019-2024). This means that gender issues must be included in the regular production of official statistics. For gender equality advocates this is one step closer to making women and girls' issues more visible in all policies and programmes. Fourteen (14) gender statistics/ thematic reports from major surveys and censuses have been produced, laying a foundation for evidence-based policy advocacy and formulation. Policy documents informed by gender data from NISR include: the revised National Gender Policy; the Gender Strategy for Agriculture, the revised GBV policy, and the Gender and Financial Inclusion Strategy.

As our capacity to regularly collect gender data improves, we are able to get a clearer picture of the magnitude of the challenges that women and girls experience. By availing data, you make gender inequalities affecting women and girls' lives visible.

- Yusuf Murangwa,
Director General (NISR)

Furthermore, the data collected has assisted the Central Bank and Private Sector institutions to develop gender responsive financial products aimed at improving women's access to finance.

Although some gaps remain, the development of a Gender Statistics Framework has increased NISR's ability to generate data on many internationally comparable gender indicators;

and GMO's ability to track progress and report on the Government of Rwanda's gender equality commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). NISR and UN Women have also established a partnership with the Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa (SDGC/A) to strengthen the uptake for gender statistics for enhanced SDG monitoring and accountability on GEWE in Africa.



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Workshop on Gender Statistics & SDGs 8-10 Aug 2018

Institutionalizing GEWE

UN Women in Rwanda enjoys a long and close working relationship with the National Gender Machinery (NGM) and has leveraged this relationship to entrench global gender equality norms and standards in Rwanda's policy and planning framework. UN Women is particularly interested in strengthening government accountability on GEWE by ensuring that gender equality is:

- a) explicit in different sectoral policies and strategies;
- b) evidenced by the increase in resources allocated for gender-focused programmes, and
- c) integrated into accountability frameworks that monitor public institutions' performance and effectiveness.

UN Women has supported efforts to align good practices in GEWE with Rwanda's national priorities and thereby promote women and girls' access to existing and emerging opportunities. The declining gender gap in financial inclusion from 15% in 2012 to 7% in 2020; and the inclusion of women smallholder farmers into agricultural supply chains at the national and intra-regional level, can be attributed to the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for Agriculture and the National Financial Inclusion Strategy both of which benefited from UN Women's technical and financial support.

The new policy is also aligned with Vision 2050, the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063; and reinforces the strategic positioning of gender equality and women's empowerment as a key pillar of Rwanda's socio-economic transformation.

As part of Rwanda's ambition to continuously advance Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, a review of the 2010 National Gender Policy was conducted in 2020, to align it with the fast-evolving development policy agenda and the country's new aspirations articulated in the Government's seven-year program – the National Strategy for Transformation (NST) 2017-2024.

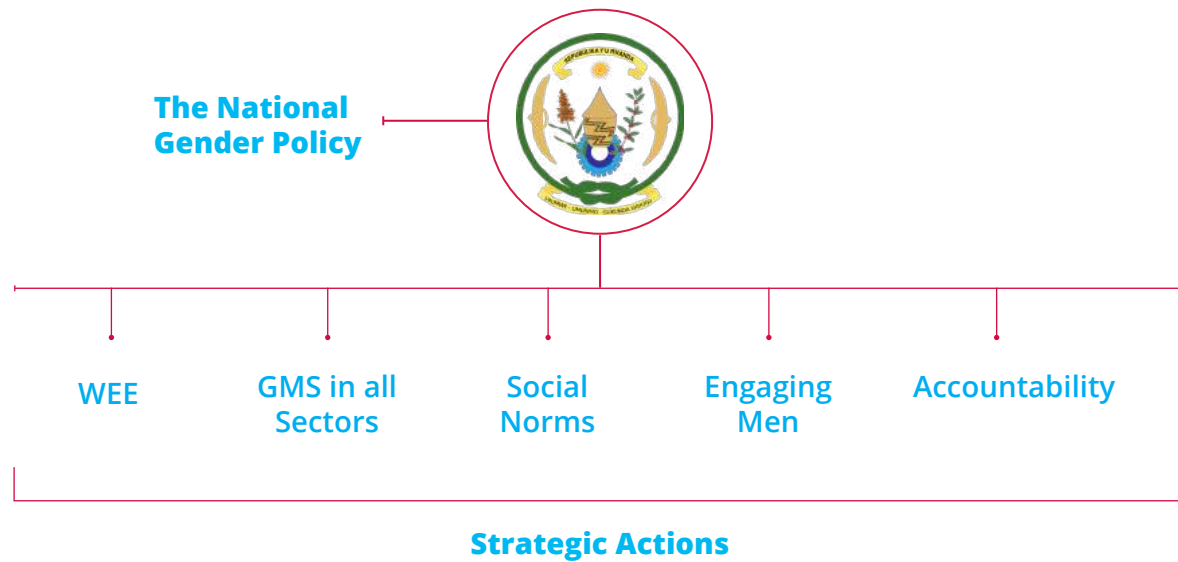
The new national gender policy which was approved by the Cabinet in February 2021 was significantly informed by the country's Beijing+25 report. This important result in terms of supporting policy formulation was the outcome of an effective multi-stakeholder collaboration, bringing together national institutions, civil society organizations and the One UN (namely UN Women, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNDP, FAO, WFP and UNICEF) to provide strategic and technical support to advance gender equality in Rwanda

The revised National Gender Policy, the Girls' Education Policy; the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for Sports and Culture; the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for the Rwanda Governance Board, the Gender and Youth Strategy for the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for the Private

Sector are other examples of the significant technical resources UN Women has invested to ensure that gender concerns in all sectors are addressed equitably.

Apart from equality, the various policies seek to promote gender transformative interventions. For example, the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for Sports and Culture advocates for the greater involvement of Rwandan women and girls in male-dominated sports as a means of challenging gender stereotypes and advancing gender equality.

Equally important was the continuous support to the National Gender Machinery (NGM) and CSOs to strengthen implementation, monitoring and reporting mechanisms of the CEDAW recommendations and other international and regional GEWE normative frameworks.



The national gender cluster has improved coordination and leveraged the synergies between the different stakeholders for the advancement of gender equality, family promotion and children’s rights.

This sector wide approach should further contribute to strengthening the voice of gender advocates and lead to concerted and more impactful interventions on GEWE.

Stronger co-ordination within the Cluster has taken GEWE to another level. With such mechanisms, delivery becomes easier.

- National Women Council



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: National Gender and Family Cluster Meeting

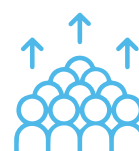
Strengthening Accountability for GEWE

Strengthening national accountability mechanisms is crucial for the delivery of GEWE commitments, and is one of the focus areas of the UN Joint Programme on Gender. Working collectively, the institutions that make up the NGM (the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), the National Women’s Council (NWC), the Forum for Women Parliamentarians (FFRP) and the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) have instituted ‘safeguards’ for GEWE at different levels.

The decision to include GEWE indicators in “Imihigo” (Performance Contracts) in 2020 and the adoption of Gender Budget Statements since 2012 are some of the good practices put in place to increase accountability for GEWE. Since the 2013 Organic Budget Law made Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) mandatory for all Ministries, districts, and provinces, “gender blind” spending has been eliminated; and budget allocations for GEWE have risen by 10% in 13 out of 17 government ministries and half of the districts. Whilst insufficient, the modest allocations are a positive development - and a signal of the government’s commitment to GEWE. This also provides a solid foundation towards effective financing of gender equality.

The Gender Accountability Day (GAD) is another unique mechanism initiated by the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) in 2017 to promote delivery on GEWE at the local level. Initially a one-day event, the GAD now stretches over an entire month in several districts and is an opportunity to promote oversight and local ownership of gender commitments by engaging community leaders and members on priority gender issues. The 2020 Gender Accountability Day in Gatsibo, Nyagatare and Kayonza districts attracted over 500 community and village leaders from the Eastern province leading to the signing of Imihigo (community-based performance contracts) to advance gender equality. During the event, the leaders made specific commitments to challenge social and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequalities in the Eastern Province, which has a high prevalence of SGBV and teenage pregnancies. A total of 671 participants were tasked with leading the campaign against GBV in their respective communities.

A Gender Management Information System (GMIS) established under the Joint Programme on Gender has improved coordination by increasing the availability of up-to-date gender data. Apart from supporting planning, programming and advocacy efforts, the GMIS has eased tracking of indicators, monitoring and reporting on progress of GEWE in Rwanda.



