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# **Women and Girls Fund (WGF)**

Country Gender Profile – Rwanda

December 2024

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The programme is implemented by a consortium comprising **Ecorys UK**; **Ecorys Zambia**; and the Forum of African Educationalists (FAWE) Chapters in Rwanda (**FAWERA**), Malawi (**FAWEMA**); and Zambia (**FAWEZA**).

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## List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

Abbreviation	Full Form
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
EAC	Eastern Africa Community
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EICV	<i>Enquête Intégrée sur les Conditions de Vie des ménages</i>
FAWE	Forum of African Women Educationalists
FFRP	Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMO	Gender Monitoring Office
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDF	International Development Fund
ILO	International Labor Organization
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
NAPA	National Adaptation Plan
NST1	National Strategy for Transformation 1
NWC	National Women's Council
PWDs	People With Disability
RPHC	Rwanda Population and Housing Census
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SG	Scottish Government
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WGF	Women and Gi

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The Scottish Government (SG) places great importance on Scotland being a good global citizen. This means playing its part in tackling global challenges including poverty, injustice and inequality. At the forefront of their efforts are programmes in partner countries supported by the annual International Development Fund (IDF), first established in 2005.

In 2020/21 the SG undertook an International Development Review in light of COVID-19 and to respond to issues for international development raised by the Black Lives Matter movement. The outcomes of that Review and commitments announced through that Statement, include that SG would:

- ▶ Align its work with a new set of International Development Principles, co-developed with civil society both in the SG partner countries (Malawi, Rwanda, Pakistan and Zambia) and in Scotland through the Review: the principles include a commitment to partner country led development; amplifying global south voices; inclusion and diversity; and equality.
- ▶ “Introduce a new “cross-cutting Equalities Programme across all four of its partner countries, with a particular focus on supporting the promotion of equality and empowerment of women and girls”.

Based on the above, the Scottish Government decided to implement a Women and Girls Fund (WGF) in Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia. This is a new Fund that will form part of the International Development Fund's (IDF) new Equality Programme.

Ecorys, a consultancy firm, together with its partners, FAWE Malawi, FAWE Rwanda and FAWE Zambia have been further commissioned to undertake the design, delivery and management of this Fund.

In line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, the overall aim of the fund is to provide appropriately targeted direct funding to support women and girls/women and girls-led organisations (WGLOs) in Malawi, Zambia and Rwanda with the advancement of gender equality and the rights of women and girls as a principal objective. Gender equality is therefore the main objective of this programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results.

While taking a participatory approach, likely sectors include focusing on advocacy and/or core strengthening of women's rights organisations and/or movements across the SG's International Development partner countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The overarching objectives of the WGF are:

- ▶ To support WGLOs in Malawi, Zambia and Rwanda to advance Gender Equality.
- ▶ To establish a participatory funding mechanism to design and evaluate the fund.
- ▶ To capture learning of the participatory approach.

## 1.2 Rationale of the Country Gender Profile

As part of understanding the context within which the WGLOs operate, the development of Gender Profiles is being commissioned as one of the first activities of the project and will be done for all three participating countries. The Country Gender Profile aims to provide an overall background on the gender equality situation in Rwanda in order to facilitate contextualization of issues and inform discussions/dialogue within WGLOs, and ultimately identification of programs and projects supported via the fund. At the same time, the Country Gender Profile will provide important context for the team's working on delivery of the fund. The profile will document existing gender inequalities at micro (grass roots), meso (institutional, sectoral) and macro level (national), taking into consideration the different background and diversity between women and men (age, disability, religion, income level, etc.). This will provide reliable information on potential advocacy issues that WG LOs may put forward. It will also serve as information for decision-making purposes for the WGLOs as well as for the project as a whole.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Country Gender Profile

This country gender profile includes: (a) identification of gender issues/gaps; gender related barriers that affect priority interventions; (b) a review of the country's legislative and policy context; (c) an assessment of the institutional framework and implementation capacity of key national institutions for gender mainstreaming initiatives, including the service delivery capacity of key stakeholders with the remit for gender and women's issue.

### 1.3.1 Specific objectives

- ▶ Provide a comparative analysis of the current situation of women and men in the country, identifying gender discrepancies in the enjoyment of social and economic rights, cultural and political rights. This helped create an understanding of existing gender disparities in the country and identify barriers to gender equality across selected thematic areas or development sectors.
- ▶ Document the legislative and policy frameworks relevant to gender equality gaps, policies/laws under review etc.
- ▶ Describe the gender institutional framework/ gender machinery, i.e. the Gender Ministries, Divisions available.
- ▶ Document examples of key national and sector specific programs being implemented by Government to deal with gender inequalities in the different sectors.

## 1.4 Scope of the country Gender Profile

The Gender Profile was panoramic, in that aggregated information was collected at national level, as very limited information was available regional (Province, District) levels in Rwanda.

The Gender Profile focused on selected key thematic areas/or sectors including governance, education, agriculture, health, labour/employment, infrastructure, environment/climate change, human rights, private sector and information and communication technology (ICT).

## 1.5 Demographic Context

This section provides sex-disaggregated demographics to show how certain trends or patterns are linked to specific demographic factors and hence to serve as a contextual background in which this gender profile is developed. Some key demographic factors considered include Education; Marital Status; Employment Status; Economic Status; Geographical location (urban vs rural); Disability Status; Household headship and Poverty incidence.

### 1.5.1 Education

In the area of education, the introduction of twelve years basic education programme (12 YBE), construction of education infrastructure (e. g. schools and education labs), and measures for quality assurance in the education sector, all contributed to the advancement of education for girls. At policy level, the 2008 girl's education policy and the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) (2013-2018) aimed at guiding a progressive elimination of gender disparities in education and training that hamper education for women and girls. As result of the policy implementation alongside other programmes in the education sector, the status of girls' education has tremendously improved at primary, secondary, and tertiary education, as indicated in Table 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

Table 1 shows that girls' enrolment at primary education level has increased from 1,244,361 in 2018 to 1,359,094 in 2021 while that of boys increased from 1,259,344 in 2018 to 1,370,022 in 2021. Nevertheless, in 2018 the enrolment of girls in primary was slightly lower than that of boys with a gender parity index of 0.99%, meaning there were 99 girls' students for every 100 boys' students, while in 2016 the reverse pattern was observed.

Table 1: Education: Trend of enrolment in primary education from 2016 to 2021

2016		2018		2021	
Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
1,275,093	1,271,170	1,244,361	1,259,344	1,359,094	1,370,022

Table 2 shows that girls' enrolment at secondary education level has increased from 349,918 in 2018 to 419,632 in 2020/21 while that of boys increased from 308,367 in 2018 to 363,214 in 2020/21. Interestingly, the enrolment of girls at secondary level in 2018 was higher than that of boys with a gender parity index of 1.13%, meaning there was 113 girls' students for every 100 boys' students. The same trend was observed in 2014 and 2016 respectively with more girls enrolled than boys' students. In general, there has been an increase of students from 2016 to 2018. This increase is the result of school construction. Financing in school construction will play a crucial role in increasing the access to education for both girls and boys.

Table 2: Trend of enrolment in secondary education from 2016 to 2021

2016		2018		2021	
Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
293,060	260,679	349,918	308,367	419,632	363,214

With regard to tertiary education, Table 3 shows that the number of women and girls' enrolment has slightly increased from 38,041 in 2018 to 39,691 in 2021 while that of men and boys decreased from 51,119 to 48,757 in the same period. In general, at tertiary level female lag behind their male counterparts in participating to education at higher level.

Table 3: Number of tertiary students from 2016 to 2021

2016		2018		2021	
Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
39,146	47,867	38,041	51,119	39,691	48,757

## 1.5.2 Employment Status

The findings in Table 4 show the composition of the employed population by status in employment in main job by sex. The data show that there is a slight difference between female and male who were employed in dependent jobs as employees in favour of males. The percentage of females employed as employees was 66.2% against 68% among males. It should also be noted that there was a slightly lower percentage of female own account worker (without regular employees) than among their male counterparts (26.3% compared to 28.7% respectively). But the percentage of female employed in dependent jobs as contributing family workers (or in other words unpaid care workers) was 5.4 percentage points higher than among male (6.6% against 1.2%).

Table 4: Employment Status

Employees		Own account worker		Unpaid care workers	
Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
39,146	47,867	38,041	51,119	39,691	48,757

## 1.5.3 Labour force participation rate by disability, area of residence and sex

As the findings in Table 5 show, the labour force participation rate is much lower among female and male living with disability as compared to their counterparts who live with no disability. At national level, only 16.1% of female aged 16 years and above living with disability participate in labour force compared to 23% of male. Taking into consideration the area of residence, there is low gap of 3.3 percentage points between female with disability living in urban area compared to their male counterparts (26.9% compared to 30.2%), while in rural area, the gap between female and male stands at 8 percentage points (14.5% compared to 22.5% respectively).

Table 5: Labour force participation rate by disability status, area of residence by sex

Living with no disability (%)		Living with disability (%)		Living with disability in urban area (%)		Living with disability in rural area (%)	
F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
46.4	64.3	16.1	23	30.2	26.9	14.5	22.5

### 1.5.4 Labour force participation rate by marital status and sex

The findings from the labour force surveys (Table 6) show that, regardless of the marital status, the labour force participation of female is lower than that of male. The gap is much bigger among female in union where married female are 21.9 percentage points lower in labour force participation rate than their male counterparts (45.6% compared to 67.5%) while for female living together the gap is 25.7 percentage points lower than their male counterparts (54.7% compared to 80.4%). The gap remains significant for the single with limited participation among females (43.2%) compared to males (52.5%). The gap is lower among widows and widowers (30.2% compared to 31.5% respectively) and among the divorced/ separated (65.5% for female compared to 69% for male).

Table 6: Labour force participation rate by marital status and sex

Married (%)		Living together (%)		Divorced/Separated (%)		Single (%)		Widow/Widower (%)	
F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
45.6	67.5	54.7	80.4	65.5	69	43.2	52.5	30.2	31.5

### 1.5.5 Male/Female headed households

In Rwanda, the man is culturally considered the head of the household, but the recent law n° 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family states that spouses (female and male) jointly provide management of the household including moral and material support to the household as well as its maintenance. Table 2.3 presents the differences between women and men in terms of household headship where about 25% of total households are reported to be permanently headed by females in 2016/17 compared to 26% in 2013/14 due to the fact that women live longer than men and probably also the genocide against the Tutsi which left more widows than widowers.

