



**HAGURUKA**  
Defending the rights of women and children

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021





Our new strategic plan seeks to reinforce Haguruka's commitment and approach to promoting gender equality and equity while exploring new ways of maximizing the advancement of women and children's rights.

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## ACRONYMS

<b>CSE:</b>	Comprehensive Sexual Education
<b>CSO:</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DC:</b>	District Committees
<b>DIU:</b>	Duteze Imbere Ubutabera
<b>GBV:</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>GESI:</b>	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
<b>G&amp;WWD:</b>	Girls and Women with Disability
<b>GOR:</b>	Government of Rwanda
<b>IEC:</b>	Information, education, and communication
<b>IECMS:</b>	Integrated electronic case-management system
<b>JRLOS:</b>	Justice Reconciliation Law and Order Sector
<b>LAF:</b>	Legal Aid Forum
<b>MAJ:</b>	Maison d'Accès à la Justice/Access to Justice Bureau
<b>MEL:</b>	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
<b>MLAC:</b>	Mobile Legal Aid Clinics
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>NWC:</b>	National Women's Council
<b>RCN:</b>	RCN Justice & Démocratie
<b>RLRC:</b>	Rwanda Law Reform Commission
<b>SDG:</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SRHR:</b>	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
<b>VAWG:</b>	Violence Against Women & Girls



## MESSAGE FROM THE **THE LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**



**“ Through our community-based approaches, we positively impacted the lives of vulnerable Women who are survivors of GBV.”**

Me Munyankindi **Monique**

Dear partners,

We are pleased to present the Haguruka Annual Report 2021. The year 2021 marks the thirtieth anniversary of Haguruka, though we quietly celebrated this unique moment due to COVID-19. Last year the activities of Haguruka on the field were halted for a while by the second wave of COVID-19 that rose in June 2021. Despite this challenge, we met our targets for ongoing projects and secured new grants to expand interventions and reach more people in need.

Last year, Haguruka reached 2,783 people in need of legal aid services and supported their access to justice. We are proud of 714 children who are now recognized by their fathers and received alimony. Additionally, 1,281 women secured their property rights back. These are only a few of Haguruka's accomplishments from 2021 that are highlighted throughout this report.

Through our community-based approaches, we positively impacted the lives of vulnerable women who are survivors of GBV. In Musanze and Gasabo districts, for example, our innovative community dialogues are making

a real difference for women and girls who experience gender-based violence.

We also reached more than 5,000 people through an awareness raising campaign on rights and laws protecting women and children. We trained over 564 duty bearers including local authorities and other people involved in dispute resolution at the community level through capacity building activities to ensure that they provide good services to the citizens in the area of conflict resolution and access to justice.

Our newly developed strategic plan for 2022-2027 ensures that Haguruka programs address injustice and inequalities. It reiterates our commitment to deliver high-impact and cost-effective programs in the areas of legal aid and psychosocial support, capacity development and awareness-raising, as well as research and evidence-based advocacy.

Speaking on behalf of our Board, Haguruka colleagues, and all those served by Haguruka, we wish to express our appreciation and gratitude for your generosity. We also respectfully ask for your support in what promises to be an extraordinary year ahead.



# ABOUT HAGURUKA

Haguruka is a non-governmental organization registered under Rwandan Law. We work towards empowering women and children to claim their rights by improving their access to high quality justice across the country. This is achieved through providing legal aid and psychosocial support to right-holders in need, doing capacity building and awareness-raising of stakeholders, as well as conducting research and evidence-based advocacy.

Haguruka was founded in 1991 and continues to be at the forefront of the fight for the rights of women and children. Haguruka has its head office in Kigali (the capital city of Rwanda) with regional offices in the Northern, Eastern, Southern, and Western provinces of the country.

Our current strategic areas of intervention are

1. Legal Aid and Psychosocial Support
2. Capacity Development and Awareness Raising
3. Research & Advocacy.

We see our beneficiaries as right holders who are empowered to claim their fundamental human rights from duty bearers following relevant international and national legal instruments applicable in Rwanda. Haguruka has a zero-tolerance approach towards sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment.

Haguruka founded  
**1991**  
forefront of the fight  
for the rights of women  
and children.