60,000

of women members of the National Women Council who received capacity enhancement in leadership



8,736

of Young Women in mentorship programmes



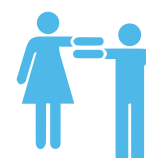
820

of youth leaders trained in gender equality principles



147

of observers deployed in the 2018 election to monitor gender-responsiveness



598

of Duty Bearers capacitated on gender sensitive planning and budgeting



225,254

of women leaders mobilized from NWC structures to participate in parliamentary elections



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: The Vibe Workshop, an innovative peer to peer mentoring and exchange programme. 30 Oct - 01 Nov 2019

3. Fostering Women's Economic Empowerment

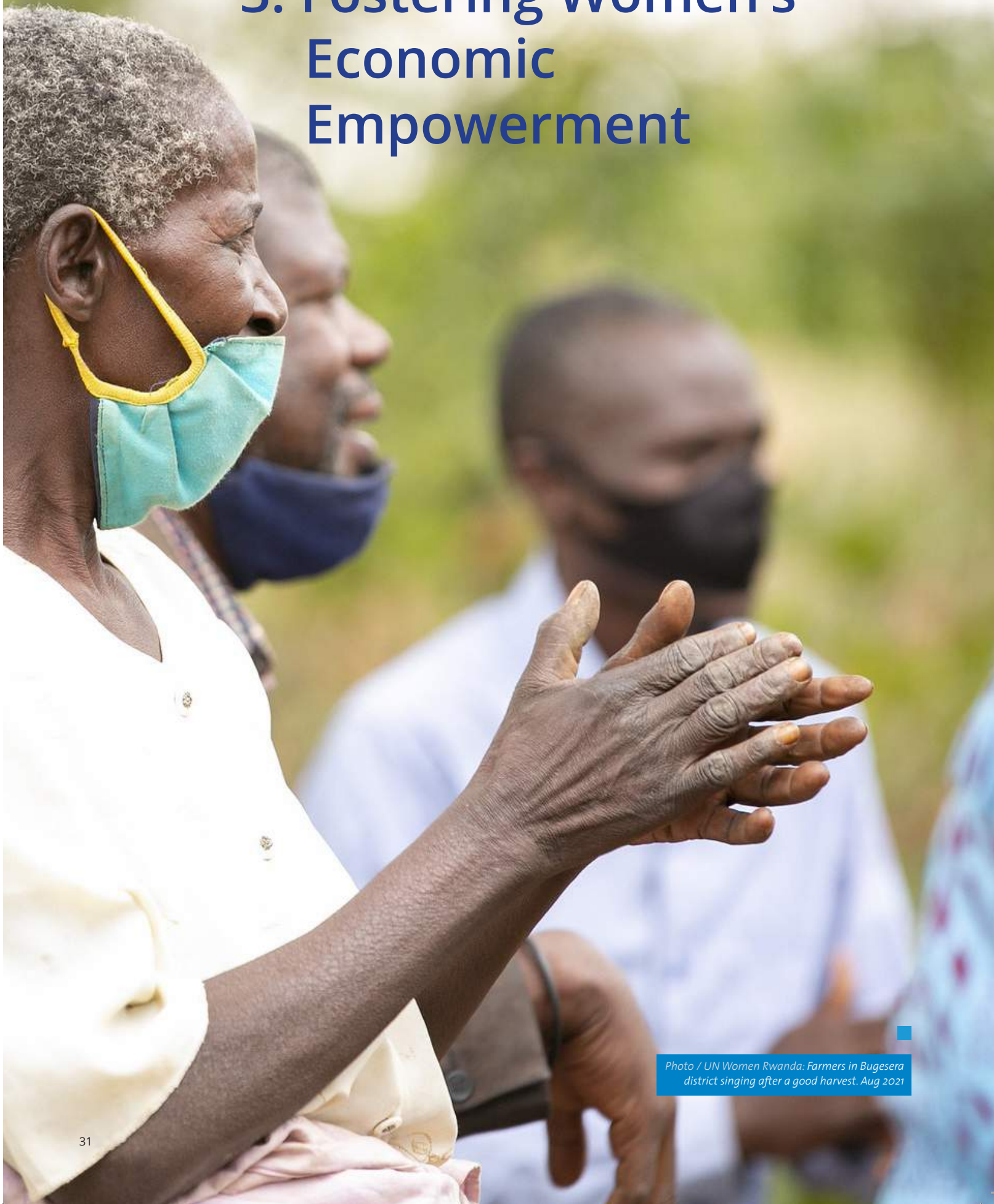


Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Farmers in Bugesera district singing after a good harvest. Aug 2021

If women's participation in leadership is to be transformative, their voices must be heard at all levels of decision making. While women's representation in Rwanda's Parliament and Government is commendable, progress has been uneven at the lower government levels where women are scarcely represented in the executive positions. The gender gap in leadership at this level increases the risk of women's concerns being overlooked or given low priority in development programmes and budgetary allocations. It could also reduce the pool of women ready for higher leadership positions over time.

▶ The Gender Gaps

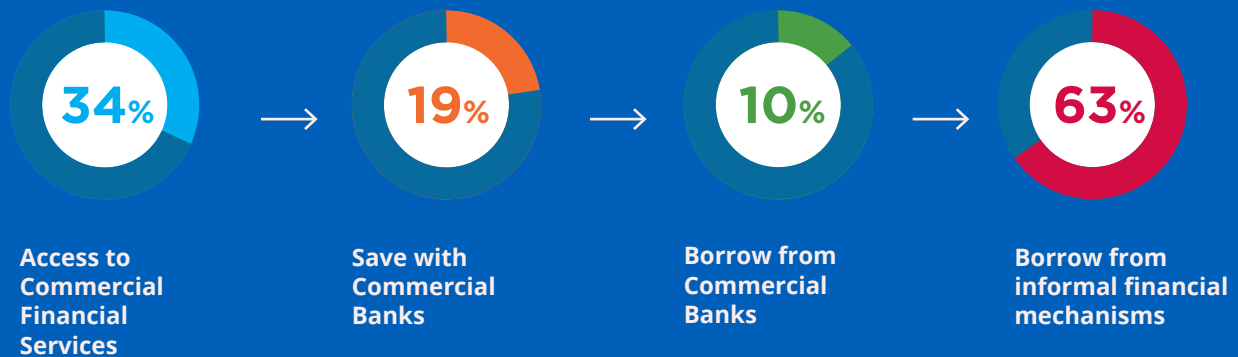


Source: Labour Force Survey 2019/2020, Gender thematic report, FinScope Survey 2020, Gender and Financial Inclusion in Rwanda

▶ UN Women's Approach



Women's Access to Credit in Rwanda (Finscope 2020)



Available statistics indicate that women in Rwanda are making an important contribution to the country's economy and particularly in the agricultural sector where they account for 49.2% of the employed population, excluding subsistence agriculture as per the ILO 2013 new definition (NISR: Labor Force Survey, 2020). Yet women farmers have been found to be consistently less productive than male farmers.

Despite the statutory reforms that have strengthened women's land ownership rights, discriminatory social norms and limited

decision-making power at household level tend to restrict women's ability to control land and the income produced from it. Women's gains from agriculture are also undermined by limited access to key agricultural inputs: improved seeds, technology, extension services, finance and higher value markets. Closing the gender gap in agriculture through informed investments that remove these barriers represents a huge opportunity for women's empowerment, economic development and resilience.



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Peer Learning Conference on Gender Equality Nov 2-4 2017

UN Women does not only support women in the agriculture sector. It also works with women in the informal sector, women entrepreneurs and young women to increase business opportunities, facilitate financial inclusion, close the digital gender divide and foster skills development for employment and job creation. The section below provides some concrete examples of our work in relation to women's economic empowerment.

What we have achieved since 2016

28,401

of Women equipped with entrepreneurial skills

4,710

of Women equipped with vocational skills

1,338

of women who received start-up capital

452

of Women who obtained forward contracts

7,945

of Duty Bearers trained

110,605

Indirect beneficiaries of WEE interventions



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Vibe Workshop, an innovative peer to peer mentoring & exchange programme. 30 Oct - 01 Nov 2019/2021



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Empowering Women Refugees in Rwanda. 12 Feb - 2019

Enhancing Women’s Participation in Agricultural Value Chain

Together with FAO, IFAD, and WFP, UN Women implements the Joint Programme on “Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women” (JP RWEE), in the districts of Nyaruguru, Kirehe, and Ngoma, to secure rural women’s livelihoods and rights.

Addressing the constraints that limit women’s effective integration into profitable agricultural value chains is critical for economic empowerment efforts. Although they constitute 79% of the labor force in Rwanda, women farmers’ participation in value chains remains low. Women farmers’ production capacity both in terms of quantity and quality has lagged due to limited access to technology, extension services, market information as well as limited decision-making power at the household level.

Implemented since 2014, the JP RWEE has embraced a holistic approach to the economic empowerment of women by responding to the identified gender gaps. Targeted communities have benefitted from education, information, services, market opportunities and access to innovative technologies ranging from water harvesting for irrigation, to greenhouse farming that have not only reduced women’s burden, but also improved yields, income, and food security.

RWEE has also invested in activities and approaches aimed at promoting transformative change in the lives of individual women as well as their families and the broader community. This has been achieved by:

- Building women’s leadership and participation in farmers’ and producers’ organizations.
- Strengthening women’s technical and entrepreneurial skills
- Using the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) to promote more equitable gender relations at household level
- Improving rural women’s access to labor and time saving technologies to reduce their workloads and free up time for other activities.

These interventions have been complemented by efforts to promote a more gender-responsive policy environment including through the development of the Ministry of Agriculture’s Gender and Youth Mainstreaming Strategy (2019 – 2024) whose vision is an “increased and sustainable productivity in the agriculture sector for healthy and wealthy women, men and youth.”

The holistic approach adopted by JP RWEE allows for dbetter targeting of interventions. For some, mastering new farming techniques has boosted yields and incomes. For others, training in vocational skills, business and cooperative management, and village savings and loans methodology have helped them access credit and start new enterprises. Regardless of their different undertakings, the rural women participating in JPRWEE are all working towards similar aspirations: securing a better life for their families.