### 1.5.6 Poverty levels by sex of household head

Although poverty levels declined in female-headed households since 2013/14, the findings of this study still show that female-headed households were slightly more likely to be poor than male-headed households, with 39.5% of female-headed households being poor compared to 37.6% of male-headed households being poor in 2016/17.

Table 7: Poverty level by sex of household head

Poverty level 2013/14		Poverty level 2016/17	
Female-headed	Male-headed	Female-headed	Male-headed
43.9%	36.9%	39.5%	37.6%

### 1.5.7 Disability status

Findings from EICV 5 reveal that, 4.2% of female population aged 5 and above in Rwanda are living with disability, and the same percentage is observed among male population. This is a vulnerable group of the population that requires special attention and assistance from the entire community. There was a predominance of disability with legs (walking) among both female (21.1%) and male (28.8%) populations living with disability. With regard to change since EICV4, the findings reveal that, the percentage of female population with disability has slightly decreased from 4.6% in 2013/14 to 4.2% in 2016/17, while for male, it has decreased from 4.3% in 2013/14 to 4.2% in 2016/17.

### 1.5.8 Economic activity of all adults

Table 8 shows that 86% of all working age persons were working in 12 months preceding the EICV5 survey. Among working population, about 87% are females while 86% are males. The working population ratio for female is higher than the one for male. This applies to all provinces except Kigali city where 81% of males and 73% of females are classified as working in 2016/17. The analysis of workforce to population ratio by age group reveals that at lower age (16-24 years) the workforce to population ratio is slightly higher for females than males (69% compared to 67%).

In general, this rate is quite low compared to older age from 25 years and above as there is an important number of working age female and male who are still at school. It should also be noted that, the workforce population ratio for female from age 25-44 is slightly lower than that of male, probably due to female childbearing at this reproductive age.

The workforce to population ratio increases with age and it reaches a pick for female at age between 45 and 54 years old (98%), while for male it reaches a pick at age between 35 and 44 years old (97%) before decreasing for both sexes. It keeps decreasing slightly till the age of 64 for both female and male, after which a sharp decreasing is apparent as most female and male are retiring and get out of economic activity.

Table 8: Workforce to population ratio by sex, age group and area of residence

Area of residence	Usual employment (12-month reference period)		
	Male	Female	Total
<b>EICV5</b>			
Rwanda	85.8	86.6	86.2
<b>Area of residence</b>			

Urban	79.6	73.1	76.3
Rural	87.6	89.8	88.8
<b>Province</b>			
Kigali City	81.3	73.3	77.3
Southern Province	85.1	88.5	86.9
Western Province	86.2	88.9	87.6
Northern Province	86.5	89.0	87.8
Eastern Province	89.0	89.2	89.1
Total	85.8	86.6	86.2
<b>Age Group</b>			
16-24	67.4	69.4	68.4
25-34	95.5	93.2	94.3
35-44	97.2	97.0	97.1
45-54	95.2	97.6	96.5
55-64	92.3	95.1	93.9
65+	75.9	79.6	78.1
Total	85.8	86.6	86.2
<b>Population aged 16+ years (000s)</b>	<b>3,159</b>	<b>3,598</b>	<b>6,756</b>

## 2.0 Methodology

The methodology used covered different steps including mainly data collection which covered review of selected key documents (secondary data), consultations with resource persons from relevant Ministries, civil society organizations and academia (primary qualitative data), data analysis and reporting. These major steps are discussed in the following sections:

### 2.1 Desk review and collection of secondary data

The documents reviewed included at national level sector policies and associated strategies and/or strategic plans, national studies and surveys, annual reports, statistical year books, action plans and guidelines. Other documents included legal instruments such as relevant laws and ministerial orders.

At regional level, reviewed documents included relevant AU and EAC policies, strategic plans, gender index, annual reports and associated legal instruments.

At international level, relevant international conventions and associated legal frameworks and reports were also reviewed.

### 2.2 Collection of primary data

Primary data (qualitative) was collected from consultations with different resource persons including interviews with key informants and focus group discussions with women and girls led organisations (WGLOs). Collected data were processed and organized for analysis (see next section).

### 2.3 Data analysis

The collected data was processed through a series of steps. Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions were coded to identify themes and patterns, categorized by demographics such as gender, age, and disability status. The findings were interpreted within the Rwandan context, considering cultural norms, policies, power dynamics, intersectionality, and historical influences. These results were then compared with existing literature to identify alignment or divergence from prior research. Finally, conclusions were drawn to directly address the key research questions.

## 3.0 National Context

### 3.1 Gender Sensitive Poverty Profile

Poverty levels among adult women and girls had reduced from 35.9% in 2014 to 34.8% in 2018 while it stood at 44.8% among girls aged less than 16 years old. This is partly explained by increased access to various services and products from social protection programmes and improved access to productive resources such as land. In Rwanda, the poverty profile of women reflects both economic and social challenges, influenced by a range of factors such as education, employment, and access to resources. In this section a special attention has been placed on employment as highlighted in the Fifth Population and Housing Census 2022 (5RPHC 2022). The latter provides data on Employment to Population Ratio by Sex, Province, District and Area of Residence as indicated in the different tables as follows:

#### 3.1.1 Northern Province

The results presented in the below Table 9 shows that the employment to population ratio stood at 45.9 in Rwanda, it is lower among females (40.2 percent) than males (52.4 percent). On the other side, it was observed that the employment to population ratio is higher in urban areas of Rwanda (53.5 percent) than in rural areas (42.7 percent).

It was observed that in Northern Province, the employment to population ratio stood at 42.9 percent, it is higher in urban areas (50.3 percent) than in rural areas of Northern Province (41.3 percent). In urban and rural areas females remain less represented compared to males (43.6% and 58.0% and 37.1% and 46%) respectively. Out of the 5 districts making the province including Burera, Gakenke, Gicumbi, Musanze and Rulindo the latter stood with the lowest rate representing a total of 39.0% out of which 33.0% are females and 45.9% for males.

Table 9: Employment to population ratio by sex, Province, District, and area of residence

District	Total			Urban			Rural		
	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females
Rwanda	45.9	52.4	40.2	53.5	62.7	44.8	42.7	47.9	38.3
Northern Province	42.9	48.3	38.2	50.3	58.0	43.6	41.3	46.3	37.1
Rulindo	39.0	45.9	33.0	51.6	63.2	41.0	37.5	43.9	32.1
Gakenke	44.0	48.9	40.0	59.2	66.7	52.5	43.4	48.0	39.5
Musanze	46.6	53.1	41.1	50.1	57.9	43.4	43.3	48.5	38.9
Burera	43.2	46.1	40.8	50.1	53.4	47.2	42.4	45.2	40.1
Gicumbi	40.7	46.6	35.7	45.8	53.8	38.9	40.4	46.1	35.5

### 3.1.2 Southern Province

As indicated in the Table 10 below the results of the 5RPHC 2022 revealed that, the labour force participation varies slightly by district in the Southern Province: from 46.6% in Kamonyi district to 40.4% in Muhanga district except in Nyaruguru district where it is very low (36.2%). The sex-disaggregated findings at provincial level show that females (37.6%) remain significantly less represented than males (49.0%). The same scenario was verified in Nyaruguru District that stood with the lowest rate with 31.5% for females' participation rate and 41.6% for males. Huye District came as last but one with female participation rate of 39.0% and 51.1% for males. The lowest rate of all came with Muhanga District with female employment to population rate of 29.4% in the rural area.

Table 10: Employment to population ratio in the Southern Province

District	Total			Urban			Rural		
	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females
Rwanda	45.9	52.4	40.2	53.5	62.7	44.8	42.7	47.9	38.3
Southern Province	42.9	49.0	37.6	52.5	60.7	45.3	41.2	46.9	36.4
Nyanza	43.3	50.0	37.5	53.6	61.2	47.1	42.1	48.8	36.4
Gisagara	43.5	47.9	39.0	48.7	61.2	44.0	43.3	47.6	39.7
Nyaruguru	36.2	41.6	31.5	47.4	53.9	41.5	35.9	41.3	31.3
Huye	44.5	51.1	39.0	56.7	64.2	50.2	41.7	48.0	36.5
Nyamagabe	45.7	50.1	41.9	40.3	45.6	35.7	46.3	50.6	42.7
Ruhango	40.6	46.3	35.8	48.4	55.9	42.0	39.6	45.0	35.0
Muhanga	40.4	47.9	34.0	57.8	65.4	49.7	35.4	42.5	29.4
Kamonyi	46.6	54.4	39.7	52.6	62.3	43.8	43.8	50.6	37.9

### 3.1.3 Eastern Province

The results presented in the below Table 11 show that in Eastern province, the employment to population ratio stood at 47.9%, it is higher in urban areas (53.1%) than in rural areas (46.5%). Like in the previous provinces males are highly represented (53.2%) than females (43.2%) in the Eastern Province. In terms of residence males' participation rate remains higher (61.6%) compared to females (45.4%) in urban area than in rural area where males represent 55.5% compared to females (42.8%). It is noteworthy that female's participation rate remains lower to males in both areas of urban and rural.

For the districts it was observed that Nyagatare emerged with the highest participation rate of 51.5% for both sexes with higher representation of males (55.2%) than females (48.1%). Kirehe District came

up with the lowest rate of 43.8% for both sexes with male rate (47.8%) still higher than female rate (40.3%).

Table 11: Employment to population ratio by sex, Province, District, and area of residence

District	Total			Urban			Rural		
	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females
Rwanda	45.9	52.4	40.2	53.5	62.7	44.8	42.7	47.9	38.3
Eastern Province	47.9	53.2	43.2	53.1	61.6	45.4	46.5	51.0	42.6
Rwamagana	50.7	58.7	43.7	54.4	64.7	45.3	48.7	55.5	42.8
Nyagatare	51.5	55.2	48.1	54.0	59.8	48.7	50.6	53.7	47.9
Gatsibo	48.8	52.4	45.8	57.5	63.7	51.9	47.9	51.1	45.1
Kayonza	45.3	50.3	40.8	52.0	60.9	43.9	44.1	48.5	40.3
Kirehe	43.8	47.8	40.3	55.2	61.9	49.1	43.0	46.8	39.7
Ngoma	46.0	50.6	42.2	54.8	61.5	48.9	45.1	49.4	41.5
Bugesera	47.2	55.9	39.5	50.1	60.4	40.7	45.3	52.7	38.7

### 3.1.4 Western Province

The results presented in the Table 12 below shows that in the Western Province, the employment to population ratio stood at 42.3% percent, it is higher in urban areas (48.2%) than in rural areas (40.6%). It was also revealed that the employment to population ratio was higher for males than females in both urban area (males: 55.7% and females: 41.7%) and rural area (males: 45.6% and females 36.5%). Out of the 7 districts making the Western Province, including Karongi, Ngororero, Nyabihu, Nyamasheke, Rubavu, Rusizi and Rutsiro, Rubavu District emerged with a total rate of 48.5% out of which males represent 55.8% and females 42.1%. In the same district males remain highly represented than females in both urban area (56.5% and 39.9%) and rural area (54.8% and 45.0%) respectively. Karongi District stood with the lowest total rate of 36.4% out of which males represent 41.6% and females 32.0%. Like in Rubavu District males remain highly represented in both urban area (59.4% and 43.9%) and in rural area (39.7% and 30.9%) respectively.

