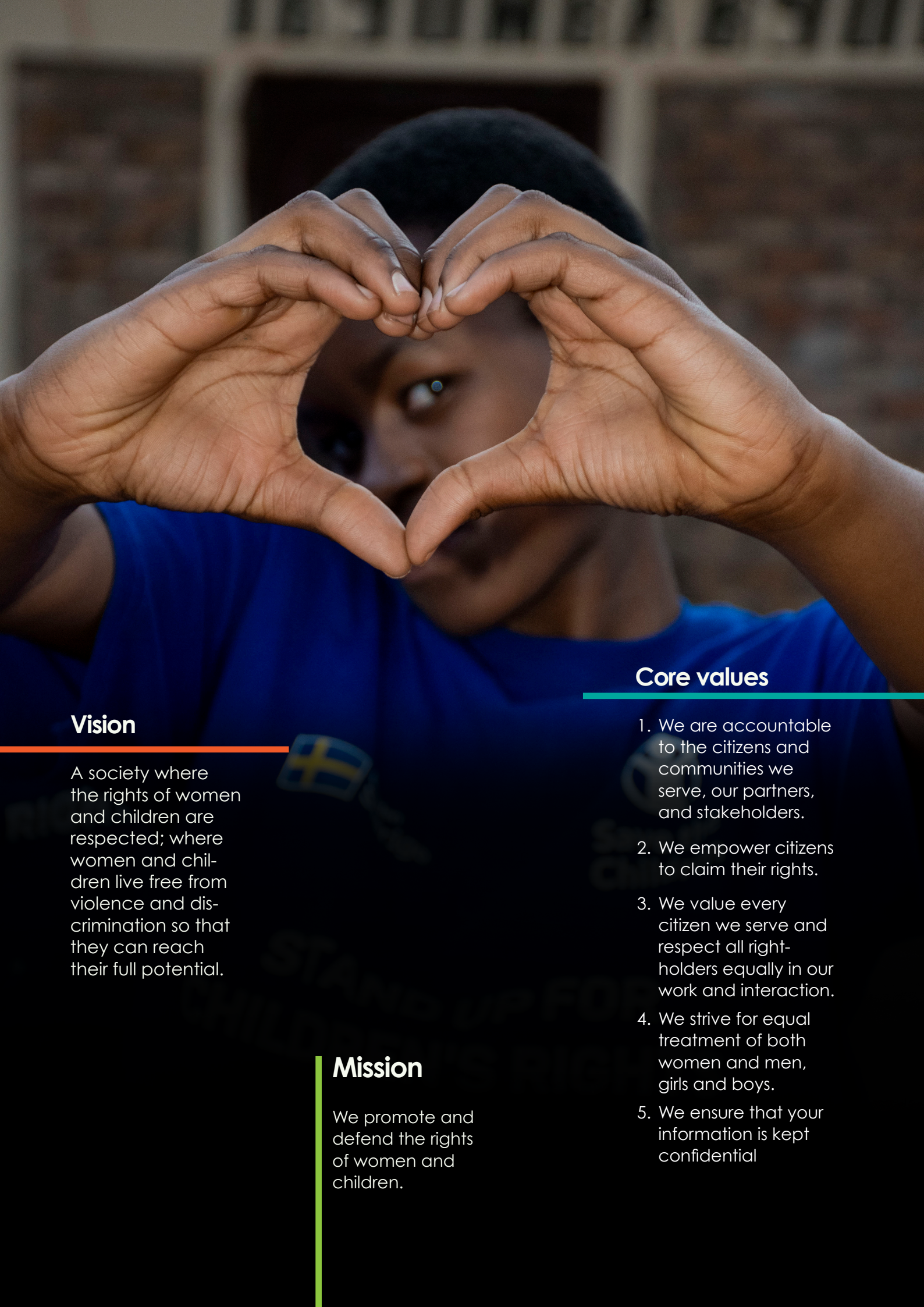




HAGURUKA
Defending the rights of women and children

Every Woman,
Every Child –
Rights Matter.

ANNUAL REPORT
2024



Vision

A society where the rights of women and children are respected; where women and children live free from violence and discrimination so that they can reach their full potential.