Photo / UN Women Rwanda: A Farmer in Munini Sector (Musanze), harvesting in Aug 2021



Key Results

- **3,744** women empowered with life skills
- **105,000** household members using the Gender Action Learning System for improved livelihood planning and equitable relations within the household
- **1,612** women trained on innovative agricultural techniques and practices
- **19** Co-operatives accessing financial services
- Over **1,884** women received business development support for income generation
- **1,713 (82% women)** smallholder farmers have access to 6 formal private sector buyers.
- **2,742** women received agricultural inputs
- **77** Women VSLAs (**1,696** women) were established and strengthened for accessing financial services.



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: A Farmer in Munini Sector, Musanze, harvesting in Aug 2021



Marie Goreth Uwintije is a 39-year-old widow and mother of four, in Ngoma district.

“In the past, I used to harvest around 370 kg of rice from my 12-acre garden but after being trained on how to use natural fertilizers and other improved farming techniques, my yield from the same garden has improved to over 500 kg per harvest.”

With the earnings, she was able to pay school fees and take care of other household needs.



Uwingabire Consolee is a farmer and agripreneur.

“The project equipped me with business skills and the profits I make have increased. I have built a new house, paid for my child’s university fees and bought cattle. I have electricity and a TV in my house.”

Florence Nyirantezimana is a 42-years old mother of five and is a resident of Urugwiro village in the Kirehe District, located near Rwanda’s border with Tanzania. Recently, she secured a soft loan from her cooperative which is one of the seven women groups that are currently benefiting from JP-RWEE activities in Kirehe district.

“With the money, I have managed to embark on a poultry project at the back of our house. Once they come of age, I intend to sell the chicken, pay off the loan and use the balance to scale the business,” she says, adding that her husband, who owns and runs a local pub, has been supportive.

Her neighbor, 35-year-old **Uwizeyimana Agnes**, a mother of five used the soft loan obtained from her savings’ group to buy a sewing machine.

“I go with my machine to every market day where I earn money sewing people’s garments. I have many customers’ assignments and I work on them from home. Thanks to RWEE, I am no longer just a wife to my husband. I am a partner contributing to our household welfare,” she says.

Unlocking Economic Opportunities for Women

Through the development of the “buy from women e-commerce platform”, a collaborative project of UN Women and New Faces New Voices and Hexakomb, women entrepreneurs have leveraged the use of digital technology to market and sell their goods and services online. The platform was piloted with women entrepreneurs involved in Agro processing, art and hand crafts, fashion, communication and events management, manufacturing

production weaving among others. Initially, the Buy from Women platform was intended to facilitate access to markets for women farmers and had registered up to 3000 farmers online to link them to financial institutions and markets. However, it faced tremendous technical challenges and in the wake of the COVID pandemic, it was repurposed to serve as an E-commerce platform.

Promoting Gender Responsive Procurement

Annually at the global level, USD 15 trillion is passed from government to suppliers through public procurement systems. However, only 1% of this significant amount goes to women-owned businesses.

The evidence generated by the study ignited policy discussions and recommendations for information sharing, affirmative action and capacity building initiatives on public procurement.

Despite a range of commendable initiatives, Rwanda’s public procurement policy is silent on GEWE and women-owned businesses find themselves largely excluded from public procurement processes. A 2019 study commissioned by UN Women and New Faces New Voices (NFNV) shows that women owned businesses in Rwanda accounted for only 13% of public tenders between 2016 - 2019, and mostly those of comparatively lower value.

The Rwanda Public Procurement Authority (RPPA) has since organized training programmes targeting women. More than 100 women entrepreneurs have benefited from the training sessions on public procurement processes and the use of the E-Government procurement platform (Umucyo). From the feedback, the training assuaged many fears and more women now feel confident to participate in public tenders. For UN Women and NFNV, the goal is to reach a stage where inclusive procurement practices become an integral part of the corporate culture.

The study informed advocacy efforts led by UN Women and New Faces, New Voices (NFNV) to increase participation of women-owned businesses as a vehicle for creating wealth for SMEs and inclusive economic growth.



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Launch of the study on Gender Responsive Procurement in Rwanda



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Private sector companies receive recognition under the Gender Equality Seal Programme

Bridging the Gender Gap in the Workplace

The private sector is the engine of growth and the largest employer in Rwanda. However corporate institutions and managerial positions are male-dominated. Since 2017, UN Women has collaborated with the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), UNDP, and Private Sector Federation (PSF) to raise awareness on the Women Empowerment Principles (WEP) and the Gender Equality Seal (GES) in Rwanda's Private Sector which both aim to address gender barriers in the workplace.

Rwanda was the first country in Africa to adopt the Gender Equality Seal - an initiative that helps companies incorporate a gender perspective in management systems, structures and processes. This includes a) eliminating gender-based wage gaps; b) increasing women in corporate leadership positions; c) policies to improve work-life balance; d) increasing women's presence in traditionally male-dominated occupations, and men in female-dominated areas; e) eradicating sexual harassment in the workplace; and f) promoting women in business and cross-cutting gender equality along value chains

The initiative has generated significant corporate interest and more than 40 companies have embarked on the certification process, albeit at different levels, to undertake business and operational reforms that will foster gender inclusive workplaces. UN Women has also assisted the Private Sector Federation with the development of its gender mainstreaming strategy (2020-2024); seeing this as yet another opportunity for Businesses to participate in promoting GEWE. Prior to this (from 2017 to 2019), UN Women also supported the career women network of Kigali in coaching, mentoring and networking for women in the private sector.

- **40** Companies willing to join and implement GES initiative.
- **10** private and **2** public companies have developed gender action plans.
- **10** private and **2** public companies have established gender equality committees.
- **500** staff members from different companies have attended gender training.



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Empowering Women Refugees in Rwanda. 12 Feb - 2019

4. Ending Violence Against Women



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: 16 Days of Activism, Nov 2017

What we have achieved since 2016

2,353

of individuals who have received legal & psychosocial support

1,646

#Service Providers trained to handle GBV cases

918

of inmates/prisoners trained on GBV to avoid repeat offenses

5.5M

Total reached through awareness raising campaigns on GBV

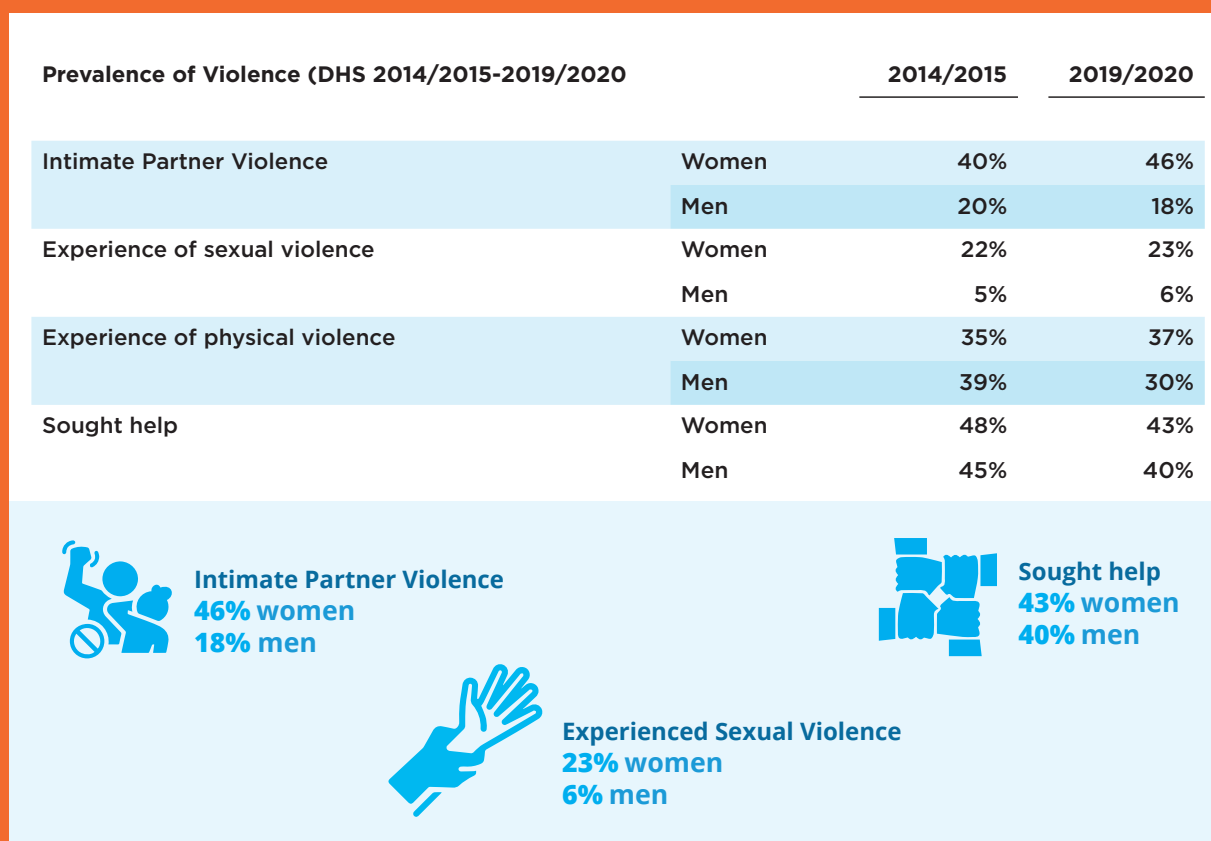
4,762

of local & religious engaged on GBV prevention through tackling negative social norms

Gender based violence (GBV) negatively affects women and girls' general well-being and prevents them from fully participating in different spheres of society. It impacts their families, their community, and the economy at large. Despite legislative advances, GBV remains pervasive and a daily reality in the lives of many women and girls in Rwanda with many experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of violence and oppression including intimate partner violence, sexual violence early and forced marriages. Sadly, the statistics show that less than half of all abused women and girls are willing to report cases of violence. Many suffer in silence, mainly due to stigma and the social norms that condone gender-based violence.