Table 12: Employment to population ratio by sex, Province, District and area of residence

District	Total			Urban			Rural		
	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females

Rwanda	45.9	52.4	40.2	53.5	62.7	44.8	42.7	47.9	38.3
Western Province	42.3	47.9	37.6	48.2	55.7	41.7	40.6	45.6	36.5
Karongi	36.4	41.6	32.0	51.2	59.4	43.9	34.9	39.7	30.9
Rutsiro	44.2	49.0	40.3	49.6	57.3	43.1	34.9	48.5	40.2
Rubavu	48.5	55.8	42.1	47.7	56.5	39.9	49.5	54.8	45.0
Nyabihu	46.2	50.6	42.5	47.9	52.7	44.0	45.6	50.0	42.1
Ngororero	34.8	40.5	30.3	44.2	51.5	37.9	34.3	39.8	29.9
Rusizi	41.9	48.9	36.6	47.6	54.3	41.6	39.0	44.8	34.2
Nyamasheke	42.5	47.0	38.8	54.6	58.7	51.2	41.5	46.0	37.8

### 3.1.5 City of Kigali

The results presented in the below Table 13 show that the employment to population ratio stood at It was observed that in City of Kigali, the employment to population ratio stood at 55.4%. It is higher in urban areas (56.6%) than in rural areas of City of Kigali (46.1%). In terms of sexes the employment rate for males is higher (65.6%) than that of females (45.0%). Males' employment rate remains higher in urban area (66.8%) than females (46.0%). The same reality remains verified in rural area whereby males' rate is 55.5% compared to females' rate of 37.3%.

Out of the 3 districts making the City of Kigali including Gasabo, Kicukiro and Nyarugenge, the district of Nyarugenge stood with the highest employment to population ratio with a total of 56.2% out which males represent 66.5% and females 45.3%. In the urban area the same district males' employment ration remains higher (66.8%) than that of females (46.0%). Gasabo District emerged with the lowest ratio of a total of 55.0% out which males and females represent 65.5% and 44% respectively. Also, it was observed that males remain highly represented compared to females in both urban area (67.8% and 45.8%) and rural areas (53.3% and 36.8%) respectively.

Table 13: Employment to population ratio by sex, Province, District, and area of residence.

District	Total			Urban			Rural		
	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females	Both Sexes	Males	Females
Rwanda	45.9	52.4	40.2	53.5	62.7	44.8	42.7	47.9	38.3
City of Kigali	55.4	65.6	45.0	56.6	66.8	46.0	46.1	55.5	37.3
Nyarugenge	56.2	66.5	45.3	56.7	66.8	46.0	51.8	64.0	39.9

Gasabo	55.0	65.5	44.2	57.0	67.8	45.8	44.7	53.3	36.8
Kicukiro	55.7	65.1	46.2	55.8	65.2	46.3	37.7	45.4	30.0

To sum up, the census results showed that employment to population ratio was 45.9%. At national level, this employment to population ratio is higher among males (52.4%) as compared to females (40.2%). The same pattern is observed in both urban and rural areas. It is also observed that the ratio is higher among males as compared to females in all provinces. A significant gap in employment to population ratio between men and women is especially observed in the city of Kigali (overall, male: 65.6% vs female: 45.0%; Urban, male: 66.8% vs female: 46.0%).

## 3.2 Macroeconomic Overview

This section discusses some of the major aspects of the macroeconomic context of Rwanda. They include Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Economic Growth Rate and Inflation Rate. Each of these aspects are looked at through gender lens meaning that a brief analysis serves to see how indicators associated with the mentioned aspects affect men and women differently.

### 3.2.1 Gross Domestic Product (GDP):

Given the paucity of data indicating how specifically men and women have contributed to national GDP, an emphasis has been placed on some key areas that are strongly linked with national economic production including agriculture, industry and services, as discussed in the next lines. More details will be provided under Chapter V on Sector Gender Analysis.

- ▶ **Agriculture:** The 2022 census result show that agriculture employment was by far the most frequent branch of economic activity, comprising 53.4% of employment. More females participate in agricultural employment than males (63.9% vs 44.3% respectively). Despite the fact that there is more participation of females in agriculture which represents the bigger portion of economic activities they are more involved in subsistence agriculture serving for the survival of their households than in commercial agriculture.
- ▶ **Industry and services:** According to the same census the industry sector accommodates 13% of total employment while service sector had 32% of total employment. Females participate less in industry sector employment as compared to the male counterpart (6% and 19% respectively). As for the services women's participation represent 28% compared to 35% for males.

Given the above, it appears that females 'contribution to the national GDP remains less significant compared to males as more of their efforts are invested for the survival of their households for agriculture. Additionally, they remain less represented in the areas where they are making some income.

### 3.2.2 Economic Growth

Looking at economic growth through a gender lens involves analysing how men and women are affected differently by economic growth and how gender inequality can impact the overall growth of an economy. The following are some of the suggested ways to approach it:

- ▶ **Labor Force Participation:** Gender gaps in labour force participation can be a significant barrier to economic growth. In many economies, women are less likely to participate in the labour market than men, often due to cultural or institutional factors, or caregiving responsibilities. In 2022, 61.8% of men had a source of income compared to 48% of women. This indicates a significant gender gap in economic opportunities.
- ▶ **Access to Education and Skills Development:** Economies grow faster when their workforce is well-educated and skilled. Gender disparities in access to education, vocational training, or higher education can limit the talent pool. By examining how gendered differences in educational attainment influence productivity and innovation, we can see the potential benefits of ensuring equal educational opportunities for all genders. However, the lack of statistics on this does not allow illustration of the link between equal education and economic growth.
- ▶ **Health and Well-being:** Gender influences access to healthcare and health outcomes, and poor health can limit economic productivity. Addressing gender-specific health challenges, such as maternal health, can improve overall workforce participation and productivity, ultimately fostering economic growth.

### 3.2.3 Inflation

A gender analysis of inflation means assessing how rising prices impact men and women differently, considering their distinct roles in the economy, income levels, spending patterns, and social expectations. The following were considered to unveil gender inequalities that are embedded in inflation:

- ▶ **Gender gap in employment:** Women in Rwanda have made significant progress in terms of employment; however, they are still underrepresented in higher-paying sectors such as Mining and quarrying (males: 94.2% and females: 5.8%), Construction (males: 85.4% and females: 14.6%), Transportation and storage (males: 97.0% and females: 3.0%), Information and communication (males: 74.5% and females: 25.5%), Professional, scientific and technical activities (males: 68.9% and females: 31.1%). Most women are concentrated in low-paying sectors like agriculture, domestic work, and the informal economy. This limited participation of women in better paying sectors renders them vulnerable to inflation.
- ▶ **Wage gaps:** women, on average, earn less than men, meaning inflation reduces their real purchasing power more. The World Bank 2021 data highlights that in Rwanda, the gender pay gap in the formal sector is estimated to be around 9%. This gap is narrower than in many countries but still reflects ongoing inequalities, particularly in high-paying sectors. A 2024 publication by UN Women titled "Gender Pay Gap and Labour Market Inequalities in Rwanda" delves into these disparities, highlighting that women often occupy lower-paying positions and face challenges in accessing higher-paying roles.
- ▶ **Occupational Segregation:** Women are overrepresented in lower-paid sectors such as healthcare, education and domestic work, which may have slower wage growth compared to male-dominated industries such as construction, engineering and technology. For example, in the area of Human health and social work women represent 53.9% compared to 46.1% for men. In Education they represent 45.7% compared to 54.3% for men. Although men's representation

is higher than that of women, the gap remains slight compared to the gaps in the better-paying sectors.

### 3.3 Human Rights of Women

The following were considered as the key aspects to discuss in terms of human rights of women in Rwanda:

- ▶ **Legal Framework and Equality:** Rwanda has made significant progress in terms of legal rights for women. The country has a progressive constitution of 2003 as amended in 2015 that guarantees gender equality and women's rights. E. g.: Gender Quota: Article 80 mandates that at least 30% of positions in decision-making organs must be reserved for women. This has been instrumental in Rwanda for achieving one of the highest rates of women in parliament globally. The legal system supports women's rights to inherit property, access education, and participate in political life. Key laws like the Law No. 59/2008 of 2008 on Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence and Law No. 27/2016 of 08/07/2016 on Succession and inheritance help safeguard women's rights, but enforcement and access to justice can still be areas of concern.
- ▶ **Political Representation:** Rwanda is globally recognized for its significant strides in female political representation. It has the highest percentage of women in parliament, with women holding 61.3% of seats in the lower house and 38.5% for the upper house. This level of representation helps ensure that women's issues are addressed at the national level.
- ▶ **Economic Empowerment:** Women in Rwanda have access to financial services, business opportunities, and the ability to own land, which is crucial in a predominantly rural country where agriculture plays a central role. However, challenges remain, including limited access to capital for women entrepreneurs and barriers to full economic participation, especially in rural areas.
- ▶ **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** While Rwanda has made important strides in addressing GBV, including the establishment of support systems for survivors, including the Isange One Stop Centres that address GBV in a holistic manner, now scaled up from national to district levels, the prevalence of violence against women—especially domestic violence—remains a critical concern. Efforts to combat GBV include increased awareness campaigns and specialized police units, but challenges in societal attitudes and access to justice persist.
- ▶ **International and Regional Frameworks:** Rwanda is a signatory to several international conventions on women's rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and it plays an active role in promoting women's rights within the African Union.
- ▶ **Women and girls with a disability:** The 2022 census data shows that Rwanda has 11,537,934 persons aged 5 years and above out of whom 391,775 (174,949 males and 216,826 females) have disability. This implies that at the national level, 3.4% of the resident population aged 5 years and above have a disability. Similarly, the prevalence rate of disability is higher in rural areas (3.7%) than in urban areas (2.8%). The disaggregated results show that Eastern Province is the most affected with the highest prevalence of disability (3.7%). The least affected is City of Kigali (2.3%). The data indicates that only a small proportion of 0.5% of people aged 5 years and above experience severe disability, followed by 2.9 and 3.0% of those having moderate and mild disabilities respectively. The prevalence rate of disability increases with an increase in age. With

regard to types of Disability, difficulty in seeing is observed to be the predominant type of disability with a total of 158,712 people (1.4%) aged 5 years and above followed by mobility limitation at 122,999 (1.1%). Out of all Persons with disabilities, almost one in three have limitations in vision, mobility and cognitive which account for 31%, 24% and 14% of persons with disabilities respectively. Noted concerns with regard to disability were discussed in the design workshop, these include the fact that critical institutions such as health facilities do not adequately cater for girls and women with disability, e. g., there are no sign language interpreters in the facilities (further details under Chapter V. Disability and Accessibility).