Head office in Kigali  
(the capital city of  
Rwanda)



Our current  
Strategic areas of  
Intervention are:



**1**  
Legal Aid and  
Psychosocial  
Support



**2**  
Capacity Development  
and Awareness Raising



**3**  
Research and  
Advocacy



EXECUTIVE

## SUMMARY

This preceding year we entered into partnerships with new organizations with whom we will work together to ensure that women and children are free from violence. Thus, three new grants were secured to implement interventions in all three areas of our focus, and therefore, we will be able to reach many right-holders and duty-bearers with our interventions. Additionally, we developed our five-year strategic plan for 2022-2027.

We continued to consolidate our work on improving access to justice and increasing the capacity and awareness of stakeholders countrywide. Because of us, more women and children who are victims of gender-based violence and injustice were access to justice.

Our legal aid package includes legal advice, referrals, mediation, and support for DNA tests, and legal representation. In 2021, we also accompanied more couples in abusive relationships to resolve their conflicts and most of them have improved their relationships. We have also reached out to local leaders in charge of land management and dispute resolution. They have been empowered to make the right decisions with regard to land disputes. Last but not least, we have empowered youth, especially teen mothers to make informed decisions with regard to sexual and reproductive health and to be reintegrated into their communities and families.



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS - LEGAL AID



“My life has significantly changed.”

Angelique

Violence is a common issue teen mothers face from the pregnancy. Musanabera Angelique is a young lady living in Musanze District, Musanze sector. She was impregnated by a man who had promised to marry her. At her disappointment, the man run away the moment he knew that Angelique was pregnant.

In 2020, Angelique gave birth to twins. Since the early stage of the pregnancy, Angelique was emotionally tortured by her parents. The parents withheld food and forced Angelique to perform unpaid care work.

Under its legal aid program, Haguruka receives thousands of women and children survivors of violence in need of legal support every year, both at its offices and through regular mobile legal aid clinics conducted in the field.

During one mobile GBV clinic organized in Musanze last year, Angelique came to seek legal support. She told Haguruka’s legal

officer what she was going through, and the lawyer arranged an appointment for her and her parents. It was not easy for Angelique to convince her parents, but they eventually came with her to Haguruka. Through an information session, parents of Angelique were given information on the rights and duties of children and the duties and responsibilities of parents over the children. After the session, Angelique’s parents recognized their fault and how their actions were a violation of children’s rights. They apologized to their daughter and agreed to stop their violence,

*“My life has significantly changed thanks to a conversation my parents had with Haguruka staff,”* Angelique remarked.

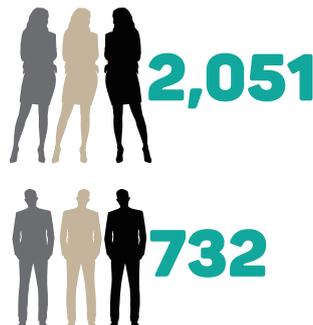
Today Angelique and her parents live in peace, and recently sent her back to school while they take care of the grandchildren.

Haguruka provided legal aid services to

**2,783**

right-holders through mobile legal clinics in different districts and office based-services in **Kigali, Musanze, Nyanza, Gakenke, Nyaruguru, Ngoma, and Kayonza** offices.

Those seeking services include



**13%**

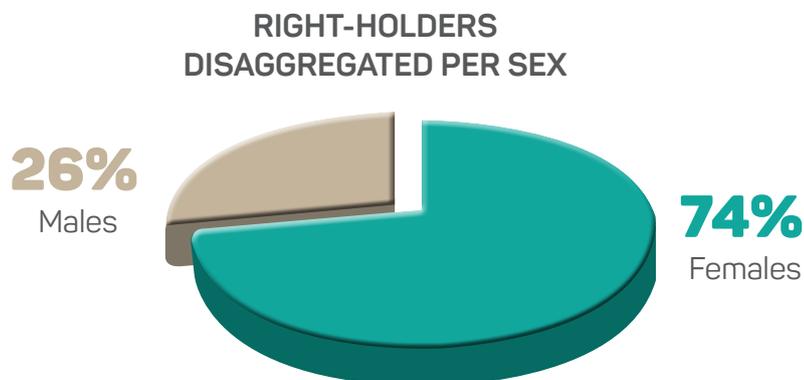
Penal cases supported

**87%**

Civil cases supported

During the 2021 year, Haguruka provided legal aid services to 2,783 right-holders through mobile legal clinics in different districts and office based-services in Kigali, Musanze, Nyanza, Gakenke, Nyaruguru, Ngoma, and Kayonza offices. Those seeking services include 2,051 women and 732 men, and of the cases supported, 13% were penal while 87% were civil.