UN Women's work in GBV prevention and response is informed by a transformative, rights-based and survivor-centered approach which entails concerted and co-ordinated action with a broad range of stakeholders to ensure that women and girls lead a life free of violence. We are working to create a safer community for women and girls through:

- a) Prevention strategies that address the root causes of inequality and GBV;
- b) Engaging legislators to pass tougher laws;
- c) Strengthening the capacities of duty bearers to address GBV;
- d) Equipping women and girls and particularly the most vulnerable, with the knowledge and information to speak up, claim their rights and obtain assistance when they need it;
- e) Supporting the production and availability of quality disaggregated data on prevalence of GBV; and access to coordinated, survivor-centered, comprehensive, quality and affordable services.



Source: (RDHS 2019-2020)

Shifting Mind-sets

Discriminatory social norms lead to a wide range of persistent rights violations and the systematic denial of women's equal access to leadership, employment, education, and justice, while also gravely undermining women's protection from all forms of discrimination and violence. Leveraging attitudinal change as a vehicle for gender equality appears therefore as a critical tactic towards accelerating the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda and notably, SDG-5, on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. (UN Women, Gender Equality Attitudes Survey, 2019)

In this context, UN Women Rwanda is collaborating with non-traditional partners at different levels of society with the potential to challenge and transform the negative social norms, harmful masculinities and discriminatory practices that sustain gender inequality and GBV. Among these are the Rwandan Association of Elders "Inteko Izirikana" and the Rwanda Religious Leaders Initiative (RRLI). In particular, religious leaders are very influential in society and have an important role in shaping beliefs and attitudes, especially since at times, the interpretation of religious doctrine can be at variance with the ideals of gender equality.

In Rwanda, a series of training sessions and a handbook (GBV prevention & response) developed with UN Women's assistance have enabled faith actors under RRLI to interrogate and find areas of convergence between the sacred text and the equitable treatment of both women and men, thereby embracing their role in speaking against the social acceptance of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

"As religious leaders, it is our duty to preach the gospel in a relatable manner that promotes unity in the family and the equitable treatment of all." - (RRLI)

With this mindset, 480 religious leaders under the RRLI have committed to use their community and media platforms to advocate for the rights of GBV survivors, and to create safe spaces at

places of worship where survivors can obtain support. In some churches, leaders have set up permanent gender desks to maintain the focus on gender equality.

RRLI has been vocal about the issue of teenage pregnancy and early marriage which is a widespread problem in Rwanda; and is advocating for teenage girls' right to resume their education after childbirth – in stark contrast from the past when teen mothers were treated as outcasts. RRLI members participated in a media awareness campaign on 6 Radio channels that is estimated to have reached over 45,000 people. During the lockdown, RRLI worked with GMO to sustain the campaign through a local drama series titled "Ziririza" (Stop GBV). The campaign proved to be extremely helpful when access to services was limited; and approximately 211 GBV cases were reported to the GMO toll free line.



Photo / Rwanda National Police: Workshop on the Prevention & Response to Gender Based Violence, Sep 2021

Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up or support programmes aimed at teaching perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behavior in interpersonal relationships with a view to preventing further violence and changing violent behavioral patterns.

- Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention (2016)

RRLI has also incorporated GBV in its pastoral work with perpetrators in the community and those in incarceration. However, RRLI sees its immediate mission as working with religious leaders across the country to counter the biased interpretation of religious doctrine that legitimizes discrimination against women and girls.

UN Women's social norm change initiatives are also targeting perpetrators of GBV. Growing evidence shows that perpetrator programmes are important elements of an integrated and comprehensive approach to GBV prevention as they contribute to the wider process of overcoming belief systems that condone and perpetuate VAWG.

Rwanda Correctional Services (RCS) reached a milestone in 2020, following its first endeavor to systematically incorporate GBV prevention and response in its rehabilitation programmes. With the support of UN Women and RWAMREC, RCS has established a team of skilled facilitators; and has embarked on a comprehensive and structured "re-socialization" programme for

inmates – some of whom are perpetrators of GBV and the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Many of the latter have been serving long sentences and are unaware of the policy and legislative reforms in relation to GBV, and therefore at high risk of repeat-offense. The programme which addresses power relations and harmful masculinities, aims to reduce recidivism, and promote the successful reintegration of perpetrators into the community. To date, 918 inmates in 13 prisons have participated in the programme and have pledged to become gender advocates once back in their communities.

With its pool of facilitators and a gender strategy underway, RCS is expected to roll out and multiply this awareness raising and mind set change initiative across all prisons in the country.

"RCS is a male dominated institution and therefore a gender strategy for our institution will enable us to practice what we are preaching"
- Rwanda Correction Services (RCS).



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Training of Trainees on Gender and Awareness on GBV Prevention in Prisons in Aug 2020

Engaging Men and Boys

UN Women's work on engaging men and boys for gender equality is anchored in the belief that achieving gender equality is about transforming unequal power relations between men and women. This involves challenging notions of masculinity and traditional perceptions of manhood. It requires men to question power dynamics in their actions or their words at the personal, interpersonal and societal level and to take responsibility for change. Men need to be engaged as gender advocates – speaking out as active agents and stakeholders who can transform social norms, behaviors and gender stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination and inequality. (UN Women)

In Rwanda, UN Women is leveraging the HeforShe campaign and other men engage initiatives to promote a transformative agenda. In 2020, UN Women joined with other organizations to support the convening of the 3rd edition of the #MenEngage Ubuntu Symposium in Kigali, Rwanda. The global virtual event, which was co-organized by RWAMREC, RWAMNET and MenEngage Africa generated debate on how to transform masculinities for gender equality taking into account the changing context triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic which threatens to reverse some gender equality gains.



Share research & innovation on positive masculinity

Stimulate dialogue & debate on gender issues

Spark new ideas & social change theories

Photo / UN Women Rwanda: 16 Days of Activism, 25 Nov - 10 Dec 2019

Under the 16 Days of activism against Gender Based Violence, UN Women Country office has continuously supported the Government of Rwanda through the Gender machinery for the national launch of the 16 days of activism together with Government institutions, security organs, local leaders, development partners, UN Agencies, local communities, youth and women's organizations.



Panel discussion on: Putting Youth and Adolescents at the centre to end GBV; AFRIYAN Meeting, Dec 2021.



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: 16 Days of Activism, 25 Nov - 10 Dec 2019



As part of the 16 Days of Activism, a moto rally was organized across the district of Kamonyi, to raise awareness on “zero tolerance” for VAW. The moto taxi is the most popular means of transport in Rwanda, and mostly operated by men. Involving them in the rally was aimed at calling for greater solidarity and partnership with men in ending violence against women and girls and promoting a gender equal society.



Photo / Rwanda National Police: Workshop on the Prevention & Response to GBV, Sep 2021

Community Dialogues

In line with the national HeForShe commitments to end GBV, UN Women is working with the NGM, Rwanda National Police (RNP) Rwanda Investigations Bureau (RIB) and Rwanda Women’s Network on GBV prevention. With the support of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Royal Netherlands government, numerous awareness raising activities have been conducted across the country and an estimated 5.5 million people have been reached through community dialogues, theatre and media (radio and TV). The awareness campaigns were intensified and reinforced with toll free numbers strengthened in collaboration with Rwanda Women’s Network, ARCT Ruhuka and Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) during the COVID-19 lockdown when GBV levels surged.

The diversity of approaches and mediums employed by the different partners has

boosted the community outreaches, ensuring that GBV messages reach every corner of the country. The RNP for example, has used its community policing programme and volunteers to reach out to the local communities while Haguruka and RWN conducted GBV mobile clinics and educated communities on the GBV laws, reporting mechanisms and services for survivors.

In addition, UN Women in collaboration with GMO increased community dialogues and strengthened accountability towards gender equality and fight against GBV by engaging dialogues with more than 4,000 local leaders in different districts of Rwanda including Ngororero, Rulindo, Nyamagabe, Gatsibo among others. These dialogues have led to increased commitment by local authorities in the fight against GBV including teen pregnancies.

Safe Rural Public Spaces Project

In collaboration with UNILEVER, UN Women is implementing the Safe Rural Public Spaces project that seeks to reduce rampant GBV and workplace sexual harassment in the tea growing areas in Nyaruguru district. The project is employing a multi-pronged approach that combines economic empowerment, skills training and advocacy against GBV. Men and women working in the tea plantations have been supported to establish 218 savings groups and group enterprises as a means of reducing women’s vulnerability to GBV.