## 4.0 Policy & Legal Framework

This chapter discusses gender related instruments and ranging from those reflecting international commitments to those that cover the region at Africa continental levels. Key articles and or provisions promoting gender equality in general and women rights in particular are given due attention, The last section looks at Rwanda's achievements as it translates its commitments, in line with ratified instruments, into actions.

### 4.1 International and regional commitments to Gender Equality

#### 4.1.1 International commitments

- ▶ **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979).** Often referred to as the "International Bill of Rights for Women", this instrument obliges member states to eliminate discrimination against women in political, economic, social, and cultural life. It encourages equality in legal systems, education, employment, and healthcare access.
- ▶ **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995).** Adopted during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, this instrument identifies 12 critical areas of concern, including poverty, education, health, violence, and women's representation in decision-making.
- ▶ **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015).** Particularly Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It targets issues like ending violence, ensuring reproductive rights, promoting equal opportunities in leadership, and addressing unpaid care work.
- ▶ **International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions.** It highlights "Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100)": Advocates for equal pay for work of equal value. Also, it provides for "Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111)": it prohibits discrimination in employment and occupation.
- ▶ **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000).** Focuses on women, peace, and security and emphasizes women's participation in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and post-conflict reconstruction.

#### 4.1.2 Regional commitments

Rwanda has made the following regional commitments:

- ▶ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol, 2003).
- ▶ Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA, 2004):
- ▶ African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR, 1981):
- ▶ African Union Gender Policy (2009):
- ▶ Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (2013):

- ▶ African Youth Charter (2006):
- ▶ Kampala Convention (2009):

## 4.2 Legal Framework and Women's Legal Status

### 4.2.1 Legal frameworks

Rwanda has a robust legislative framework that promotes gender equality and women's empowerment, reflecting its commitment to achieving gender parity in all sectors. The key pieces of legislation include:

- ▶ **The Rwandan Constitution (2003, revised in 2015):** It mandates equality between men and women and guarantees a minimum of 30% representation of women in all decision-making bodies.
- ▶ **Law No. 43/2013 Governing Land in Rwanda:** Ensures equal land rights for men and women, which is critical for economic empowerment.
- ▶ **Law N° 071/2024 of 30/07/2024 on Persons and Family.** This law harmonizes previous legislation, including the earlier Law N° 22/1999 on Gender Equality in Property and Inheritance, and introduces significant reforms aimed at addressing modern family and property management issues. This law was revised to become
- ▶ **Law No. 66/2018 Regulating Labor in Rwanda:** Prohibits gender discrimination in the workplace and includes provisions for maternity leave and protection against workplace harassment.
- ▶ **Law No. 59/2008 on Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** Provides a legal framework for addressing GBV, ensuring protection and justice for survivors. and the establishment of the Isange One Stop Centres, which provide integrated medical, legal, and psychological support to GBV survivors. The Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) and community-based programs further raise awareness and engage local leaders in combating GBV.
- ▶ **Law No. 71/2018 Relating to the Protection of the Child:** Includes gender-sensitive provisions to safeguard children's welfare.
- ▶ **Law No. 51/2007 of 20/09/2007** determining the responsibilities, organization and functions of the gender monitoring office in Rwanda in the National Development (The Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda)

### 4.2.2 Women's Legal Status

The legal status of women in Rwanda is defined and safeguarded by a comprehensive framework of laws, policies, and international commitments aimed at ensuring gender equality, women's rights, and protection from discrimination and violence. The following are some d in 2015) explicitly guarantees equality between men and women in all areas (Article 10). of the key elements:

#### 1. Constitutional Provisions

- ▶ Equality Before the Law: The Constitution of Rwanda (2003).

- ▶ **Affirmative Action:** The Constitution mandates a minimum 30% representation of women in all decision-making bodies (Article 80), leading to significant political empowerment.

## 2. Key Legal Protections

- ▶ **Equal Inheritance and Property Rights:** Law N° 22/1999 (revised in 2024): Ensures equal inheritance rights for daughters and sons and provides that married women have equal rights to property within their matrimonial regime.
- ▶ **Protection Against Gender-Based Violence:** Law N° 59/2008: Criminalizes gender-based violence (GBV), including physical, emotional, and economic abuse. It also establishes mechanisms for victim support and GBV prevention.
- ▶ **Employment Rights:** Labor Law (Law N° 66/2018): Prohibits workplace discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. Women are entitled to maternity leave and equal pay for equal work.

## 3. Political and Social Empowerment

Women occupy 61.3% of parliamentary seats, one of the highest rates globally, reflecting Rwanda's commitment to political empowerment. Numerous programs promote women's participation in economic activities, including support for women entrepreneurs and access to credit.

## 4. Key Challenges

Despite the progress made, some key issues persist:

- ▶ **Cultural Norms:** Traditional gender roles still influence societal expectations sustaining existing inequalities between men and women.
- ▶ **Gender-Based Violence:** GBV remains prevalent, though efforts to combat it are ongoing.
- ▶ **Economic Inequality:** Women, particularly in rural areas, often face barriers to economic opportunities.

## 4.3 Institutional Framework for Policy Implementation

Rwanda has made significant strides in establishing gender-related institutions to promote gender equality and empower women. These institutions play a vital role in implementing policies, advocating for rights, and ensuring gender inclusivity. The following are the key institutions that play a pivotal role in promoting gender equality in the country:

- ▶ **Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF).** MIGEPROF has the mandate to oversee gender equality, family promotion, and child rights in Rwanda. Its key responsibilities include developing and implementing gender-related policies and strategies, coordinating national efforts to promote gender equality and monitoring and evaluating gender mainstreaming in various sectors.
- ▶ **Gender Monitoring Office (GMO):** the latter has the role to ensure accountability in gender equality promotion across all sectors. Its major activities are monitoring and evaluating the implementation of gender-related policies and programs.

- ▶ **National Women's Council (NWC):** It has the role to mobilize and advocate for women's rights and development at all levels. As a structure, it operates at national, district, sector, and local levels, involving grassroots participation.
- ▶ **Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians (FFRP):** their role is to advocate for gender-sensitive legislation and policymaking in Parliament.
- ▶ **Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe (CSOs):** it has the mandate as an umbrella organization for women-led civil society groups. Its major role includes advocating for women's socio-economic and political empowerment and facilitating collaboration between member organizations.
- ▶ **Gender Desks in Key Institutions:** two gender desks are established and operational. They include
  - ▷ **Police Gender Desk:** Handles cases of GBV and ensures gender-sensitive policing.
  - ▷ **Military Gender Desk:** Promotes gender equality within the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF).

## 5.0 Gender Analysis by sector including needs of women

This chapter discusses gender issues in the selected key sectors. The key sectors include Employment, Agriculture, Infrastructure, Health, Education, Information Communication Technology, environment/climate change, human rights, private sector and Governance.

### 5.1 Gender and Employment

The following are key gender issues for employment in Rwanda:

- ▶ **Labour Force Participation Gap:** In 2022, 61.8% of men had a source of income compared to 48% of women. This indicates a significant gender gap in economic opportunities. Some of the factors underlying this gap include education, access to financial services, and cultural norms...
- ▶ **Business Ownership:** Women own only 38% of micro businesses, 32% of small businesses, 21% of medium enterprises, and a mere 15% of large businesses. Limited access to financing and support systems continues to restrict women's entrepreneurial activities.
- ▶ **Sectoral Segregation:** Women are underrepresented in technical and higher-paying fields, which are traditionally male-dominated, contributing to disparities in income and career advancement opportunities. As indicated under Section 3.2.3 females are less represented in Construction (males: 85.4% and females: 14.6%), Transportation and storage (males: 97.0% and females: 3.0%), Information and communication (males females: 31.1%).
- ▶ **Wage Disparity:** The gender pay gap remains prevalent (74.5% and females: 25.5%), with women often earning less than men for similar roles, further exacerbated by their concentration in low-income jobs. As mentioned under Section 3.2.3 a 2024 publication by UN Women titled "Gender Pay Gap and Labour Market Inequalities in Rwanda" delves into these disparities, highlighting that women often occupy lower-paying positions and face challenges in accessing higher-paying roles.
- ▶ **Unpaid Labour:** Women spend significantly more hours on unpaid domestic and care work, which limits their participation in formal employment and professional growth opportunities.
- ▶ **Private Sector Challenges:** Although nearly 90% of Rwanda's workforce is employed in the private sector, women's representation remains low, and issues such as inadequate maternity leave policies and workplace harassment persist.

**Progress and Strategies:** Rwanda has implemented gender mainstreaming strategies, including the 2020-2024 private sector plan to promote equality. Initiatives such as targeted support for female entrepreneurs and advocacy for workplace reforms are ongoing

These challenges highlight the need for systemic changes, such as improving women's access to financing, enforcing gender-sensitive workplace policies, and reducing the burden of unpaid work.

### 5.2 Gender and Agriculture Sector

As the backbone of Rwanda's economy, the agriculture sector is employing a significant portion of the population, particularly in rural areas. However, gender disparities persist in the sector, affecting

productivity and equitable development. The following are the key gender issues in agriculture in Rwanda:

- ▶ **Access to Land:** Land ownership is a critical factor in agriculture, but women often face challenges in accessing and owning land despite laws ensuring equal rights. The 1999 Land Law and subsequent reforms that culminated into the Law N° 071/2024 of 30/07/2024 on Persons and Family provide for equal inheritance rights, but traditional practices and patriarchal norms sometimes undermine women's rights to land ownership. Although women contribute significantly to agriculture, they own only 25% of agricultural land.