Mission

We promote and defend the rights of women and children.

Core values

1. We are accountable to the citizens and communities we serve, our partners, and stakeholders.
2. We empower citizens to claim their rights.
3. We value every citizen we serve and respect all right-holders equally in our work and interaction.
4. We strive for equal treatment of both women and men, girls and boys.
5. We ensure that your information is kept confidential

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

RFI: Rwanda Forensic institute

MEAL: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

GBV: Gender Bases Violence

RIB: Rwanda Investigation bureau

NPPA: National Public Prosecution Agency

NCDA: National Child development agency

MAJ: Access to Justice Bureaus (maison d'access de justice)

LAF: Legal aid forum

MINADEF: Ministry of Defence

CSW: Commission on the Status of Women

SRHR: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

UWONET: Uganda Women's Network

NCDA: National Child Development Agency

NRS: National Rehabilitation Service

MIGEPROF: Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion

MINALOC: Ministry of Local Government

MINIJUST: Ministry of Justice

NHCR: National Human Rights Commission



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

**When GBV persist,
the mission to fight
against it becomes
our duty**

On behalf of the HAGURUKA Board of Directors and staff, I'm delighted to present the report that entails the achievements for the year 2024. The report highlights the realized achievements, success stories as well as the way forward.

We provided legal aid services to **2656** (1828F & 828M) people. Connected to that we represented 194 victims of GBV before courts of law. HAGURUKA conducted awareness raising on Family Law, Land Law, GBV Law, and Child Rights that reached **18,730 people** (11,631F & 7,099M).

The awareness was conducted through community assemblies (inteko z'abaturage), radio and Tv shows as well as community dialogues. In the spirit of enlightening citizens on their rights and obligations and building more informed citizens as stipulated in legal aid policy

In line to improve the capacity of state and non-state actors to effectively deliver, we have trained **4868** (2222F & 2646M) different categories of people such as Medical Doctors, Nurses, local leaders on different laws. Under research and advocacy, we developed NST2 policy brief, conducted assessment on shelters as well as development of SOPs for HAGURUKA shelters.

These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication and courage of the HAGURUKA staff, the support of our esteemed partners, and guidance from the board of directors; all the above achievements would not have been realized. Your contribution of all kinds to the advancement of the HAGURUKA Mission has not been taken for granted. Despite of changing landscape in funding, HAGURUKA remains attached to the cause of empowering the community in line with our mission.

Thank you!

Me MUNYANKINDI Monique
Legal Representative
HAGURUKA



Their Rights, Our Fight

ASK ME ABOUT

ABOUT HAGURUKA

Haguruka is a non-governmental organization registered under Rwandan law, founded in 1991 with the mission to promote and defend the rights of women and children. Haguruka has its head office in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda, and regional offices in the Northern, Eastern, Southern, and Western provinces of the country.

Our Areas of Intervention

Haguruka pursues her mission in the following three primary strategic areas:



1 Organization
Capacity
Development
[OCD]



2 Access to
Justice and
Psychosocial
Support
[AJPS]



3 Research
and
Advocacy
[RAD]



4,868

Individuals
trained in
various
programs.

18,730

Reached through
community
awareness
campaigns.

2,656

Received legal
assistance

194

Right holders
represented in
court.

120

Facilitated
mediation for
right holders

YEAR AT A GLANCE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, Haguruka significantly advanced its mission by delivering direct legal aid to 2,656 individuals and raising awareness of rights among 18,730 community members.

We enhanced community support systems by training 4,868 right-holders and duty-bearers.

Our achievements are attributed to innovative, community-focused strategies, including mobile clinics, community dialogues, and specialized training programs.



2,656

Individuals directly received legal aid which significantly advanced Haguruka's mission



18,730

Members were educated on their Rights and GBV prevention through the Community Awareness Campaigns.



4,868

Right holders & Duty-bearers reached to enhance their ability to effectively serve the community.





**Organization
Capacity
Development
(OCD)**

As envisioned in HAGURUKA's strategic plan, the organization is dedicated to boosting the capacity of staff and paralegals to effectively serve our rights holders. In this regard 30 staff and 45 paralegals were empowered on diverse topics.