Community leaders including district officials and local security officers have also been equipped with the knowledge and tools to promote women and girls’ safety and security in the workplace and the community. Safety audits have been conducted in all the project areas and action plans involving different stakeholders developed.

These include security patrols in areas identified as potentially unsafe for women and girls. The project is also supporting community wide anti GBV advocacy campaigns led by men which aim to promote more gender sensitive attitudes.



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Advocacy & Dialogue for Safe Rural Public Spaces in Nyaruguru district, November 2021



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: UN Women - SDC joint field visit to Burera district during the parent-adolescent communication session, 12 Oct 2021.

|| *I am a father of 8 children, 5 boys and 3 girls. I used to value the boys more than the girls, thinking that boys are more important than girls. I used to attend and give responsibilities to boys as a way of encouraging them and emphasized that know you are men, don't be like girls, it's after the training that I realized I was doing discrimination among my children and I did not take them the same way. I need to apologize especially to my daughters.*

*- Mr. Uwiyisaba Joram,
Anti-GBV Champions, Munini Sector*



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Mobile Clinic Van on site during the mobile clinic outreach in Burera district, Aug 2021

Scaling up Quality Services for GBV Survivors

Operationalizing the normative framework on GBV is an ongoing task and one that the UN agencies in Rwanda have been working on with government institutions for a long time. And nowhere has this effort been more visible than in the establishment and replication of the Isange One Stop Centre (IOSC) model to improve the quality of services available to survivors of violence.

Established in 2009, the IOSC model has grown exponentially. Currently, there are 44 IOSCs spread across Rwanda of which 23 that established under a collaboration between the Government and the One UN with funding from the Netherlands; and 21 by the World Bank. In 2014, the Government of Rwanda took a decision to extend the IOSC model by integrating it into the district health centres. GoR has committed to extend the IOSCs to 495 health centres by 2023 and thereby increase accessibility of services in every region of the country. [What makes this even more notable is the guarantee of government financing for GBV prevention and response, which is uncommon in many countries in Africa.](#)

The Isange One Stop Centre (IOSC) model stands out in Africa as a centre of excellence for the provision of holistic support services to survivors of GBV and child abuse. To date, more than 50,000 have benefitted from the services offered.

In addition to medical care for those who require it, many survivors who have experienced Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) have enjoyed the sense of security offered by the centres. Testimonies from survivors indicate that the legal aid and psycho-social support offered has enhanced their resilience by enabling them to re-imagine and rebuild their lives.

In recent years, the One UN has focused its support on systems strengthening for quality service delivery and sustainability. This has become even more urgent with the expansion of the IOSCs. One of the milestones so far achieved from UN's technical assistance through UN Women includes the IOSC Five Year Strategic Plan (2020-2025).

This is the first time a long-term plan has been developed for the IOSCs and it is expected that it will strengthen coordination and delivery of services, while also guiding resource mobilization efforts. Other important tools developed during this period include the revised Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with UNFPA which have been translated into French and Kinyarwanda. New SOPs that are child and gender sensitive have also been developed; and a pilot Child Friendly Space that includes a separate and private space for children (whether victims, witnesses, or suspects) established in RIB's Kigali office. It is anticipated that these tools and facilities will improve the handling of cases of Child Abuse.

Support to systems strengthening has also extended to the development of the GBV Management Information System (GBV MIS) since routine data collection and accurate records on GBV cases has been an outstanding challenge in Rwanda. The system is expected to improve the systematic collection, analysis, storage and dissemination of data on GBV cases, including the details of victims and perpetrators. A total of 279 personnel at the IOSCs from the medical, security and legal teams have been equipped with the skills and the tools to operate the system.

The GBV MIS has also been linked to the Integrated Electronic Management System (IEMS), managed by the Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST) and is accessible to all key agencies in the justice chain. With the ability to reduce delays and transaction costs, the GBV MIS is expected to facilitate timely justice through more efficient GBV case management

Data generated from the system will also contribute to the annual GBV reports and will be shared with stakeholders for advocacy, evidence-based planning, and monitoring of policy implementation. In addition, a GBV and child abuse prevention training manual was also developed by RIB through UN Women support as an important tool that will guide the capacity building of RIB personnel in management of GBV and child abuse cases in their daily tasks of crimes prevention, detection, and investigation.

Other knowledge products have also been produced including a “Study on Knowledge, Attitude and Practices on the root causes of GBV and IOSC service delivery” in collaboration with MIGEPROF and “Access to justice for GBV Victims: achievements, barriers and recommendations” which amplify the voices of the beneficiaries of services, services providers and the community.

- **44** centres have been established across Rwanda, with one circulating mobile clinic.
- The IOCs provide **24/7** multi-disciplinary free services.
- Reintegration of victims into their communities is a key component of the IOSC model.
- Increased focus put on the prevention of GBV, access to justice for victims & survivors, and victim reintegration.

Access to Justice

While the expansion of the IOSCs signifies progress in responding to GBV, access to justice remains work in progress. Many cases have been dropped and perpetrators acquitted due to the lack of sufficient evidence. Under the Joint Programme on Gender, UN partners (UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF) have worked with justice sector agencies including the Rwanda National Police (RNP), Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB), Rwanda Defense Forces (RDF), Rwanda Correctional District Administration Security Organ (DASSO), the Rwanda Bar Association (RBA) and the Legal Aid Forum to

address identified gaps in the delivery of justice. Over 1,012 duty bearers including lawyers, police and other security officers have been equipped with knowledge on GBV prevention and response: and training in investigative skills. Critical gaps such as the collection and preservation of forensic evidence have also been addressed, and this according to the police, has contributed to the faster prosecution of SGBV cases. Records show that the number of GBV cases successfully prosecuted has risen from 9,063 in 2018/19 to 12,029 in 2019/20.



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: UN Women Team engaging teen mothers during the mobile legal clinics outreach in Burera district, Aug 2021

Mobile Legal Clinics

Beyond the formal justice sector, UN women has collaborated with legal aid service providers to extend services to poor and vulnerable women and girls living in remote communities, including refugees, WLHIV and persons with disabilities. For many of these women and girls, justice remains out of reach due to ignorance of their rights, proximity issues and the cost of accessing services.

In 2019, over 500 women and girls obtained legal services through mobile legal aid clinics conducted in 15 districts of Rwanda in collaboration with Haguruka. Many women were given legal advice and/or referrals on property issues, GBV including sexual violence, economic violence and paternity tracing. With the assistance of Haguruka – a legal aid provider, 15 survivors were able to identify the

fathers of their children through DNA tests. Apart from identity, this process ensured that these children will be able to receive some level of financial support from their biological fathers. However, many more were not able to obtain the desired outcomes due to the lack of evidence, especially in the case of rape by unknown persons.

One of the consequences of GBV in Rwanda is the drastic increase in teen pregnancies. In 2017, over 17,000 cases were identified countrywide. By 2019, the number of teen pregnancies had increased to 23,000, constituting an increase of 35.3%. With the persistent culture of silence, patriarchal social norms, cultural beliefs and high economic dependence of women to men, many cases remain unreported.



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: A teen mother with her daughter during the mobile clinic outreach in Burera district, Aug 2021

Supporting Peace, Security, & Humanitarian Response

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000) was adopted on 31 October 2000. The Resolution recognizes women's different roles and needs in conflict and post-conflict environments:

- **full and active participation of women in all peace and security processes**
- **protection and promotion of the rights of women and girls, prevention of violence and discrimination against women, and for an end to impunity for perpetrators**
- **increased women's participation in decision-making at the community, national, regional and international levels.**

In this regard, Rwanda developed and adopted the current National Action Plan 2018-2022 (NAP) which builds upon the previous experience of implementing the NAP 2009-2012. UN Women played an active role by supporting the evaluation of the last NAP and providing technical support to the steering committee put in place by the Ministry of gender. The contribution to the UNSC Resolution 1325 revolves around 3 main areas: Support to the reintegration of ex-combatants; Prevention and response to GBV; and Women Leadership and participation in decision-making. Most of the interventions supported by UN Women were

Strengthening Women's Resilience

On the humanitarian front, research shows that refugee women are less likely to be economically active, in comparison to refugee men, which increases their vulnerability to sexual exploitation and violence. The situation is worse for female heads of households as they strive to balance livelihoods and the heavy burden of care and dependency. With the support of the Government of Sweden, UN Women has established the Women Opportunity Centre in Kigeme Refugee Camp, home to over 20,000 refugees, 61 per cent of whom are women, to enhance protection initiatives for refugee women and girls as recommended under pillar 4 (Relief & Recovery) of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR)

implemented in the framework of Delivering as One through Joint Programmes and involved sister agencies such as UNDP and UNFPA.

UNSCR 1325(2000) recognizes that women and men ex-combatants have unique needs in DDR processes. Male and female ex-combatants are part of broader institutions i.e., families and therefore have varied roles and obligations, that necessitate the recognition of their dependents' needs. The latter are unfortunately frequently overlooked when designing and distributing reintegration packages.

Since 2020, UN Women and UNDP have collaborated with the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) to develop its pioneer Gender Strategy; and to strengthen internal gender capacities to conduct gender responsive monitoring and evaluation. UN Women's support stems from its commitment to implement Rwanda's National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325; and its expertise in integrating gender concerns in the planning and execution of DDR programmes.