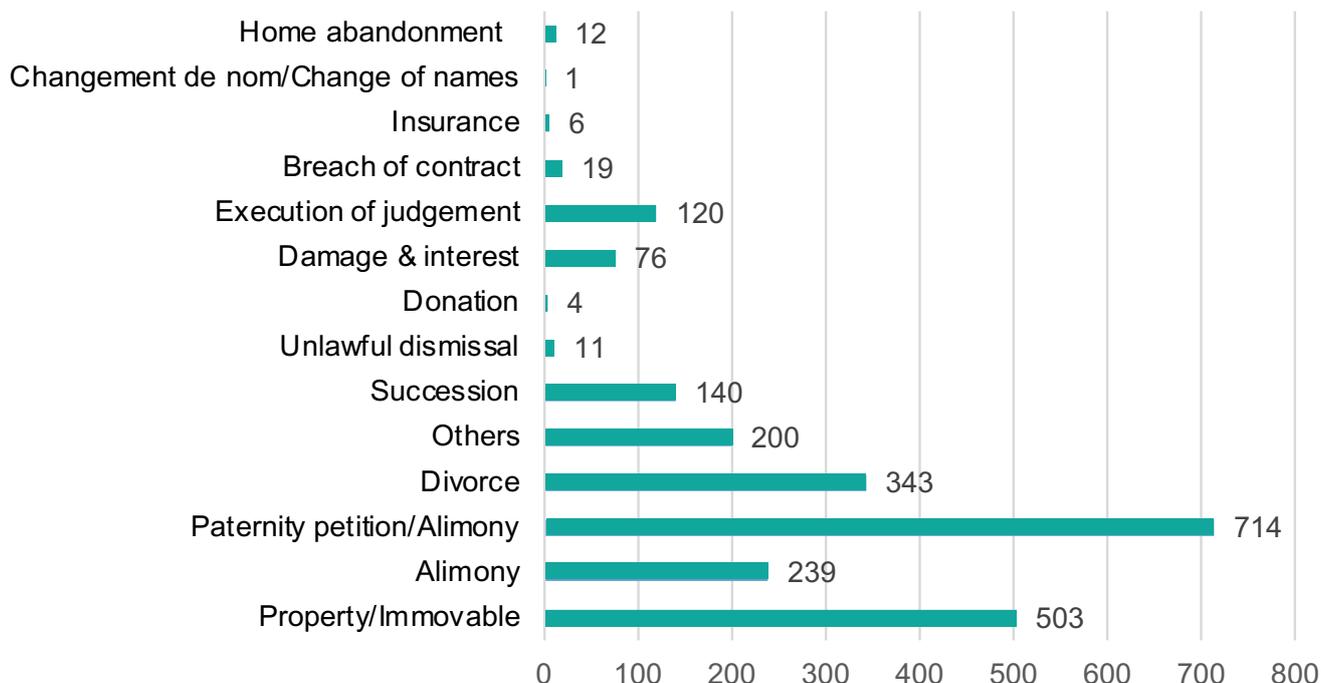
**Domestic and economic violence were the majority of penal cases while paternity search and alimony were overwhelmingly civil cases.**



All 2,783 cases received legal advice. The majority of cases also received additional support. For instance, 177 cases were supported by the preparation and submission of legal briefs to the courts of law, 101 cases were resolved through mediation, 101 cases were supported by legal representation before the court of law, and 84 cases were supported

with DNA tests. Additionally, 460 were referred to other structures of dispute resolution. We enhanced our toll-free line to allow right-holders in need of legal aid to call and get support and advice on legal information and referrals. This initiative reduced the distance right-holder had to travel in order to access our offices to find legal officers.

### Number of Civil Cases



The toll-free line received 20,928 calls from people in need of legal aid during 2021. Our legal officers answered calls and provided not only legal advice, but also guidance on non-legal queries related to accessing social support such as shelter, legal aid, medical, and psychological support. The large quantity of calls proves the high demand for legal aid services.

Legal services are generally difficult to obtain by vulnerable people from remote areas due to barriers such as financial limitations to afford transportation to services and limited information on available legal aid services. The toll-free line was significant in addressing this barrier.

**“ We celebrate, among other successes of the year, the official recognition of 714 children by their fathers who started to provide alimony, and 1,281 women secured their property rights back.**



official  
recognition  
**714**  
children by their  
fathers who started  
to provide alimony



**1,281**  
women secured  
their property rights  
back



On June 1<sup>st</sup> 2021, Haguruka was visited by the Netherlands & Swedish Ambassadors to Rwanda, Amb. Matthijs Wolters & Amb. Johanna Teague. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, among other justices, also joined to learn about Haguruka's work related to legal aid.

# CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT & AWARENESS RAISING

We implemented capacity-building activities including training workshops, refresher training sessions, coaching and mentorship sessions, learning events, community dialogues, as well as awareness raising meetings at the community and the national levels.





KEY HIGHLIGHTS -

# CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND AWARENESS RAISING



“ Participants reported an understanding of women’s rights and a desire to change their attitude and behavior regarding women’s rights.

Our capacity building and awareness raising activities contributed to the empowerment and resilience of women and children who are survivors of GBV. Our work under this pillar was also a big contribution to the improvement of service provision and the respect of citizen’s rights by duty-bearers.

Participants in training activities reported an understanding of women’s rights and a desire to change their attitude and behavior regarding women’s rights. As a result of the community dialogues, perpetrators of violence also changed their attitudes. Men are now involved in domestic chores and responsibilities once



considered as only for women. Men and women expressed improved communication especially by valuing other’s opinions. Couples, who in

Haguruka trained

# 67

**Paralegals**

from **Nyamasheke, Musanze, Kayonza, Gasabo, and Musanze** on gender based violence.

Law

**n°59/2008 of 10/09/2008**



on prevention and punishment of gender based violence.



the past lived in abusive relationships now live in good relationships and are involved in livelihoods activities. Women survivors of GBV were empowered to a level of competing in the elections of local leaders and to win. Now, many of those women are now leaders in the community.

We implemented capacity-building activities including training workshops, refresher training sessions, coaching and mentorship sessions, learning events, community dialogues, as well as awareness-raising meetings at the community and the national levels. We reached various categories of stakeholders: right-holders, paralegals, local authorities, and members of civil society organizations. These sessions covered topics related to GBV law, succession law, land law, rights, justice system, and more.

### Training and awareness-raising meetings

Haguruka trained 67 paralegals from Nyamasheke, Musanze, Kayonza, Gasabo, and Musanze on gender based violence and law n°59/2008 of 10/09/2008 on prevention and punishment of gender based violence.

The training not only built the capacity of paralegals on GBV prevention, but also increased their knowledge on children’s rights, family & succession law, and additional related laws. The training aimed to empower paralegals with adequate skills on key legal matters, especially

GBV laws. We organized awareness-raising meetings at the community level in Gasabo, Musanze, and Nyanza Districts on gender equality & equity and GBV prevention and responses. These meetings aimed to promote gender equality across levels—from the household to the community level. In all, we reached 380 people, the majority women, at community meetings.

We also conducted a series of training for CSOs partners on newly amended laws—including; the law governing land, the law governing persons, and the law relating to the civil, commercial, labor, and administrative procedure. The major objective of the training was to enhance participants’ capacity to provide quality aid to right-holders. During the training, participants also explored attitudes and beliefs that can negatively affect the work.



**85**  
out of  
**89**  
mentored  
and coached



**85** out of the **89** women who were mentored and coached, campaigned in the local elections and **81** of them were elected for different leadership roles in their villages, cells, and sectors.

Haguruka conducted mentorship and coaching sessions on leadership with 89 women. These women were empowered to compete for different positions during the recent elections of government decentralized entities.

Additionally, Haguruka hosted national learning and experience sharing dialogue. The session brought together 25 (5 men and 20 women). The aim was to present and discuss ideas and issues documented in the local government elections as well as strategies to increase women's participation in the decision-making at the local level.

Organized by Haguruka, 43 representatives of CSOs who work on access to justice participated in a one-day workshop to "build an alliance and reflect on citizen-centered legal aid services and knowledge sharing" and 43 representatives of CSOs participated. The main objective of this networking was to learn from partners' different expertise and approaches used in the delivery of legal aid services, share technical know-how on the delivery of legal aid services that is citizen-centered, and identify challenges to come up with actionable recommendations.

**“There is a need for CSOs in legal aid provision to strengthen collaboration, coordination, and communication to ensure a coordinated referral network that is responsive to clients' needs,” participants expressed.**

In the realm of psychosocial support and counseling, we provided training to 32 community dialogues facilitators (20 women and 12 men). Participants were capacitated to facilitate dialogues sessions for couples, women, youth, teen mothers, and intergenerational dialogues (youth and parents). The training covered basic counseling techniques related to the psychological challenges of GBV and interacting with survivors of GBV. Participants also had time to practice some techniques for individual and group counseling.