This double workload reduces their capacity to fully engage in productive agriculture and income-generating activities. **Access to Financial Resources:** Women farmers have limited access to credit and financial services due to lack of collateral, often tied to land ownership. For example, in term of borrowing and credit women are slightly more likely to borrow compared to men (especially from informal sources). In total, 77% of women borrow compared to 76% of men. Women are more likely than men to borrow money to cover education and school fees (26% of women compared to 7% of men), buying land/dwelling (17% of women compared to 12% of men) and emergencies other than medical (7% compared to 1%, respectively). Men are more likely than women to borrow money for developmental reasons (such as business, building/improving dwelling, living expenses, farming equipment/expenses, livestock) at 60% and 36%, respectively. This limits women's ability to invest in agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers, and modern farming tools, reducing productivity.

- ▶ **Access to Agricultural Inputs and Technology:** Women have less access to agricultural technologies, equipment, and high-quality inputs. Social norms often prioritize men for training programs and resource distribution, leaving women at a disadvantage.
- ▶ **Labour Division:** Women carry a disproportionate burden of agricultural labour while also managing unpaid household responsibilities due to their social expectations.
- ▶ **Decision-Making Power:** Women often have limited involvement in decision-making at the household, community, and institutional levels. As a result, women's priorities, such as food security and nutrition, may not be adequately addressed in agricultural policies and projects.
- ▶ **Access to Markets:** Women face barriers in accessing markets to sell their produce due to limited mobility, lack of market information, and cultural constraints. As consequences, this affects their ability to secure fair prices and improve their livelihoods.
- ▶ **Capacity-Building and Education:** Women farmers have fewer opportunities for training in modern farming practices, leadership, and entrepreneurship. Gender-biased participation in agricultural extension services limits their ability to adopt innovations and improve productivity.
- ▶ **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** Women in rural agricultural settings may face GBV, including in accessing resources or participating in cooperatives and decision-making platforms. National statistics suggest that 37% of Rwandan households have experienced some form of GBV, a figure that highlights the widespread nature of the problem. This further marginalizes them and restricts their economic potential.
- ▶ **Climate Change Vulnerability:** Women are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change due to their reliance on small-scale farming and limited access to resources for adaptation. Around 70% of the labour force in agriculture is female, and they contribute significantly to food production. However, climate variability like unpredictable rainfall and

extreme weather events affects crop yields, leaving women more vulnerable to food insecurity. Women's increased burden during environmental crises often leads to heightened risks of gender-based violence as they undertake difficult tasks during droughts or floods.

**Efforts to Address Gender Issues in Agriculture:** Rwanda's effort to address gender issues in agriculture covers a range of initiatives including the following among others:

- ▶ **Policy Frameworks:** Rwanda's National Gender Policy and Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation emphasize gender equity.
- ▶ **Land Tenure Reforms:** Efforts to implement equitable land registration under the 2004 Land Policy have aimed to strengthen women's land rights.
- ▶ **Capacity Building:** Programs by the government and NGOs focus on empowering women farmers through training and cooperatives.
- ▶ **Access to Finance:** Initiatives like microfinance schemes are tailored to support women in agriculture.

While Rwanda has made significant strides in addressing gender disparities in agriculture, persistent cultural and systemic barriers require sustained efforts. A focus on gender-responsive policies, capacity-building, and equal resource distribution can foster more inclusive and productive agricultural development.

### 5.3 Gender and Infrastructure Sector

Gender issues are multifaceted in Rwanda's infrastructure, reflecting broader societal dynamics that require targeted interventions. Key challenges persist and opportunities available as discussed below.

- ▶ **Gender Disparities in Labour and Infrastructure Usage:** Women in Rwanda spend about seven hours daily on unpaid care work, compared to men's 2.1 hours. This imbalance limits their economic opportunities and access to infrastructure such as transportation and energy systems designed for paid work environments. Employment in agriculture, industry, and services remains gendered, with women disproportionately engaged in informal roles in agriculture. Despite women's significant presence in the sector, few hold professional positions, affecting their influence in decision-making for gender-responsive infrastructure.
- ▶ **Access to Energy and Technology:** Many women in rural areas face challenges in accessing clean energy and water systems. Investments in such infrastructure could alleviate the burden of unpaid care work and improve health outcomes.
- ▶ **Safety and Mobility:** Gender-based violence and safety concerns reduce women's ability to use public transport and other shared infrastructure effectively. UN Women's initiatives, such as "Safe Rural Public Spaces," aim to create safer environments for women to pursue economic activities.
- ▶ **Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres:** To address unpaid care work burdens, Rwanda has established ECD centres. These centres allow women to leave their children in a safe environment while engaging in economic activities, improving household incomes and reducing gender inequalities.

- ▶ **Economic Empowerment Initiatives:** Programs providing women with entrepreneurship training, financial literacy, and access to start-up capital have empowered over 2,500 women, enabling them to contribute more actively to the economy.

These issues highlight the importance of gender-responsive planning in Rwanda's infrastructure development, ensuring equitable access and promoting women's economic empowerment.

## 5.4 Gender and the Health Sector

The following are key gender issues for the health sector in Rwanda:

- ▶ **Access to Healthcare:** Despite Rwanda's significant progress in healthcare provision, women, especially in rural areas, face difficulties in accessing health services. Cultural norms, economic barriers, and limited transportation options can hinder access to essential care, including maternal and child health services.
- ▶ **Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights:** Women of reproductive age still encounter gaps in accessing modern contraceptive methods, despite 72.1% coverage for family planning. Unmet needs for sexual and reproductive health education and services contribute to unintended pregnancies, which disproportionately affect young women.
- ▶ **Teen pregnancies:** This is a major health concern because of its association with higher morbidity and mortality for both the mother and the child. Childbearing during adolescence is known to have adverse social consequences, particularly regarding educational attainment, as women who become mothers in their teens are more likely to drop out of school. In Rwanda, only 5% of women age 15-19 have begun childbearing; 4% have given birth, and 1% are pregnant with their first child). The percentage of teenagers who have given birth or are pregnant with their first child has declined since 2014-15, from 7% to 5%. The percentage of women age 15-19 who have begun childbearing increases with age, from less than 1% among those age 15 to 15% among those age 19. Teenage childbearing does not vary substantially by urban-rural residence. By province, the percentage of teenagers who have begun childbearing is highest in East and South (6% each) and lowest in West and City of Kigali (4% each). Teenage childbearing is less common in the wealthiest households: 3% of women in the highest wealth quintile have begun childbearing, as compared with 8% of those in the lowest quintile. The tendency to initiate sexual intercourse before age 15 is higher among men than women (10% versus 5%). Less than 1 percent of women age 15-19 were married by age 15, and less than 1% had given birth by that age. No men reported fathering a child before age 15.

Factors contributing to this issue include poverty, limited access to sexual and reproductive health education, and insufficient communication between parents and children. Many young girls, upon becoming pregnant, face stigma, are expelled from school, or are abandoned by their families, which limits their opportunities for a stable future. The consequences are far-reaching, often trapping girls in cycles of poverty and dependency.

Teen mothers face several other problems for which advocacy is needed issues include the fact that teen mothers do not have insurance and therefore cannot access health services and the fact that most health facilities are not disability friendly and for example have no sign language interpreters.

- ▶ **Maternal and Child Health:** While maternal mortality rates have declined, challenges persist in ensuring consistent quality of prenatal and postnatal care. Factors like economic inequality and a lack of skilled health workers in remote areas exacerbate these challenges.
- ▶ **HIV/AIDS and Gender:** Women are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS due to factors like GBV and limited access to preventive healthcare. Efforts to integrate gender-sensitive approaches in HIV programs have shown promise but require scaling up

Rwanda's initiatives, such as community health programs and gender-sensitive policies, aim to close these gaps, but structural and societal challenges remain. Addressing these requires continuous investment in healthcare infrastructure, education, and gender empowerment programs.

## 5.5 Gender and the Education Sector

Rwanda has achieved near gender parity in primary school enrolment. As of 2020, the net enrolment rate was 98% for girls and 97% for boys. The net enrolment rate for secondary education was lower, with 32.4% for girls and 30.1% for boys, indicating room for improvement in both genders, but particularly emphasizing the need to support girls through to higher levels of education. Barriers to education include financial constraints particularly for secondary education. Costs associated with schooling, such as uniforms, books, and transportation, can be prohibitive for many families. According to a 2023 report, economic challenges contribute to higher dropout rates among girls in secondary education due to some social norms and practices: Early marriage and household responsibilities often limit girls' education. The prevalence of early marriage is a barrier, with 7% of girls married before the age of 18. Another significant challenge for girls is menstrual hygiene and management as there is a lack of adequate sanitation facilities in schools. According to a 2024 UNICEF report, around 22% of schools lack gender-segregated toilets, which impacts girls' attendance and performance. Lastly, school-related GBV, including harassment and abuse, is a critical issue that affects girls' safety and their ability to stay in school.

Efforts to create safe and supportive school environments are on-going, but more work is needed. Distribution of Population by School Attendance More than a half (54%) of population of Rwanda aged 5 years and above have previously attended school, 32% are currently attending while 14% have never attended school. About a half (51%) of PWDs and 54% of those without disabilities have previously attended school.

A higher proportion of PWDs are more likely not to attend school compared to those without disabilities. The data shows that a higher proportion of PWDs (34%) have never attended school compared to only 13% of those without disabilities. Further, the census results show that only a small proportion of PWDs (14%) is currently attending school compared to 33% of those without disabilities.

### Enrolment and Access

**Primary Education:** Rwanda has achieved near gender parity in primary school enrolment. As of 2020, the net enrolment rate was 98% for girls and 97% for boys.

**Secondary Education:** The net enrolment rate for secondary education was lower, with 32.4% for girls and 30.1% for boys, indicating room for improvement in both genders, but particularly emphasizing the need to support girls through to higher levels of education.