For RDRC, the partnership with the UN has brought to the fore the importance of recognizing the diversity of ex-combatants and their dependents and lays ground for more gender responsive interventions in DDR programmes.

1325. The Centre, which was officially opened on World Refugee Day in June 2019, strengthen women's resilience and promotes refugee women's agency and empowers them to claim their rights within their families whether in the camps or in host communities.

UN Women's biggest intervention was to complete a gender assessment of all six refugee camps in Rwanda together with UNHCR, the One UN and MIDIMAR back in 2017. Recommendations from these two assessments have informed the programming, decision making, and service delivery to refugees and also served as a resource mobilization for humanitarian actors.



■
Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Empowering Women Refugees in Rwanda
(Women's Economic Empowerment through Humanitarian Assistance)



Esperance Mutegwaraba, 61, fled the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2012 along with 30,000 refugees. Because of her age and illiteracy, it was not easy to find work until she enrolled in a UN Women-supported programme run by Indego Africa, which equips refugee women with practical vocational and entrepreneurial skills to help them make a living.

“Escaping war along with my four children and four grandchildren, and a young orphan girl I rescued...life was really tough. We parted ways with my husband, had nowhere to sleep, and nowhere to go. We came to this refugee camp in June 2012. My children are my motivation to stay here because if I take them back to Congo, they will not be able to finish their studies. I was so excited when I was selected for the UN Women’s programme. We are learning how to weave beautiful baskets that Indego Africa sells all over the world. We receive orders and we get paid through personal bank accounts that we opened as part of the programme, a first for me. Our cooperative, Igisubizo (the Solution) earned around 300,000 Rwandan francs (USD 340) from its first order.”

“In the six years that I have spent in the refugee camp, this is the first time that I have somewhere to go and be productive, meet other women, share experiences and comfort each other. I am 61 years old; the other women call me “Taté” (granny). People used to doubt that I was capable of working. But the programme raised my confidence, and despite the many failed attempts at weaving baskets in the beginning, I never gave up and I am learning everyday with the support of the trainers. In my hometown, the only available work for women would be farming or domestic work. We were not expected to work together in cooperatives or speak in public. Coming here really taught us a lot. This is knowledge that I will use if I go back to the Congo. We have learned how to manage our finances and we save 10% of what we earn in our accounts. Even though it’s just the beginning, I can already feel the impact on my family, and this gives me hope for their future...the programme opened doors that I never knew existed.”

/// The key achievement of the project is the financial independence it has given the women refugees. The trainings covered basket weaving, business, and cooperative management and how to approach financial institutions as well as mindset change. When we were starting some women couldn’t read nor write and couldn’t speak in public. Few months down the line, these women have changed and have acquired critical skills that they will use even after they leave the camp.

- Yves Nshiyimana,
A trainer from Indego Africa

Fostering a Gender Responsive Response and Recovery From the Covid-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis is a turning point for humanity and for the world economy. Although Rwanda has a comparatively low number of infections, economic activity, household incomes and livelihoods have been adversely affected by the pandemic. The 16th edition of the World Bank Rwanda Economic Update estimates that, because of lockdowns, the poverty headcount is likely to rise by 5.1% (more than 550,000 people) in 2021, with more than 80% of the new poor in rural areas. Despite this bleak outlook, the pandemic provides an opportunity to reset and rebuild a more inclusive and equitable economy.

Experience from previous crises has shown that women and men are affected differently. Gender inequalities and discrimination filter through every issue; and women and girls confront additional risks that can only be averted if governments deliberately put women and girls' needs at the centre of response and recovery efforts. Despite Rwanda's impressive policy and institutional frameworks for gender equality, the pandemic has exposed the disproportionate impact on women and girls' health, economic security, education, and social protection due to pre-existing gender inequalities and harmful gender norms.

Evidence Based Covid-19 Response

Leveraging its gender expertise, UN Women has worked with other UN agencies and development partners to provide data and support the integration of gender in Rwanda's COVID-19 response. Soon after the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, UN Women, UNFPA and MIGEPROF jointly commissioned a Rapid Gender Assessment to establish the gender differentiated impact on women and men. Although not entirely surprising, the findings illustrated how the stringent COVID-19 containment measures in Rwanda had disproportionately affected women's economic activity and incomes; and increased their vulnerability to poverty. Most affected were women in urban centres who operate micro enterprises in the informal sector and have limited access to finance and social protection. Stay at home measures and school closure have intensified women and girls' unpaid care and domestic load as well as their exposure to GBV and intimate partner violence; a situation worsened by limited access to support services.

The evidence generated and the technical support provided by UN Women contributed to a more gender inclusive COVID-19 response. Rwanda's Social and Economic Recovery Plan prioritizes among others, the expansion of the Umurenge social protection programme; emergency cash transfers for vulnerable households; training of women entrepreneurs; and financing for women owned MSMEs. As part of its fiscal stimulus package, the government has opened a special window to support micro and small enterprises in the informal sector via microfinance institutions, and to provide credit guarantees through business development funds (BDFs).

Other assessments supported by UN Women include the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Women and Men in Informal Cross Border Trade in Rubavu, Rusizi, and Nyamasheke Districts in partnership with the Gender Monitoring Office. The Gender Assessment of the Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Initiatives against COVID-19 in Rwanda and the



Source: MIGEPROF/ UN Women/UNFPA/Women Count, 2020: COVID-19 Rapid Gender Assessment

ONE UN report on the socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 in Rwanda completed the set. The findings and recommendations from these important studies informed evidence-based programming, advocacy efforts at all levels for an inclusive recovery, as well as the One UN Joint Programme in support of the Social Economic Recovery Plan (COVID-19 JP SERP).

UN Women also supported civil society organizations in producing a policy brief to make the economic recovery plan/fund (ERP/F) more gender responsive as it was being revised. Leveraging the various studies and data on the gendered impact of the pandemic, recommendations were shared with the Ministry of Finance to improve gender responsiveness in the next iteration of the ERP namely in the design; implementation; and monitoring and evaluation.

In addition to policy advice, UN Women has developed tailored interventions to mitigate the adverse impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women entrepreneurs. Unlike their male counterparts, women's business resilience is undermined by their limited networks and access to information and capital, making it harder for them to bounce back after economic shocks.



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: UN Women & Solid Africa (COVID-19 Support 2021)



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Business clinic training for women entrepreneurs in 2020

Business Clinics for Women Entrepreneurs

In 2020, UN Women piloted a business assistance intervention in partnership with the Rwanda Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs whose members were badly affected by the closure of markets and disruption of supply chains. Business clinics offering business advisory services, coaching and psycho-social support were organized for 80 women owned businesses in Kigali and other cities. Over a period of 6 months, women entrepreneurs were assisted by BPN, Kora Coaching and Inkomoko to develop recovery plans that included pivoting their business models, leveraging digital tools to engage in e-commerce; and information on how to access the government's economic stimulus package.

One year later, the women entrepreneurs acknowledge that the advisory services have improved their business management skills and opened their eyes to new ways of doing business. Some of them sought further support from entities such as the African Entrepreneur Collective (AEC) – which will give them the tools and resources (mentorship and direct financing) that they require to grow their businesses.

What we received in terms of knowledge and skills has contributed much more to our businesses than money ever could.

*- Agnès Samputu
PSF Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs*

Using digital tools to access markets

The COVID-19 pandemic has revolutionized the way businesses operate and has accelerated the digitalization of business models and shift of commercial operations from predominantly physical spaces to online outlets. Cognizant of these trends, UN Women in collaboration with NFNV and Hexakomb consulting company leveraged the Buy from Women digital platform by further upgrading it with e-commerce functionalities that will facilitate digital market access and financial opportunities for women entrepreneurs across various value chains. The System now includes a virtual catalogue module, allowing for the display of products across various value chains.

Promoting Equitable COVID-19 Recovery in the Informal Sector

The economic impact of COVID-19 has been even worse for women working in the informal sector. According to the 2019 labor force survey, 91.2% of women in Rwanda are employed in the informal sector, among them 61% live on daily incomes, without any savings or social safety nets, and are therefore vulnerable to economic stress. For many of these women, the mobility restrictions, border closure and declining demand for goods from local and export markets, not only reduced their earnings; but also led to coping mechanisms that further eroded their financial resilience. Many women depleted their savings and working capital, while others sold assets and/or borrowed money as they struggle to put food on the table.

With support from the Government of Japan, UN Women and her partners (NFNV, NWC, Duterimbere, Profemmes Twese Hamwe, ADEPE, RRP) employed an intersectional COVID response by targeting women whose vulnerabilities were exacerbated by the pandemic. Cooperatives targeting Women Living with HIV in Muhanga, Musanze, Gakenke, Nyarugenge, Bugesera and Karongi districts, and women informal cross border traders in Rusizi and Rubavu districts are among those who benefitted from recapitalization grants to restart their small enterprises. In addition, UN Women is promoting gender-sensitive policies and programmes ensuring that vulnerable informal workers and business owners can continue to earn a living during the pandemic and afterwards.