We also trained facilitators of community dialogues on Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights (SRHR) and GBV Prevention. We trained participants on SRHR content, information, education, and communication (IEC) materials, and facilitation methodologies. Facilitators testified they were equipped with knowledge on gender equality, women's rights, GBV prevention and referrals, knowledge on SRHR, and related rights. This knowledge will help facilitators to lead community dialogues with confidence and thus realize their impact. The training was followed by a refresher session where facilitators used the opportunity to discuss experiences and strategies for difficult cases. Successful stories from the community were also shared and appreciated.

Haguruka conducted capacity training workshops in Musanze and Gasabo districts for 76 local leaders (58 men and 18 women): executive secretaries of cells, village leaders, and Inshuti z'umuryango (Friends of Family). The training aimed to increase the capacity of local leaders to provide legal assistance and orientation to citizens and raise awareness among local authorities to mitigate violence against women and children. The training covered different topics including knowledge of family law, land law, and GBV laws and policies. At the completion of the training, participants were in a strengthened position to uphold women's rights, carry out GBV prevention, and appropriately respond to GBV.

## Community dialogues on basic laws, gender equality and SRHR

Through community facilitators, we conducted a series of dialogue sessions with 160 youth (80 girls and 80 boys) in Musanze and Gasabo Districts. Participants discussed concepts of gender equality, women's rights, and sexual reproductive health and rights. Youth testified that they gained knowledge on SRHR and the ability to claim their rights based on their own choice. Participants also committed to an end of abusing drugs which are associated with poor decision making and negative effects on their lives.

“ Before attending these dialogues, I thought household chores were for girls and women only. But after learning about gender equality, I now share household chores with my sister.” – Shared one young male participant

We completed a series of dialogues for 120 women survivors of GBV in the safe spaces created in the Musanze and Gasabo Districts. Women used the opportunity to discuss and share their personal experiences in a safe environment. Conversations on their rights related to sexual reproductive health, and how they can claim them, also took place. Participants then discussed participation in decision-making and economic activities in their households. As women became more aware of their rights, they simultaneously become more empowered to claim their rights and stand up against GBV. Thanks to their participation in the dialogue sessions, the following was achieved:

*“Twenty-two women started small businesses, two women found jobs in the construction industry, two women became community health workers, and one woman was elected as a member of the committee of the National Woman Council at the village level.”*



We also conducted a series of dialogue sessions with 120 couples (120 men and 120 women) in both the Musanze and Gasabo districts. Most of the couples were living in conflict, and the dialogue sessions presented opportunities for couples to discuss and be trained on different topics—including gender equality, women's rights, gender-based violence, healthy communication for building peaceful families, different types of power and abuse, and cultural norms hindering gender equality. Couples also used the time to discuss the law against GBV, and especially on properties which is the source of family conflict according to participants. At the end of the dialogues, participants made commitments at the individual and couple levels. Those commitments were about changes related to their negative attitudes and behaviors around gender inequalities and gender-based violence.

# SUCCESS STORY

...becoming change agents in the community.



## Success Story: Becoming change agents in the community.

Gasana Mathieu and Uwamahoro Violette are married and live together in Musanze District. They shared their story and experience before and after participating in community dialogues sessions organized for couples by Haguruka:

**“ Before the dialogue sessions, my husband and I were in constant conflicts due alcohol abuse. All our produce was sold just after harvesting, and all the money was spent on alcohol by my husband. My husband used to come back late in night from bars. The kids and I would hide or be beaten by him.**

**Various authorities tried to help us solve the problems through mediation, and he would say that he was going to change, but he had never honored his commitments. He kept abusing us.**

**One day, [my husband and I] were invited by the executive secretary of the cell as one of the families selected to participate in the Haguruka’s community dialogues. We went through sessions on how to build and keep good and peaceful relationships and what GBV is. After understanding what violence is, and what it means to a family and its implications, my husband decided to stop taking too much beer and beating the kids and I. My husband significantly changed since he embarked in the dialogue sessions. He now provides for the family, and he comes back home before it is dark. Our commitments made after the sessions were: maintain a healthy family relationship, avoid conflict, and become change agents in our neighborhood,” shared Violette.**



**10**

Sessions of safe spaces with single and teen mothers to share their experiences

We conducted 10 sessions of safe spaces with single and teen mothers to share their experiences. SRHR issues were extensively discussed, and teen mothers learned different methods they can use to prevent future unplanned pregnancies. Those who did not report their cases in both Musanze and Gasabo districts were legally supported by Haguruka’s lawyers to report and also register their children.