## Barriers to Education

The following are key barriers to equitable education in Rwanda:

- ▶ **Economic Barriers:** Financial constraints are significant, particularly for secondary education. Costs associated with schooling, such as uniforms, books, and transportation, can be prohibitive for many families. According to a 2023 report, economic challenges contribute to higher dropout rates among girls in secondary education due to some social norms and practices: Early marriage and household responsibilities often limit girls' education. The prevalence of early marriage is a barrier, with 7% of girls married before the age of 18.
- ▶ **Sanitation Facilities:** A significant challenge for girls, particularly during menstruation, is the lack of adequate sanitation facilities in schools. According to a 2024 UNICEF report, around 22% of schools lack gender-segregated toilets, which impacts girls' attendance and performance.
- ▶ **Gender Based Violence:** School-related GBV, including harassment and abuse, is a critical issue that affects girls' safety and their ability to stay in school. Efforts to create safe and supportive school environments are ongoing, but more work is needed.
- ▶ **Government Initiatives:** Rwanda's Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) emphasize gender equality in education. Policies are in place to support girls' education through scholarships, mentorship programs, and community engagement initiatives.

International organizations like UNICEF and Plan International are active in Rwanda, supporting various programs aimed at improving educational outcomes for girls. These programs include building infrastructure, providing sanitary products, and running awareness campaigns on the importance of girls' education.

## 5.6 Gender and Climate Change

The following are key gender issues for gender and climate change in Rwanda:

- ▶ **Disproportionate Impact on Women:** Women in Rwanda are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. They bear the brunt of climate-related challenges, such as water scarcity and food insecurity, because they are often responsible for collecting water and firewood. During extreme weather events, women face heightened risks of gender-based violence and displacement.
- ▶ **Economic Impact:** Women represent 70% of the agricultural workforce in Rwanda, which makes them crucial to food security and livelihoods in rural areas. However, their productivity is heavily affected by climate change due to reduced agricultural yields and increased workloads as they have to travel further for water and firewood.

Women in Rwanda are disproportionately impacted by climate-induced challenges due to their economic and social positions. For example, female-headed households are more likely to be poor (39.5% compared to 37.8% for male-headed households) and rely heavily on natural resources threatened by climate change.

In response, Rwanda has taken significant steps to address gender in its climate policies. The country has integrated gender considerations into its national climate strategies, such as the National Adaptation Plan (NAPA) and its green growth and climate resilience strategy. Additionally, initiatives like gender-climate vulnerability mapping are being implemented to provide more precise data for policymakers, helping to develop gender-responsive climate action plans.

These efforts aim to build community resilience, ensuring that women are not only recognized for their critical role in climate adaptation but also empowered with the resources and support necessary to combat the adverse effects of climate change. However, the challenge remains to increase women's participation in decision-making processes and ensure equal access to climate adaptation resources.

## 5.7 Gender Human Rights

Rwanda has made significant strides in gender equality, positioning itself as a leader in women's empowerment in Africa. The country ranks highly on global gender equality indices, with women holding over 61% of parliamentary seats, making it the highest representation of women in any national legislature. However, challenges remain in achieving true gender parity, particularly in areas such as socio-economic equality, education, and addressing gender-based violence. The key issues include:

- ▶ **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** Despite legal frameworks like the 2008 Gender-Based Violence Law and efforts by the police Gender Desk, gender-based violence remains a critical issue. Consultations indicated that many cases go unreported, and survivors often face barriers in seeking justice due to social and economic pressures, such as dependence on male breadwinners. Women are still vulnerable to domestic violence, including physical and sexual abuse, with a significant portion of women experiencing intimate partner violence. For example under “Forms of spousal violence” 36.3% of ever-married women reported that they have ever experienced any physical violence committed by their current or most recent husband or partner compared to only 19.6% of men, 15.6% of women reported ever experienced any sexual violence compared to only 10.3% of men, and 34.6% of women reported ever experienced any emotional violence compared to 23.4% of men.
- ▶ **Economic Empowerment and Land Rights:** 79% of women are employed in agriculture, with many relying on subsistence farming, making them particularly vulnerable to climate change and economic shocks.
- ▶ **Education:** Although Rwanda has introduced several policies promoting girls' education, such as the Girls Education Task Force and university gender policies, girls still face challenges, including early school dropouts due to domestic responsibilities and societal expectations. Consultations indicated that while girls now have equal access to primary education, their representation in higher education and technical fields like ICT remains lower compared to boys.

Despite these challenges, Rwanda has actively worked to close gender gaps through policies, such as promoting women's roles in governance, health, and economic sectors. Programs targeting women's health, including HIV prevention and maternal health, are also crucial to improving the lives of Rwandan women.

Thus, while Rwanda stands as a model in certain areas of gender equality, deeper cultural and structural changes are still needed to address the persistent inequalities, especially at the community level.

## 5.8 Gender and Private Sector

In Rwanda, key gender issues within the private sector are related to participation, leadership representation, access to finance, and wage disparities. Despite significant progress in policy development, such as the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy (2020-2024), challenges remain in achieving gender equity in this sector.

One of the primary concerns is the low participation of women in the workforce. While women make up about 48.2% of the labour force, men constitute 65.6%, with women being especially underrepresented in high-paying, technical roles. Only 32% of women occupy decision-making positions in the private sector, and women are often excluded from sectors such as technology, which tend to offer higher wages. Moreover, women face substantial barriers to entrepreneurship. Female ownership in micro and small businesses is relatively low, with women owning only 38% of micro enterprises, 32% of small businesses, and just 15% of large businesses. This disparity is compounded by limited access to finance, making it difficult for women to scale their businesses. Women also face challenges in securing loans due to cultural and institutional barriers, including joint ownership of assets and biases in credit scoring.

To address these gaps, Rwanda has implemented several initiatives, such as the Gender Equality Seal Program, which encourages companies to adopt gender-sensitive policies, including equal pay, representation in leadership, and measures against sexual harassment. Additionally, the government's policies on land ownership have allowed women to use joint land titles as collateral for loans, facilitating their access to finance and increasing their economic empowerment.

While there are signs of progress, with increasing numbers of women in leadership roles and successful women-led businesses, gender equity remains a central challenge in Rwanda's private sector, requiring ongoing efforts to close these gaps.

## 5.9 Gender Governance

Rwanda has registered significant achievements in gender equality within governance, positioning itself as a global leader, particularly in women's political participation. However, there are still key gender issues to address. These issues are particularly visible in leadership representation, political participation, and the barriers women face in fully accessing political power and influence.

- ▶ **High Women's Representation in Parliament:** Rwanda leads the world in female parliamentary representation, with women holding 61.3% of seats in the lower house of parliament. This remarkable achievement is largely the result of intentional policies such as gender quotas, which mandate a certain percentage of seats to be reserved for women. This policy has not only increased women's visibility in politics but has also contributed to the country's international recognition for gender equality.
- ▶ **Barriers to Women's Leadership Beyond Parliament:** While women dominate in parliament, their representation in executive roles, such as State Ministers positions (27.7%), Heads of public institutions (20.0%) remains limited. Women remain less represented at the decentralized local government with 26.7% as District Mayors and 16.7% as Vice-Mayors Economic Affairs. Yet they represent 66.7% as Vice Mayors/Social Affairs which is a replication of their social reproductive roles as care givers.
- ▶ **Economic and Institutional Barriers to Political Participation:** beyond the formal structures of governance, women still face substantial economic and institutional barriers that hinder their political engagement. Consultations indicated that limited access to financial resources, patriarchal attitudes, and domestic responsibilities often impede women's ability to campaign effectively. Women entrepreneurs and leaders, especially from rural areas, were also said to face challenges in accessing networks, funding, and training that would allow them to scale their political influence.

- ▶ **Gender-Based Violence in Politics:** women in Rwanda, as elsewhere, are also impacted by gender-based violence (GBV), particularly in the political arena. Consultations stressed that Sexual harassment and gendered violence against female politicians, though not as widespread as in many other countries, still occur. These issues are compounded by societal attitudes that trivialize the challenges women face in politics.

To address these issues, Rwanda has implemented several gender-focused initiatives within governance:

- ▶ Gender-responsive budgeting has been introduced to ensure that gender equality is considered in national policies and programs and/or projects.
- ▶ Training and mentoring programs for female politicians and women in local government help build leadership capacity and increase women's influence in decision-making processes.

To sum up while Rwanda has made significant advancements in female political participation and leadership, challenges remain, particularly concerning the deeper, structural issues that limit women's influence at higher levels of governance and in the political process overall. Continuous efforts to address these barriers will be crucial in moving towards true gender equality in governance.

## 5.10 Information Communication Technology

In Rwanda, gender issues within the ICT sector are multifaceted, with several initiatives aiming to bridge the gender gap. Key issues include limited access to digital technologies, underrepresentation of women in tech-related fields, and gendered disparities in digital skills development.

- ▶ **Limited Access to Digital Tools:** While Rwanda is recognized for its efforts to integrate ICT into various sectors, women often face challenges accessing smartphones, digital services, and financial platforms, which are increasingly essential for economic participation. The Government of Rwanda has committed to increasing female participation in digital financial systems, with over 55% of Rwandan women currently registered on digital platforms.
- ▶ **Gender Disparities in Education and Employment:** There is a noticeable gender gap in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education and employment. Girls and women are underrepresented in ICT-related fields, which impacts their career opportunities. Programs like Girls in ICT Rwanda and institutions such as Carnegie Mellon University Africa are working to change this by providing mentorship, boot camps, and other support systems.
- ▶ **Digital Financial Inclusion:** Programs like the Ihuzo platform, which offers digital training for micro and small enterprises (including women-led businesses), have been crucial in promoting e-commerce among women. As of 2023, the platform has empowered over 4,000 businesses, with 40% of them being women-owned.
- ▶ **Policy Support:** Rwanda's leadership in the East African Community (EAC) and the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) highlights a strong governmental commitment to improving digital equity. Rwanda aims to increase women's participation in ICT by addressing the barriers women face in accessing technology, thus contributing to broader gender equality goals.

These initiatives reflect Rwanda's strategic approach to leveraging ICT for gender equality, focusing on education, access, financial inclusion, and policy. However, there remains work to be done to ensure these initiatives are scalable and inclusive.

## 5.11 Consultations with Women and Girl-Led Organizations (WGLOs)

A workshop bringing together some selected women and girls-led organizations operating in Rwanda was jointly organized by FAWE Rwanda and Ecorys Ltd. The three-day workshop took place in Kigali from November 20-22, 2024. The participants discussed about achievements registered, challenges faced and recommendations to address them. These challenges span social, economic, and political spheres, although the country has made significant strides in gender equality in recent years. The following emerged from discussions as the key challenges:

### 1. Limited Access to Funding and Resources

- ▶ **Financial Constraints:** Women and girls-led organizations often face difficulties accessing adequate funding. Despite Rwanda's progressive policies on gender equality, there is limited funding available specifically for women-led initiatives, and organizations struggle to secure consistent support.
- ▶ **Resource Allocation:** The allocation of resources (human, material, financial) to women-focused programs can be insufficient, making it challenging for these organizations to scale their efforts or sustain long-term projects. Despite the gender responsive budgeting program under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) that aims at ensuring that any government money be spent in gender responsive manner, resource allocation for women and girls-led organizations remains limited.