Together with New Faces New Voices and Gahaya Links, UN Women provided temporary jobs and income to reduce the economic vulnerability of women whose employment in the informal sector was at risk. Over 250 women have earned much needed income from the initiative. Forty thousand (40,000) protective face masks have been produced and distributed to 9,200 women in markets in the City of Kigali and Western Province to allow them to resume their activities safely.

Women are and will remain the hardest hit by this pandemic but they will also be the backbone of recovery in communities. We can build a better and more resilient economy by addressing inequalities in the response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

*- Fatou Lo
UN Women Representative in Rwanda*

Alleviating Women's Care Burden

The centrality of care to sustainable development and its relevance for gender equality are now widely recognized by the global community. Yet, around the world women and girls shoulder a disproportionate share of the care work that is unpaid, unrecognized, and undervalued. Emerging evidence indicates that the pandemic has further exacerbated women's burden of unpaid care work, with women taking on more tasks including care for the sick, amidst great hardship. This has not only affected women's health and well-being

but also their ability to take on paid work. It is against this background that UN Women and Solid Africa supported a two-pronged initiative that sought to alleviate the burden of women who care for patients, while also promoting income opportunities for women. Meals and hygiene products were sourced from women-owned or women-led businesses to patients in four hospitals (Masaka, Muhima, Kibagabaga and CHUK), during the first lock down in 2020. Over 50,000 meals were prepared and delivered daily over a two-month period.



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: UN Women & Solid Africa (COVID-19 Support 2021)

Leaving No One Behind

Leaving no one behind is central to UN Women’s programming efforts. Women with multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities i.e., women living with HIV (WLHIV), refugees, women with disabilities, and teen mothers face systematic marginalization, stigma and prejudice that creates additional barriers to social and economic opportunities. Because of their lower social and economic status, these women have less voice and are thus at greater risk of exploitation, violence, abuse and poverty.

UN Women has adopted an inclusive and intersectional approach that seeks to address women’s multiple vulnerabilities. We believe that ownership and control of economic assets increases autonomy and agency; and reduces vulnerability to violence. UN Women has over the last ten years supported numerous interventions that have increased women’s access and ownership of economic resources and opportunities.

In the period covered by this report (2016-2020) over 2000 vulnerable women have acquired vocational, training, entrepreneurial and financial literacy skills that have enabled them to start and/or expand their micro and small enterprises.



One of the effective strategies employed has been the mobilization and organization of vulnerable women into savings groups, village savings and loans associations (VSLAs) and co-operatives. The savings groups have served as an entry point for women’s financial inclusion – enabling women to save, pool resources and borrow. Such groups have recently been recognized and included in Rwanda’s revised National Financial Inclusion Strategy as a viable pathway for extending financial services to marginalized groups that do not meet the collateral requirements of formal financial institutions. Because of groups like these, there has been a reduction in the gender gap on financial inclusion in Rwanda, from 4% in 2016 to 1% in 2020 (Finscope Survey 2020).

The cooperatives/ savings groups contributed to improvements in social, economic, and health outcomes among women. In addition to employment and market opportunities, women have reported: expansion of social networks/ safety nets, confidence to speak in public, leadership opportunities, greater bargaining power at the household level and increased self-esteem. The groups also fostered greater social inclusion as they are integrated into pre-existing community support systems managed by government and non-governmental institutions.

With 3% of the adult population infected, the HIV epidemic is under control in Rwanda, however, the HIV burden is substantially higher among women and key populations. Emerging evidence suggests a close relationship between economic vulnerability and vulnerability to HIV infection. Therefore, economic empowerment is part of HIV prevention and mitigation.

In Musanze district, a group of 65 young women living with HIV (WLHIV) are running micro enterprises, under a project supported by UN Women and ANSP+. The project equipped women with skills in tailoring, handicrafts and entrepreneurship and supported them to establish a cooperative, through which they sell their goods.

Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Empowering Women Refugees in Rwanda (Women’s Economic Empowerment through Humanitarian Assistance)



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Former Women Street Vendors during Safety Audit Training, Mar 2019.

The Co-operative has also provided the WLHIV with a safe space to share and support each other. Whereas eradicating HIV stigma will take time, the assets, skills and social connections derived from the group have increased WLHIV's resilience and inclusion.

UN Women in partnership with the Rwandan Organization of Women with Disability (UNABU), supported enterprise development interventions for women living with disabilities. A total of 286 women and 10 self-help groups for women living with disabilities received seed capital to establish and/or expand their income generating activities. Additionally, 31 women benefitted from diverse technical vocational training activities and were given starter kits that enabled them to start small businesses in knitting, tailoring, shoemaking and hairdressing. Securing a regular income has increased the women's ability to meet their basic needs, including health insurance.

Other vulnerable groups that have been supported include teen mothers who experience stigma, abandonment and marginalization.

With funding from SDC and Japan, UN Women has in collaboration with Imbutu Foundation assisted over 400 teen mothers in Burera, Rwamagana and Gatsibo districts to rebuild their lives. The support offered considers the diverse needs of teen mothers and ranges from psychosocial support to parent-adolescent communication, school reintegration and SRHR services. Teen mothers interested in income-generating activities received financial literacy training.

|| Now that I have rediscovered my self-confidence, despite being a woman living with HIV, I am hopeful that my future success will change people's negative view on women infected with HIV and will make them realize that we are more than capable of bringing about positive change in our families and communities.

*- Philomene Kamabera,
A 30-year old single mother of two*

5. Partnerships



Photo / UN Women Rwanda: Advancing and Sustaining Gender Equality Gains in Rwanda Validation Workshop, Jul 2018

Building strategic partnerships with a broad range of actors has enabled us to increase our reach and our impact in Rwanda. It has also provided us with an opportunity to leverage and strengthen GEWE coordination and accountability.

As the title of this publication indicates, UN Women relies heavily on partnerships to deliver on its mandate. In Rwanda, we have built partnerships to successfully implement our Strategic Plans but also leveraged the convening power of the UN to broker partnerships among various actors as needed to advance GEWE. We have deliberately sought collaboration with public institutions and the private sector, development partners and the One UN family, civil society and the media, academic institutions and security organs, religious leaders and traditional leaders, women and youth organizations. More importantly, we have approached non-traditional partners such as faith-based organizations, local leaders, private sector, International Financial Institutions, the media and Men Engage organizations to deliver transformative and sustainable results.

In line with Delivering as One Agenda in Rwanda, UN Women actively sought out joint programming opportunities to Accelerate Progress on GEWE. Over 90% of the office portfolio was implemented through joint programmes with sister UN agencies and national partners. Finally, UN Women sought to position itself a thought leader on gender using the evidence, data and knowledge built at country level but also at regional and global level to provide sound policy advice and technical and strategic advice services to the government, civil society, the private sector and the One UN. A list of the publications commissioned by UN Women Rwanda over the past five years is available in annexes.

Development Partners

Netherlands, SDC, Embassy of Sweden/SIDA, Government of Japan, People's Republic of China, Norway, USAID

UN Agencies

All UN Agencies making the United Nations Country Team in Rwanda through the UN delivering As One Framework and especially through the Joint programming with agencies like UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, IOM, WFP, UNHCR, IFAD, ILO, UNCDF, UNIDO, UNAIDS

CSO & Private sector

Haguruka, Imbutu Foundation, Chamber of Women Entrepreneur of Private Sector Federation, Legal Aid Forum, New Face New Voices, Rwanda Religious Initiative, Profemmes Twese Hamwe, ARFEM, AJPRODHO JIJUKIRWA, FAWE, ADEPE, RWAMREC, Rwanda Bar Association, ANSP+, RRP+, SEVOTA, Duterimbere NGO, Reseau de Femmes, Inades Formation, NFPO and many others.

Government Partners

MIGEPROF, GMO, FFRP, NWC, MINECOFIN, MINAGRI, NISR, RIB, RNP, RCS, MINYOUTH, MINALOC, MITEC, RALGA, MINICOM

Quotes From Partners

Over the years we have participated in several inter-agency initiatives under the collaborative framework provided in the "Common Chapter" of the global strategic plan, as a way to build synergies and leverage the comparative advantages of various UN agencies and MDAs.

While maintaining our UN, government and civil society partners, we have expanded our partnerships to include non-traditional partners such as the IMF, academic institutions, religious and traditional leaders and financial institutions in the private sector.



Partnerships have been at the core of our work.

- Fatou Lo
UNW Representative



UN Women are very good partners. Every time we reach them – they have always been there for us. When they see opportunities – they inform us. In 2020, they were the first among our partners to reach out to us and find out how we were managing.

- Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs



UN women is a unique partner. When you have a partner who sees you as an equal – you have a shared understanding.

- Legal Aid Forum



UN Women seed money has given us visibility and now GBV is our niche. UN Women has increased our visibility and introduced us to new partners within UN family.

- Legal Aid Forum



UN Women is an organization that listens to the partner and supports the priorities of the partners according to the strategic plan. UN Women does not impose her ideas.

- Rwanda Investigation Bureau

Quotes From Partners Cont'd



The relationship with UN Women is not a bossy one and we rejoice in our partnership.

- RRLI



Partnership with UN Women has enabled Hagaruka to learn the realities on the ground regarding GBV and has enabled us to identify priority needs and appropriate strategies. It has enabled us to fulfill our mission.

- Hagaruka



UNFPA and UN Women are like twin sisters in terms of mandate and the partners we work with. We have worked well together because of leadership and clear division of labor.