**240**

Teen mothers and their parents

We conducted intergenerational dialogue sessions with 240 teen mothers and their parents in Musanze and Gasabo districts. During the sessions, participants discussed violence against children and child rights. As a result, parents understood the necessity of helping their daughters who gave birth to go back to school. Some parents supported them to be reintegrated into formal education and others into informal vocational training.

**“ I appreciated the methodology used by the facilitators of the dialogue sessions. They treated us as their friends. Facilitators started by telling us their personal history on how they went through their adolescence: how it was not easy for them and how tough challenges they faced during that time were. Their testimonies increased trust between them and us and we were more open and we started sharing our experience: how we got pregnant, our feelings and challenges after giving birth”.**

Said one teen mum who participated in community dialogue sessions in Gasabo district.

Haguruka conducted awareness workshops on GBV against girls and women with disabilities in Musanze, Nyabihu, Rwamagana, and Muhanga. Awareness sessions contributed to 1) increased capacity and knowledge of local leaders to

effectively respond to specific needs of Girls and Women with Disability (G&WWD) at the community level; 2) contributed to the improved perception and practices towards disability-friendly SGBV and justice services for G&WWD.

Name of the activity	Women reached	Men reached	Total
Youth dialogue sessions	80	80	160
Women safe spaces	120	0	120
Dialogue sessions with couples	120	120	240
Intergeneration dialogue with teen mothers and parents	160	80	240
Dialogue sessions with teen mothers	80	0	80
Dialogue sessions with girls and women with disabilities on GBV legal framework	134	119	253
GBV mobile clinic during 16 days of activism against GBV	900	300	1100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1594</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>2293</b>

## COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION



Haguruka undertook an initiative on the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) module developed by The Rwanda Education Board and the National Examination and School Inspection Authority (NESA) to simplify, summarize, and adapt the module to be more user-friendly for teachers.

“ An initiative on the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) module developed to simplify, summarize, and adapt the module to be more user-friendly for teachers.”

The module was developed as a guide for teaching CSE in secondary schools.

However, per the results of the baseline evaluation of the Amplify-funded project conducted by Haguruka last year, CSE was found to be too long, boring, and not user friendly. The simplified CSE module was finalized and distributed at the end of the reporting period.

## DEVELOPMENT OF HAGURUKA STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027

The new strategic plan seeks to reinforce HAGURUKA's commitment and approach to promoting gender equality and equity while exploring new ways of maximizing the advancement of women and children's rights from different angles. The strategic plan has three strategic directions:

- Legal aid and Psychosocial support
- Capacity Development & Awareness Raising
- Research and Advocacy

By the reporting period, the strategic plan was still under review and in the near future our goal is to finalize and receive approval by the competent organs before implementation.



# RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

Our research findings and lessons learned were used to engage key duty-bearers and advocates on women and children's rights, especially gender equality and protection against violence.



Strategic Recommendations entities.

1. MIGEPROFE & FFRP
  - 1. MIGEPROFE - to revise the existing strategies for Plans and Strategy on Women and Youth Access to Finance (2018-2022) women role model and challenges facing women in local levels.
  - 2. FFRP - to initiate national debate on critical issues facing understanding of gender equality and positive culture v
  - 3. MIGEPROFE - to develop specific programs targeting key partner to ensure good understanding of gender equality to ensure "No One Left Behind" SDG5 goal.
2. HAGURUKA & PARTNERS
  - 1. Prepare three year action plan in partnership with other building of women at community level prior to election and
  - 2. Support districts to establish special tri-partite committee to be ready to participate in decision making positions;
  - 3. Support Haguruka and FFRP with experts to support debates and produce reports to inform national policies
3. MINALOC, NEC, MIFOTRA
  - 1. Partnership Model with MIFOTRA to assess particular conditions of women and Cells as people with naturally specific responsibilities in the appointment of women in the position of ES at sector or cell, should include schools, hospital or health center etc.
  - 2. The members of ES to remain 7 days at the HQ of the sector should be
  - 3. The secretary of the Sector and Cells, to advise some officers of the MIFOTRA to set up a special committee in charge of raising the awareness of women



## RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY



“...through research and advocacy work done, we committed more than ever to our role as a convener.

During the reporting period, through research and advocacy work done, we committed more than ever to our role as a convener. Our research findings and lessons learned were used to engage key duty-bearers and advocates on women and children’s rights, especially gender equality and protection against violence.