### 2. Cultural and Societal Barriers

- ▶ **Patriarchal Norms:** Despite progress, some deeply rooted patriarchal norms persist in Rwandan society, leading to biases that undermine the credibility and authority of women and girls in leadership roles. These societal expectations can hinder the effectiveness of women-led organizations and their acceptance in more traditional circles.
- ▶ **Stereotypes and Gender Roles:** There are persistent gender stereotypes about women's and girls' roles in the community. These stereotypes hinder trust among women and girls and their opportunities to take on leadership positions or be recognized for their contributions.

### 3. Lack of Capacity and Skills

- ▶ **Limited Leadership and Management Skills:** Some women and girls-led organizations face challenges in organizational management, leadership skills, and governance due to a lack of access to leadership training and development programs.
- ▶ **Technical Expertise:** Many women in leadership positions in these organizations might lack specific technical expertise in areas like fundraising, project management, research and advocacy, which are crucial for running successful organizations.

### 4. Legal and Policy Barriers

- ▶ **Limited Awareness of Rights:** While Rwanda has some progressive gender policies, there remains a gap in the awareness and implementation of these laws at the grassroots level. This can limit women and girls' ability to claim their rights and access opportunities that would empower them to run organizations.

- ▶ **Policy Gaps:** While there is political will to promote gender equality, certain policies or regulations can still create obstacles for women-led organizations. For instance, legal and regulatory requirements for registering or operating organizations can sometimes be cumbersome or not sufficiently supportive of women-led enterprises.

## 5. Political and Structural Challenges

- ▶ **Representation in Decision-Making:** Although Rwanda has one of the highest percentages of women in parliament globally, women and girls-led organizations may still struggle with being adequately represented in key decision-making processes or in high-level political conversations. This limits their influence on national policy or resource distribution.
- ▶ **Dependency on External Actors:** Some women-led organizations may become overly reliant on external actors (like international NGOs and donors), which can lead to challenges in autonomy, sustainability, and local impact.

## 6. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

- ▶ **Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence:** Many organizations working with women and girls, particularly in rural areas, have to deal with the effects of gender-based violence, as they are majority among the victims, which hampers their ability to focus on broader empowerment goals. Victims of such violence may find it difficult to engage in activities outside of coping with trauma.
- ▶ **Stigma and Re-traumatization:** Women and girls who have experienced sexual and gender-based violence may face social stigma and discrimination when trying to engage in leadership roles or join organizations, which discourages participation.

## 7. Inadequate Infrastructure

- ▶ **Limited Access to Technology and Communication Tools:** Many women and girls-led organizations in Rwanda, particularly in rural areas, lack access to essential infrastructure, such as reliable internet, communication tools, and transportation. This hinders their ability to network, access funding, or scale their activities effectively.
- ▶ **Geographical Isolation:** Women and girls from rural areas may face additional challenges, including geographical isolation and limited access to important networks and events, making it harder to build connections or access training.

## 8. Intergenerational Challenges

- ▶ **Challenges of Younger Female Leaders:** Younger girls and women leading organizations may struggle to be taken seriously or face resistance from older, more traditional community members, even if they are doing meaningful work. The generational divide can create obstacles in building cross-generational support.
- ▶ **Lack of Mentorship:** Younger women and girls in leadership roles may not have sufficient mentorship or role models who can guide them through the challenges they face, limiting their potential for growth and success.

## 9. Impact of Climate Change

- ▶ **Environmental Challenges:** Climate change disproportionately affects women, especially in rural areas, where they often bear the brunt of environmental disasters. Women-led organizations focused on development and community welfare may find themselves diverted to addressing climate-related issues rather than advancing their core missions.

## 10. Disability and Accessibility

Despite progressive laws promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, many still face challenges in accessing education and healthcare. The following emerged from discussions as the major issues:

- ▶ **Education: limited Accessibility in Schools:**
  - ▷ Many schools lack infrastructure such as ramps, accessible toilets, sign language interpreters, and braille materials, making it difficult for students with physical or sensory disabilities to learn effectively.
  - ▷ Transport to and from school is also a challenge, as most public transport is not disability friendly.
  - ▷ **Inadequate Special Education Teachers and Resources:**
    - There is a shortage of trained teachers who specialize in inclusive education or special needs education.
    - Most teachers lack the skills to accommodate different learning needs, particularly for students with intellectual or sensory disabilities.
  - ▷ Learning materials in accessible formats (Braille, large print, or audio) are scarce, especially in rural areas.
- ▶ **Social Stigma and Discrimination**
  - ▷ Some communities still hold negative perceptions about disability, seeing it as a burden or a curse.
  - ▷ This can lead to lower expectations for children with disabilities, discouraging families from sending them to school.
  - ▷ Bullying and social exclusion in schools also affect the self-esteem and academic performance of students with disabilities.
- ▶ **Financial Barriers**
  - ▷ While Rwanda has policies promoting free and inclusive education, many families of children with disabilities struggle with additional costs, such as assistive devices, transportation, or specialized care.
  - ▷ Many children with disabilities come from low-income backgrounds, making it difficult to sustain their education.
- ▶ **Language and Communication Barriers**
  - ▷ Students with hearing impairments often struggle due to a lack of sign language interpreters in schools.

- ▷ Rwandan Sign Language is not yet fully integrated into the mainstream education system, limiting accessibility.
- ▶ Transition to Higher Education and Employment:
  - ▷ Even when students with disabilities complete primary and secondary education, they face challenges in accessing higher education due to limited specialized support.
  - ▷ Universities and technical schools often lack inclusive learning environments, making it difficult for students with disabilities to advance in their careers.
- ▶ Healthcare: limited accessibility of healthcare facilities:
  - ▷ Many hospitals and health centres lack wheelchair ramps, elevators, and disability-friendly toilets, making it difficult for people with physical disabilities to access services.
  - ▷ Sign language interpreters are rarely available in healthcare settings, posing communication barriers for people with hearing impairments.
  - ▷ High cost of healthcare services: while Rwanda has a universal health insurance system (Mutuelle de Santé), some specialized services (e. g., assistive devices, rehabilitation, and therapy) remain expensive.
  - ▷ Many people with disabilities struggle with unemployment, limiting their ability to afford healthcare services.
  - ▷ There is a lack of trained medical professionals in fields like physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and mental health services tailored to people with disabilities.
  - ▷ Some healthcare workers lack awareness and sensitivity toward the needs of people with disabilities, leading to discrimination or inadequate care.
  - ▷ Essential devices like wheelchairs, crutches, prosthetics, and hearing aids are often unavailable or expensive.
  - ▷ Some donated equipment may not be suitable for local conditions, leading to inefficiencies in use.
  - ▷ Negative attitudes and misconceptions about disability may result in poor treatment or neglect in healthcare settings.
  - ▷ Some healthcare providers may assume that people with disabilities have lower life expectations, affecting the quality of care they receive.
  - ▷ Women with disabilities often face discrimination in reproductive health services, including maternal care, contraception, and information on sexual health.
  - ▷ There are misconceptions that people with disabilities are asexual or incapable of having families, leading to exclusion from reproductive health programs.

NB: Although both males and females with disability are faced with the above-mentioned challenges, consultations highlighted that females are more affected than males.

## 6.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

Rwanda has registered significant achievements in addressing gender inequalities across the different development sectors. The registered achievements resulted from a series of initiatives taken ranging from policies, strategies and relevant interventions in terms of mechanisms and other measures put in place for effective implementation of the developed policies. This led Rwanda to international recognition as one of the leading countries in the promotion of gender equality, which made the country a role model that shares her wealthy experience with those other countries and actors that strive to promote gender equality both internationally and regionally.

Despite important progress key challenges persist in the different development sectors that Rwanda is investing in for national development. Identified challenges are highlighted in the next section under each of the selected priority sectors. Also, recommendations to address identified challenges are provided.

### 6.1 Recommendations

- ▶ **Employment:** women were found to be less represented in the high-paying jobs due to limited knowledge and skills as required in the concerned technical areas. Their vast majority is represented under unpaid labour due to their social and cultural expectations, which aggravates their vulnerability and leads to the overwhelmingly dominated participation of men in the private sector. These challenges highlight the need for systemic changes, such as improving women's access to financing, enforcing gender-sensitive workplace policies, and reducing the burden of unpaid work.
- ▶ **Agriculture:** women's participation in agriculture as farmers was found to be more represented as compared to men, but they are more present in subsistence agriculture which makes them more vulnerable. Their limited access to and control over land and financial resources coupled with their heavy involvement in domestic realm make them less benefiting from agriculture yields. A focus on gender-responsive policies, capacity-building, and equal resource distribution can foster more inclusive and productive agricultural development.
- ▶ **Gender and Infrastructure Sector:** Despite women's significant presence in the sector, few hold professional positions, affecting their influence in decision-making for gender-responsive infrastructure. Additionally, their limited access to energy and technology in rural areas face challenges in accessing clean energy and water systems resulting into heavier burden of unpaid care work and poor health outcomes. This informs the importance of gender-responsive planning in Rwanda's infrastructure development, ensuring equitable access and promoting women's economic empowerment.
- ▶ **Gender and the Health Sector:** Despite important achievements in the health sector unmet needs for sexual and reproductive health education and services contribute to unintended pregnancies, which disproportionately affect young women. This adds to the issue of gender-based violence that continues to affect significant portions of the population under its various forms especially the domestic gender-based violence. Addressing these challenges requires continuous investment in healthcare infrastructure, education, and gender empowerment programs.