- UNFPA



UNDP and UN Women have collaborated well. The level of collegiality right from the top level has enabled us to achieve more. When there were difficult issues to discuss - it was easy to discuss them at executive level.

- UNDP



UN Women understands how to work with Women NGOs. Our collaboration has succeeded because we have a shared vision and shared goals & because we communicate regularly and share information. Regular communication makes working together easier.

- New Faces, New Voices



Photo / UN Women Rwanda:
UN Women colleagues in a group discussion, Feb 2020

6. Conclusion

Rwanda's strong commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) is evident by the remarkable progress achieved by the Government of Rwanda, UN agencies, CSOs, NGOs and INGOs and Development partners. Leveraging the strong political will, the progressive normative and institutional frameworks for GEWE and the high representation of women at all levels of leadership, the country is uniquely positioned to be among the first countries to ever achieve gender equality. However, this requires greater efforts to change the mindsets and social norms that continue to hold women and girls back. We must also acknowledge that along with all the other countries in the world, Rwanda has been adversely affected by the COVID19 pandemic. Recovery could take time, but we hold a unique opportunity to build forward better in an inclusive, green and sustainable manner.

UN Women is proud to have contributed to the country's efforts to achieve gender equality so far and remains fully committed to the journey ahead, together with the many partners we are privileged to work with and the women and men, girls and boys we continue to humbly serve.

Thanks to all UN Women staff and interns who have contributed to our journey.



UN WOMEN TEAM OVER THE YEARS



UN Women Rwanda retreat, Feb 2020



Group photo of UN Women Rwanda colleagues, Feb 2020



UN Women Executive Director's mission to Rwanda, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka in May 2017



UN Women Interns with the Country Representative, Ms. Fatou Lo. Feb 2019



Equal Arts Equal Hearts, March 2018



Visit of the Deputy Regional Director, Zebib Kavuma to the Country in 2018

COLLABORATION



Girls Takeover initiative, Mar 2019



Gender Cafe on AfCFTA, Dec 2021



H.E. First Lady, Jeannette Kagame participating in the Car free day sports activities in honor of 16days of activism, November 2021



Youth Connekt Africa, Oct 2019



Walk of Solidarity during the 16 Days of Activism, Nov 2019



Screening of "The Uncondemned" during the 5th edition of Mashariki African Film Festival, March 2019



International Women's Day, Mar 2019



UN Women Representative, Fatou Lo and SDC Regional Director, Marc De Santis with teen mothers during the legal mobile clinic outreach, October 2021.



Fawe Career Centre Launch, Oct 2021



Launch of the Gender Assessment of Refugees, March 2017



Youth Connekt Africa, Oct 2019



International Women's Day Closing Ceremony, March 2019



Ring the Bell for Gender Equality, Mar 2019.



From L-R, Sweden Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, H.E Paul Kagame the President of Rwanda, former UNSG Ban Ki-moon, Emma Watson and former UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka during the HeForShe campaign launch at Davos, January 2015



Empowering Women Refugees in Rwanda, Feb 2019

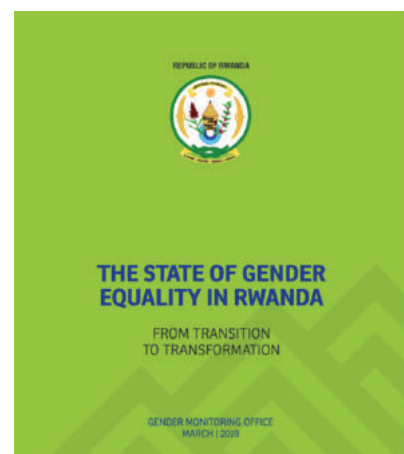
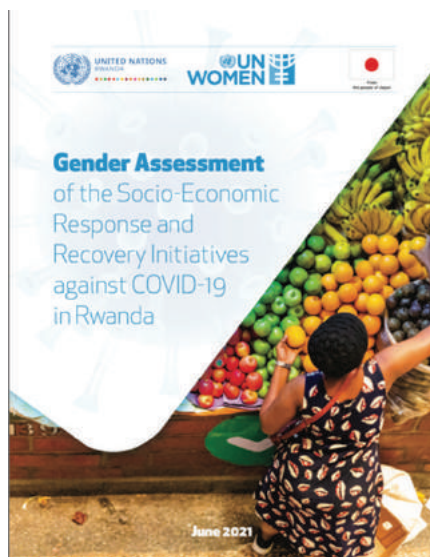
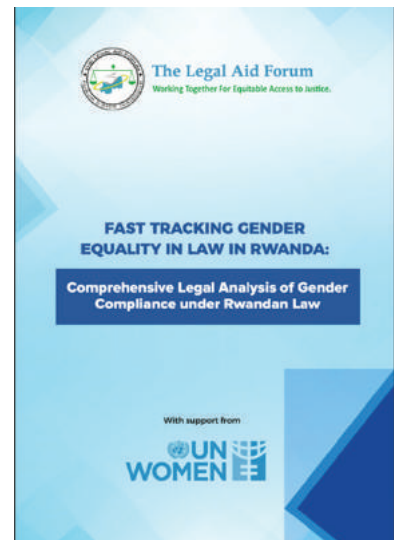
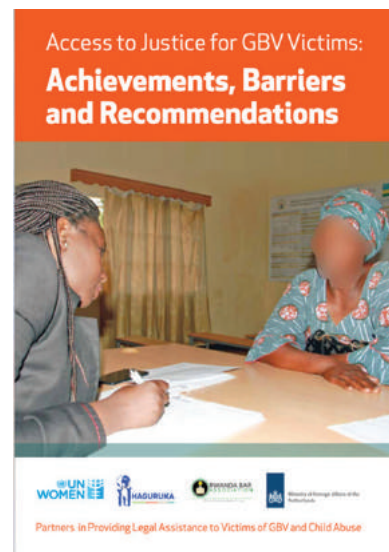
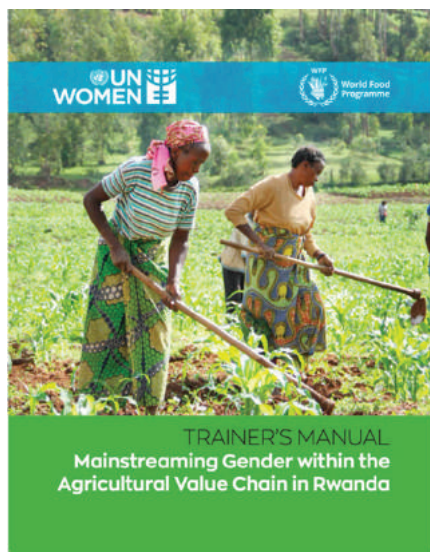
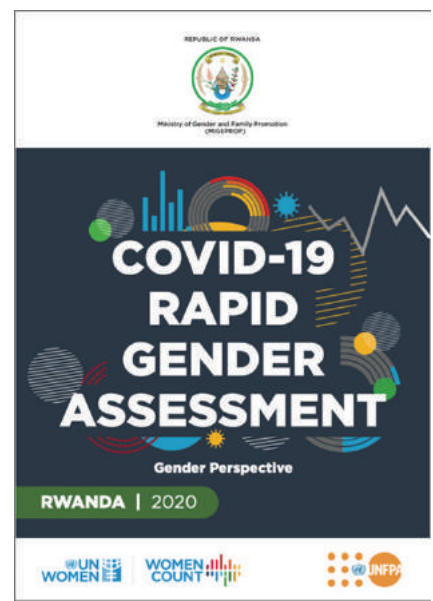
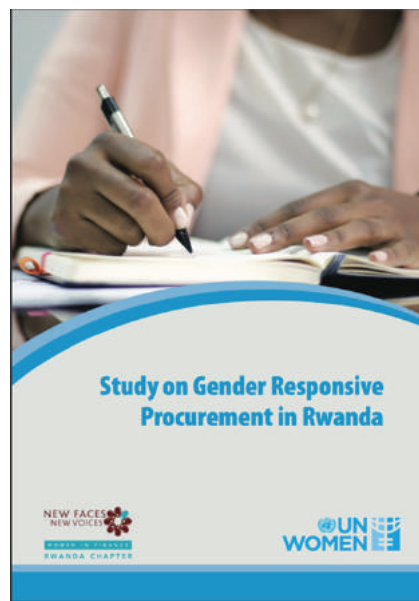
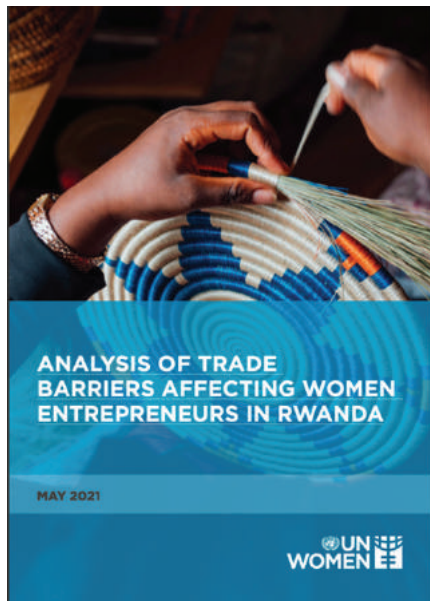


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ANNEX

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