We conducted two assessments: 1) a mapping of ADR community-based structures and 2) an assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of gender-related laws and policies. We disseminated findings and recommendations from the assessment in national stakeholder meetings. Additionally,

we organized a breakfast meeting with key actors in the women empowerment area for the dissemination of findings of the study conducted on women participation. Finally, we organized a round table discussion on Access to Justice for Girls and Women with Disabilities.

## Mapping of ADR community-based structures

The assessment covered 10 districts including Ngoma, Kayonza, Ruhango, Nyanza, Nyamasheke, Karongi, Musanze, Gakenke, Gasabo, and Kicukiro districts. The overall objective of the assessment was to contribute to the body of knowledge on alternative dispute resolution community structures towards their effectiveness in Rwanda. A validation meeting to disseminate findings and to get inputs from key actors in ADR was organized on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, and 15 people from different institutions such as the Ministry of Justice, CSOs, and RIB participated. Participants commended the work done by Haguruka and the quality of the report.

### Mapping of ADR community-based structures

10

Districts covered



Ngoma, Kayonza,  
Ruhango, Nyanza,  
Nyamasheke,  
Karongi, Musanze,  
Gakenke, Gasabo,  
and Kicukiro  
districts



## Assessment of the effectiveness of the enforcement of gender-related laws and policies

The assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of gender-related laws and policies was conducted in 10 districts i.e Gasabo, Nyarugenge, Ngoma, Kayonza, Nyamasheke, Rusizi, Gisagara, Nyanza, Musanze, and Gicumbi. The overall objective of the assessment was to undertake a thorough analysis of existing policies, strategies, and laws and to document implementation gaps that may constitute the underlying causes of gender inequalities and gender-based conflicts.

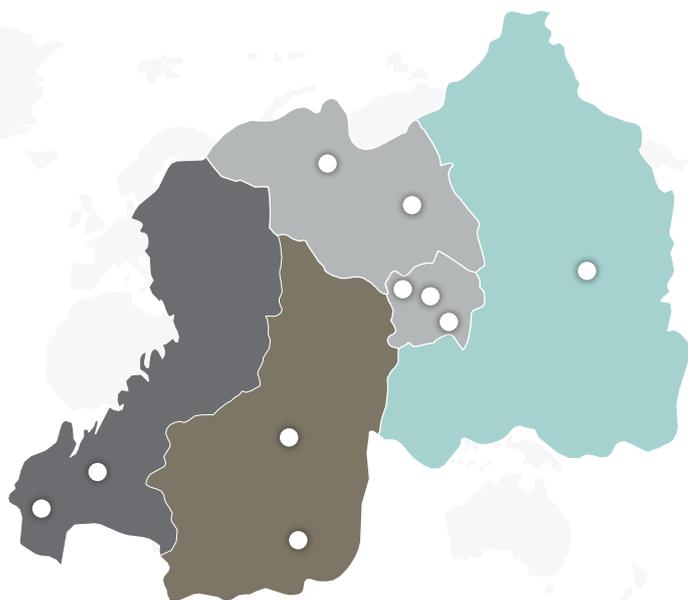
### Implementation of gender-related laws and policies

10

Districts covered



Gasabo, Nyarugenge, Ngoma, Kayonza, Nyamasheke, Rusizi,  
Gisagara, Nyanza, Musanze, and Gicumbi.



## FROM THE ASSESSMENT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- The implementation of gender equality-related laws and policies were rated “very good” for key sectors: governance, economic empowerment, education, and health.
- The awareness about the meaning and intention of the concept of “Gender Equality” and how it should be applied was “poorly” rated as people misunderstand or misinterpret the concept which subsequently leads to family conflicts and violence
- Implementation challenges persist for some laws and policies—mainly around family properties, headship, and GBV punitive measures of 25 years in prison for defilement even when families have already arranged unions between their children
- Major gaps include, but are not limited to, inadequate gender analysis, insufficient

gender planning and budgeting at the district level, low level of women’s participation in well-paid and top decision-making positions, GBV reporting and feedback mechanisms, low gender sensitivity among some local leaders, and lack of practical strategies to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuses and harassment at workplace and public venues

- While gender mainstreaming in the education sector is judged “effective” in primary and secondary education, gaps are noted in areas of low numbers of females’ enrolment, completion, and staffing in TVET and High Learning Institutions—especially in government-sponsored universities and colleges.