- ▶ **Gender and the Education Sector:** despite the gender parity achieved in primary education among other registered achievements, women remain less represented especially at higher levels of education in technical areas (STEM) that leads graduates to higher-paying labour opportunities. Building infrastructure, providing sanitary products, and running awareness campaigns on the importance of girls' education especially in the traditionally male dominated areas, are among the strategic actions to address these challenges.
- ▶ **Gender and Climate Change:** women were found to be the majority as farmers in rural area which makes them more exposed to climate change effects as they are socially the custodians for water and firewood collection. Additionally, their weak socio-economic situation makes them more vulnerable to impact of climate change especially in the rural area. Increasing women's participation in decision-making processes and ensure equal access to climate adaptation resources would contribute to addressing these challenges.
- ▶ **Gender Human Rights:** Gender-based violence remains one of the major challenges affecting human rights of Rwanda's population with women remaining the majority among the victims. Also, the dominating female participation in agriculture of subsistence with limited control over land makes them more vulnerable to effects of climate change. Improving socio-economic conditions of women through financial literacy and increased access to capitals, transformational training on gender equality GBV included would contribute to addressing identified key challenges.
- ▶ **Gender and the Private Sector:** women were found to be less represented as owners of small, medium and large SMES due to limited knowledge and skills in finance literacy compounded with challenges in securing loans due to cultural and institutional barriers, including joint ownership of assets and biases in credit scoring. Although progress was made in increasing access to finance for women, capacity building in financial literacy and improving their socio-economic conditions these efforts need a continued momentum.
- ▶ **Gender Governance:** while Rwanda has made significant advancements in female political participation and leadership, challenges remain, particularly concerning the deeper, structural issues that limit women's influence at higher levels of governance and in the political process overall. Continuous efforts to address these barriers especially gender transformational training will be crucial in moving towards true gender equality in governance.
- ▶ **Information Communication Technology:** despite the Rwanda Government's strong commitment to promote a gender equitable ICT, challenges persist in terms of limited participation of women in STEM linking to ICT among other engineering subjects. Adopting measures aimed at increasing women's participation in stem and scaling up initiatives that already proved to be effective as they translate into action, would contribute towards gender equality in ICT.
- ▶ **Disability and Accessibility:** the following recommendation are made for education and healthcare:
  - ▷ Ensure all schools have ramps, accessible toilets, elevators, and disability-friendly desks.
  - ▷ Provide assistive technology like Braille books, hearing aids, and speech-to-text software.
  - ▷ Train teachers in special needs education and inclusive teaching methods.
  - ▷ Hire and deploy sign language interpreters and Braille instructors in schools.

- ▷ Adapt school curricula to accommodate different learning abilities.
- ▷ Integrate life skills, vocational training, and technical education for students with disabilities.
- ▷ Increase government funding for scholarships, school fees subsidies, and free learning materials.
- ▷ Strengthen policies that enforce inclusive education in both public and private schools.
- ▷ Conduct community sensitization programs to combat stigma and encourage parents to enrol children with disabilities in school.
- ▷ Promote peer support programs to create a welcoming learning environment.
- ▷ Ensure all hospitals and clinics have ramps, disability-friendly toilets, and accessible consultation rooms.
- ▷ Provide sign language interpreters in major hospitals to support people with hearing impairments.
- ▷ Expand Mutuelle de Santé coverage to include assistive devices, rehabilitation, and mental health services.
- ▷ Strengthen home-based healthcare services for people with severe disabilities.
- ▷ Train doctors, nurses, and midwives in disability-sensitive healthcare practices.
- ▷ Develop specialized disability healthcare programs, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and mental health services.
- ▷ Subsidise wheelchairs, prosthetics, crutches, and hearing aids for those in need.
- ▷ Expand rehabilitation centres across the country, especially in rural areas.
- ▷ Ensure accessible maternal care, family planning, and sexual health education for people with disabilities.
- ▷ Train health workers to provide non-discriminatory reproductive healthcare.
- ▶ **Women and girls-led organisations:** despite the various challenges they are faced with, women and girls-led organizations in Rwanda continue to make significant progress by working with the government, international donors, and other stakeholders to overcome these barriers. Empowerment programs such capacity building in needed knowledge and skills (e. g.: fundraising/resource mobilization, project management, entrepreneurship, research, advocacy), education, increased access to mentorship and role model networks would play a crucial role in helping to change cultural and structural dynamics which hamper the concerned organizations' advancement.

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## Annexes

### Annex 1: Brief description of Government programs promoting gender equality for women and girl's empowerment

The Rwandan government has implemented several key programs to promote gender equality and empower women and girls. Some of the notable programs include:

- ▶ **National Gender Policy:** This policy aims to promote gender equality and equity in all development sectors. It serves as a framework guiding all initiatives and programs related to gender equality.
- ▶ **Gender Monitoring Office (GMO):** Established to monitor and evaluate the implementation of gender-related policies, programs, and laws. The GMO ensures that gender equality is mainstreamed across all sectors.
- ▶ **Women's Economic Empowerment Programs:** These programs provide women with access to financial resources, training, and support to start and grow businesses. Initiatives like the Women Guarantee Fund and the Business Development Fund focus on enhancing women's economic participation.
- ▶ **Girls' Education Policy:** This policy aims to increase girls' access to quality education at all levels. Programs under this policy include scholarships, school feeding programs, and campaigns to promote girls' enrolment and retention in schools.
- ▶ **Isange One Stop Centres:** These centres provide comprehensive services to victims of gender-based violence, including medical care, psychosocial support, legal aid, and safe housing. They aim to support and empower survivors.
- ▶ **HeForShe Campaign:** Rwanda has actively participated in the UN's HeForShe campaign, which encourages men and boys to advocate for gender equality. This campaign has led to increased awareness and involvement of men in promoting gender equality.
- ▶ **National Strategy for Transformation (NST1):** This strategy includes specific targets for gender equality and women's empowerment, ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in national development plans.
- ▶ **Gender-Responsive Budgeting:** This approach integrates gender perspectives into the budgeting process, ensuring that public resources are allocated in ways that address the needs and priorities of both women and men.
- ▶ **Umugoroba w'Ababyeyi (Parents' Evening Forum):** This community-based program encourages dialogue on gender issues, family welfare, and social cohesion. It promotes the involvement of both men and women in decision-making at the household and community levels.

## Annex 2: Brief description of cooperating partner interventions promoting gender equality and women and girl's empowerment

Several international and local partners collaborate with the Rwandan government to promote gender equality and empower women and girls. Here are some key interventions by cooperating partners:

- ▶ **UN Women:** UN Women supports Rwanda in implementing gender-responsive policies and programs. Their interventions include promoting women's economic empowerment, ending violence against women, and ensuring women's participation in peace and security processes.
- ▶ **UNICEF:** UNICEF works on enhancing girls' education, improving maternal and child health, and protecting children from violence and exploitation. Their programs focus on creating safe and supportive environments for girls to thrive.
- ▶ **USAID:** The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) supports various gender equality initiatives in Rwanda, such as promoting women's economic opportunities, enhancing girls' education, and preventing gender-based violence.
- ▶ **The World Bank:** The World Bank funds projects aimed at increasing women's access to economic resources, improving healthcare services for women and children, and supporting educational initiatives to reduce gender disparities in schools.
- ▶ **CARE International:** CARE's programs in Rwanda focus on economic empowerment, improving health services, and advocating for women's rights. They implement community-based savings and loans groups, provide vocational training, and support reproductive health services.
- ▶ **Oxfam:** Oxfam's initiatives include promoting women's leadership, enhancing women's access to financial services, and advocating for gender justice. They support women's cooperatives and provide training in entrepreneurship and financial literacy.
- ▶ **Plan International:** Plan International works to advance children's rights and equality for girls. Their programs in Rwanda focus on education, health, and protection from violence and exploitation, with a strong emphasis on empowering girls.
- ▶ **GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit):** GIZ supports gender equality through projects that promote women's economic empowerment, enhance vocational training, and integrate gender perspectives into agricultural programs.
- ▶ **ActionAid:** ActionAid's interventions include advocating for women's rights, combating gender-based violence, and supporting women's leadership. They work at the grassroots level to empower women and girls through education, awareness-raising, and capacity-building activities.
- ▶ **World Food Programme (WFP):** WFP's initiatives in Rwanda include providing food assistance to vulnerable populations, supporting school feeding programs, and promoting gender equality in food security and nutrition programs.

## Annex 2: Brief description of civil society programmes promoting gender equality and women and girl's empowerment

Civil society organizations (CSOs) in Rwanda are actively engaged in promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls through various programs and initiatives. Some key civil society programs include:

- ▶ **Rwanda Women's Network (RWN):** RWN focuses on improving the socio-economic welfare of women through health care services, advocacy, and empowerment programs. Their initiatives include the Polyclinic of Hope, which provides medical and psychosocial support to survivors of gender-based violence, and community-based health and wellness centres.
- ▶ **Profemmes Twese Hamwe:** This umbrella organization comprises several women's associations working to promote gender equality and women's rights. Their programs focus on peacebuilding, economic empowerment, and capacity building. They advocate for women's participation in decision-making processes and provide training and support for income-generating activities.
- ▶ **HAGURUKA:** HAGURUKA is dedicated to promoting and defending the rights of women and children in Rwanda. Their activities include legal aid services, advocacy for policy changes, and awareness campaigns on gender-based violence and women's rights. They also provide training on legal rights and support women in accessing justice.
- ▶ **Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC):** RWAMREC works to engage men and boys in promoting gender equality and combating gender-based violence. Their programs include community sensitization, training on positive masculinity, and initiatives to involve men in family planning and reproductive health.
- ▶ **AVEGA Agahozo:** This association supports widows and orphans of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. AVEGA provides psychological support, health care, and economic empowerment programs for widows, helping them rebuild their lives and achieve financial independence.
- ▶ **Kigali Women Information Centre (KWIC):** KWIC focuses on improving access to information and communication technologies (ICT) for women. Their programs include ICT training, advocacy for digital inclusion, and support for women entrepreneurs to leverage technology for business growth.
- ▶ **Umuryango Nyarwanda w'Abagore Bafite Ubumuga (UNABU):** UNABU supports women and girls with disabilities, advocating for their rights and inclusion in all aspects of society. Their programs include capacity building, advocacy, and economic empowerment initiatives tailored to the needs of women with disabilities.
- ▶ **Girls in ICT Rwanda:** This initiative encourages girls and young women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Their programs include coding camps, mentorship, and workshops to build digital skills and confidence among girls.
- ▶ **Resonate:** Resonate works to unlock the leadership potential of women and girls through storytelling and confidence-building workshops. Their programs aim to empower women to become leaders in their communities and workplaces by building self-confidence and communication skills.

- ▶ **Akilah Institute:** The Akilah Institute offers higher education programs focused on leadership and career development for young women. Their curriculum includes business management, entrepreneurship, and information technology, preparing women for leadership roles in various sectors.