SUCCESS STORY

Marie claire finds justice through paralegal services



My name is Nkurunziza Marie Claire; I was illegally married with Joseph Nizeyimana whom we lived together for over 10 years blessed with 1 daughter. While living together we acquired properties composed of land, 2 plots, and 2 houses.

Later, my husband left our home to find another wife and excluded me on properties as if we have never known each other claiming that I'm not his wife and I don't have any contribution in properties we had.

Later I participated in a dialogue where Haguruka paralegal sensitized the rights of women

on properties especially those living in informal marriage. After the meeting, I approached her presented my case and she linked me with Haguruka Lawyer.

Haguruka gave me the lawyer to represent me before the court. The final court decision ordered that Nizeyimana should give me one house worth 12,000,000Frws which changed my life and the life of my child as I had registered it and started to rent it and earn money to start a small business.

I thank HAGURUKA for the tremendous support that helped me to access justice.



Smartphones: Enhancing Paralegal effectiveness

Paralegals are vital bridges connecting citizens to legal support and HAGURUKA services, acting as key agents for community mobilization on legal matters, GBV prevention, and response.

Equipping paralegals with smartphones has significantly enhanced their effectiveness. As a result, they now submit reports directly into HAGURUKA's dashboards and Kobotool. This

technological upgrade has led to increased data accessibility, improved data storage, and enhanced data security.

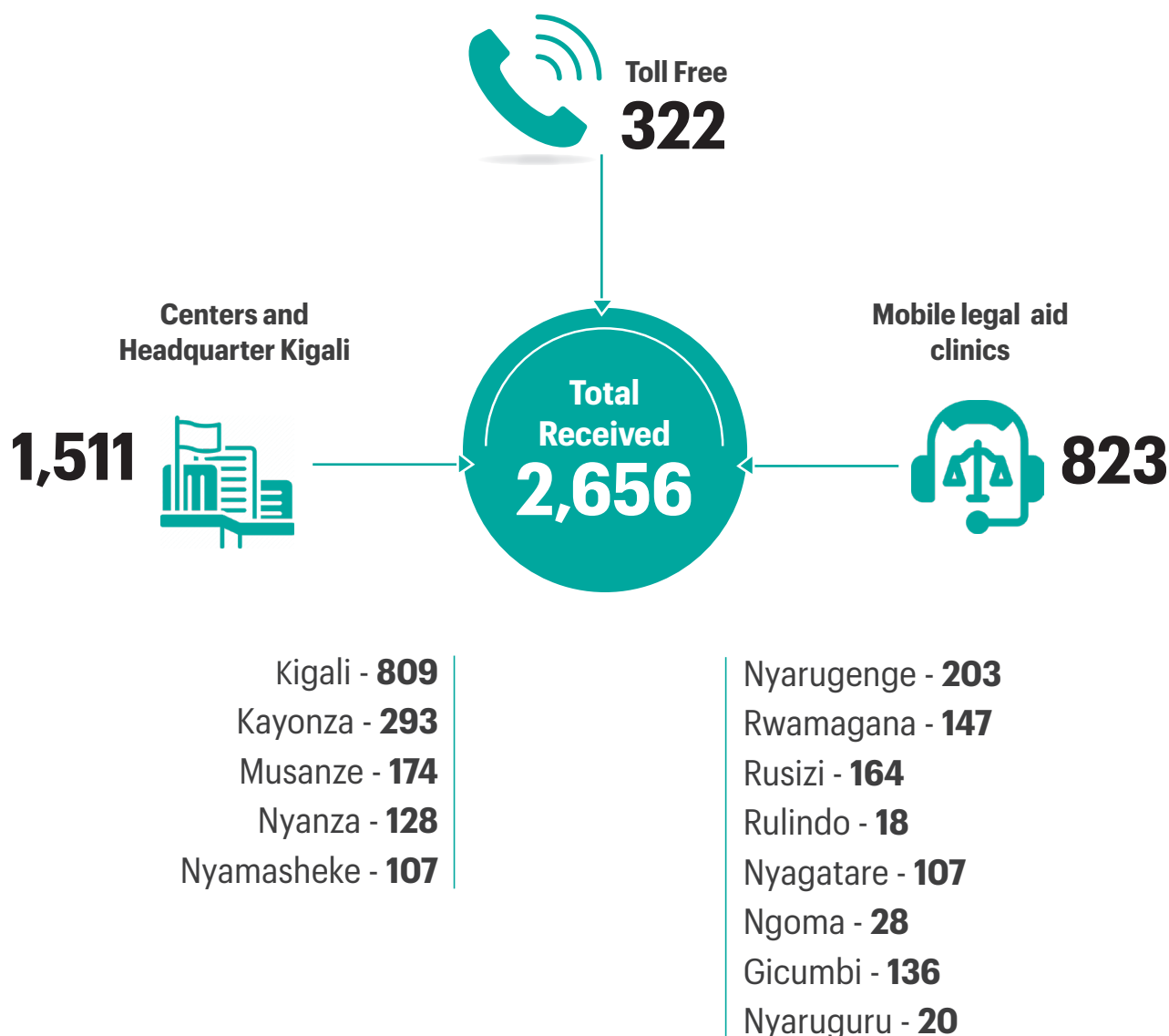
Zainabu Kayitesi, a paralegal from Remera Sector, Ngoma District, shared:

"Before I used to report in a traditional way using books, where I sometimes lost the information, but now I am using a smartphone to report to Haguruka systems, taking pictures to support my reports, calling right holders, and following the progress of rights holders' cases, especially those referred to different institutions."



Access to Justice and Psychosocial Support (AJPS)

HAGURUKA support vulnerable women and children to access justice, through representing them before courts of law, DNA testing, legal advice, mediation. In this regard, HAGURUKA supported 2,656 right holders. In the adult category 344 were males, 1300 females while in children category were 484 boys, and 528 girls. The above right holders were received under below channels.



Center and Head office

Establishment of Haguruka offices in provinces and city of Kigali helped citizens to easily access Haguruka services without travelling long distance

Mobile legal aid clinics

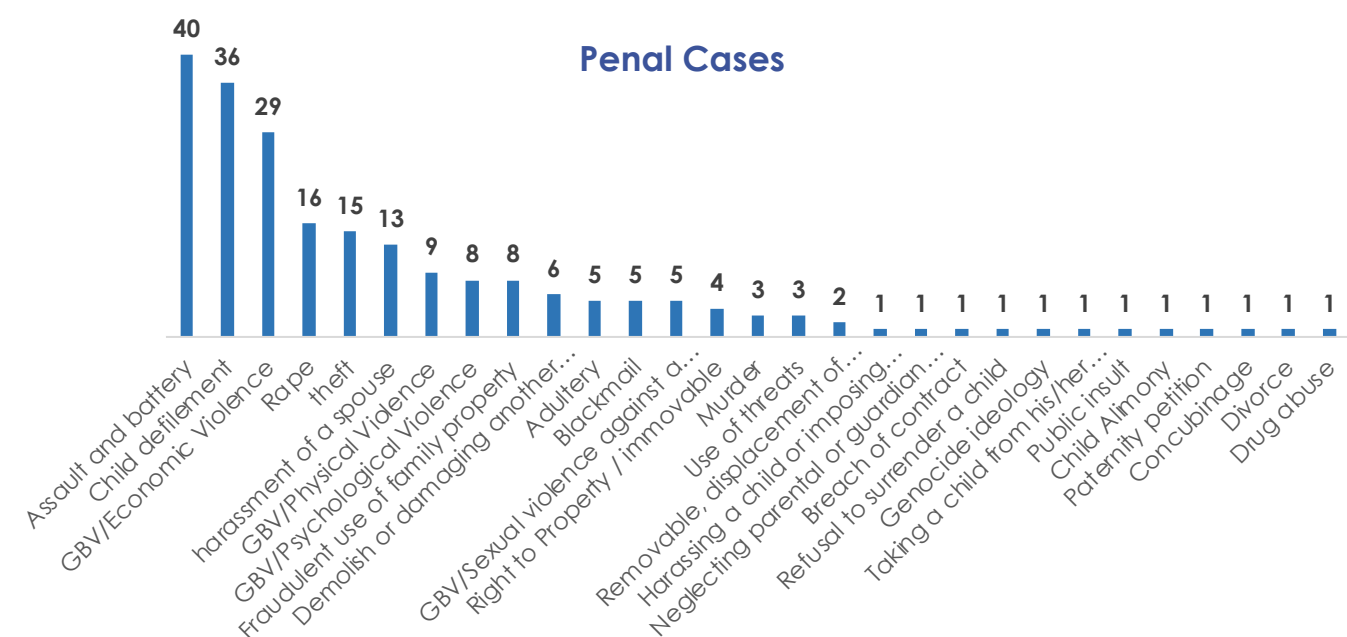
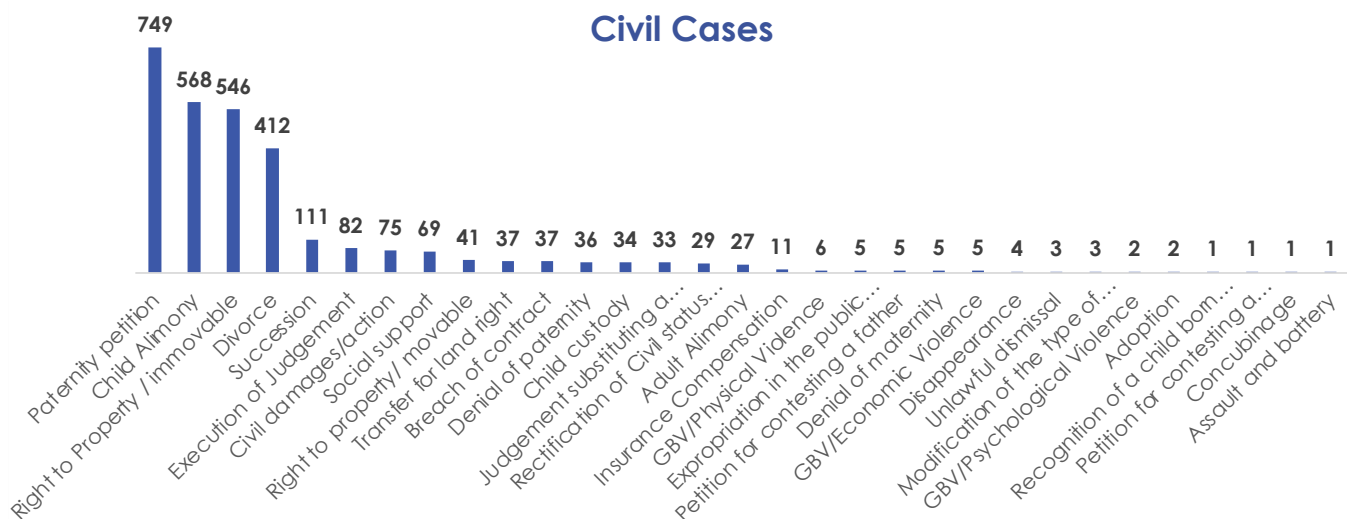
In line to decentralize services closer citizens especially those leaving in remote areas, Haguruka conduct MLAC. This has approach help citizens to cut the cost and time it would have taken to access justice