## THE ASSESSMENT FINDINGS LED TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS BELOW:

- Increased synergy between different actors, systematic awareness of community members about the real meaning and intention of gender equality, capacity strengthening of local structures on family conflicts resolving, GBV case reporting and feedback mechanisms.
- Capacity building for all local leaders on revised Gender Policy 2021 and other

gender equality related laws and policies; specifically, the management of family properties and defilement related laws and policies is strongly recommended.

- The establishment of more reliable reporting and feedback mechanisms for GBV cases remains desirable.



“...conducted a breakfast meeting to disseminate findings from a study conducted on factors that contribute to the low representation of women in decision-making bodies in both informal and formal sectors in Rwanda.”



**Breakfast meeting on Women’s participation in decision making positions at the local level.**

During the reporting period, we conducted a breakfast meeting to disseminate findings from a study conducted on factors that contribute to the low representation of women in decision-making bodies in both informal and formal sectors in Rwanda. The meeting discussed findings of the study, innovative ideas, and realistic strategies to empower and encourage women to campaign and participate in the upcoming national elections at local levels. Participants also formulated recommendations on what should be done to ensure the full participation of women in decision-making bodies.

### Findings of the study highlighted in the meeting included the following main factors:

- Difficult work conditions in the local administration
- Misunderstanding of gender concepts
- Limited access to information
- Limited support of husband and community
- Weak Support of Peer Women
- Family education
- Insufficient support for Women Role Model (WRM).
- Low self-confidence,
- Education background,

- Fear of failure,
- Household responsibilities
- Financial capabilities of women

### The key recommendations of the meeting are as follows:

- Increased involvement of men in supporting women for leadership positions as a priority
- Root causes preventing women from being in leadership positions must be addressed first: patriarchal mindset, stereotypes, the power imbalance in control over resources between men and women.



## National round table discussion on access to justice for girls and women with disabilities

During this reporting period on May 6th 2021, Haguruka organized a round table discussion on Access to Justice for Girls and Women with Disabilities. Both government institutions and civil society organizations attended.

These included key institutions in legal reform such as the Rwandan Law Reform Commission, Ministry of Justice, RIB, Gender Monitoring Office, Rwandan Public Prosecution authority, and private institutions. The objective was to discuss and share experiences to influence the draft of the Disability Inclusive Justice Strategic Plan.

Participants discussed issues related to how persons with disabilities especially G&WWD girls and women with disabilities can access

justice and also influence the draft of the Disability Inclusive Justice Strategic Plan.

**“** *The language barrier remains one of the major hindrances for people with disabilities to access justice. Mitigating this challenge will greatly contribute towards inclusion.*”

*Participants expressed this during the plenary session*



## LESSONS LEARNED

“ ...need to expand the capacity of the organization’s “digitalization” in order to be able to sustain our work during difficult moments, such as pandemics, and to stay relevant in the digital world.

Covid-19 created and revealed significant challenges throughout the world and Rwanda. Haguruka, too, faced these challenges. While global COVID-19 infections continue, we must increase measures for preparedness such as including assessing transmission risks during the course of work and potential direct impacts of the pandemic and developing management plans for Covid-19.

Working with local authorities to deliver our interventions is largely contributed to our success, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. We must continue to keep local authorities as our allies and reinforce their capacity and skills to address issues of women and girls, particularly to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

Technology was very instrumental to our work during the past year. Thanks to the toll-free line, citizens in need of legal aid called and received the information needed without traveling to Haguruka offices. Our staff continued the work of the organization remotely to prevent the spread of Covid-19. However, the Covid-19 pandemic taught us that implementing and monitoring our programs remotely will continue to happen and may even be more cost-efficient. We, therefore, need to expand the capacity of the organization’s “digitalization” in order to be able to sustain our work during difficult moments, such as pandemics, and to stay relevant in the digital world.



## OUR TEAM, SUPPORTERS, AND PARTNERS

Last year we had the pleasure of working with and being supported by a wide range of exceptional individuals, organizations in the civil society, and private sector. We would like to thank all of them for their invaluable support.

Our sincere gratitude also goes to our donors and supporters. Our work and success would not be possible without you.

Last but not least, we would like to thank our amazing staff, volunteers, and Board members for their hard work and dedication to HaguruKa over the last year. Your commitment, passion, and excellence in helping the most vulnerable women and children to get their rights are highly regarded. We are sincerely thankful for your contribution.



Norwegian People's Aid



*Thank You!*



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