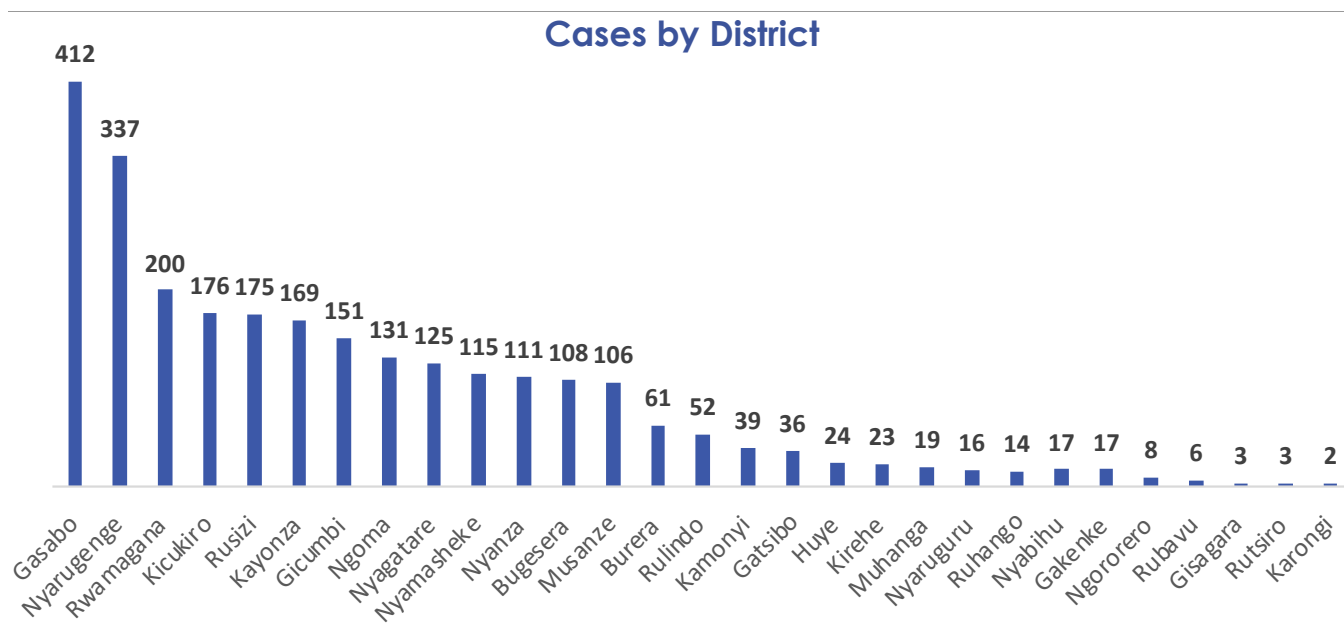
Toll free number (4311)

On the other hand, toll free support right holders to follow-up to progress of their cases without coming to Haguruka offices. It helps right holders to lodge cases without coming to offices as well as seeking advices on proper evidence gathering

CASES CATEGORIZATION

Among the 2,656 right holders received, their cases were analyzed and categorized. Based on analysis, some cases involved multiple categories which is why the number of categories exceed the number of right holders that presented the cases as summarized in the graph below.

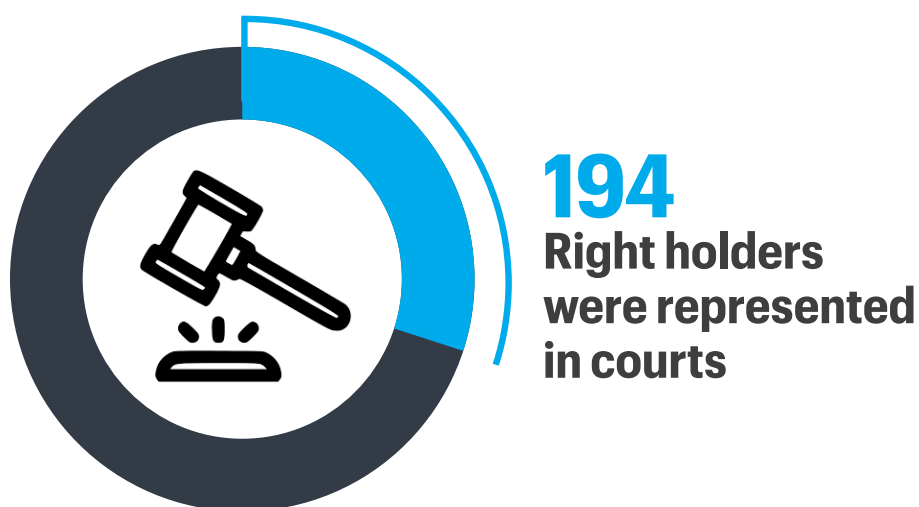


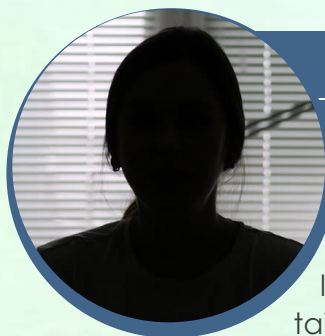


OFFERING LEGAL AID SERVICES

Legal representation

Haguruka represents vulnerable women and children with financial difficulties to access Justice by representing them before courts of law. In that regard, 194 (F:183, M:11) right holders were represented in courts as summarized in graph below.





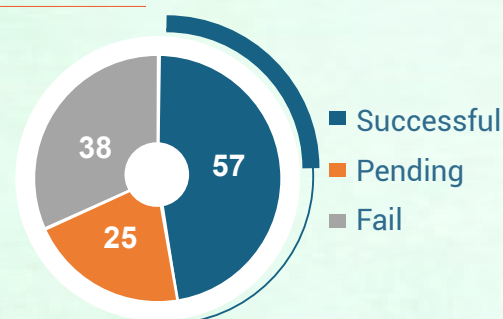
From illegal marriage to equal ownership

My name is UWERA Marie Louise, I live in Zaza Sector, Ngoma District. I was illegally married to a man, and our relationship was engulfed in relentless conflict, which resulted in my exclusion from the properties we obtained during our cohabitation simply because we weren't legally married.

I approached the Haguruka office in Ngoma to present my case, and they supported me in filing the case and represented me in court. The court ordered that we share three houses and land equally. However, the judgment was not executed due to a spelling error in the court decision. Haguruka's lawyer helped me file a complaint to the court requesting the correction of the errors, asked for an enforcement order, and advocated for me with a bailiff who assisted in executing my judgment. I have now regained my rights and received my 50% share of the property, thanks to Haguruka's assistance.

MEDIATION

Haguruka believes in the power of mediation to achieve mutually acceptable resolutions without resorting to formal court trials. This year, we facilitated mediation for 120 right-holders, helping them resolve conflicts effectively and amicably.



Mediation transformed a former prisoner's mindset

I am Mukabahigi, a 65-year-old woman living in Kabatasi Cell, Rubona Sector, Rwamagana District. I was married to Cyaruhinda Francois before the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Our lives took a devastating turn when Cyaruhinda was accused of committing crimes related to the genocide and was sentenced to 18 years in prison.

In 2013, Cyaruhinda was released and returned home, but his behavior had changed dramatically. He had developed a severe drinking problem, which led to violent outbursts and chaos in our home. The local authorities tried to intervene, but their efforts were in vain. I feared that if we separated, our house would be divided, leaving me homeless in my old age. The authorities' decision to have Cyaruhinda live in one part of the house while my daughter, grandson, and I lived in another only provided temporary relief.

One day, I learned about Haguruka lawyers offering free legal services at our cell office. They listened attentively to my story and worked with the local leaders to summon Cyaruhinda, our daughter, and me. Cyaruhinda acknowledged the harm his behavior had caused and agreed to work on changing his ways. The lawyer guided him in improving his behavior and understanding its legal implications. Through mediation, we were able to address the root causes of our problems, and today, our home is filled with love and harmony.

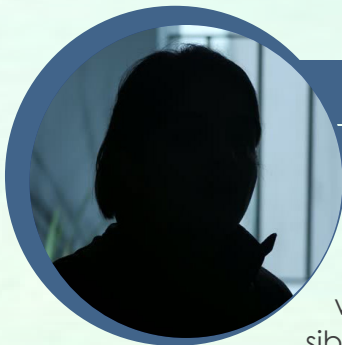
DNA TESTING FOR VULNERABLE FAMILIES

Haguruka supports rights holders facing financial constraints through DNA testing. DNA testing, valuable for paternity cases and identity verification, provides evidence that supports victims in obtaining justice and holds perpetrators accountable in court.



51
tests (72%)
were positive

20
tests (28%)
were negative



Anne: Haguruka's DNA test restored our family

My name is Anne Kamariza, and I'm from Musanze District. After years of marriage, my husband began denying our two children, claiming they weren't his. It was a devastating situation, marked by his refusal of responsibility, escalating gender-based violence, and constant harassment. He would even physically abuse me in front of our children.

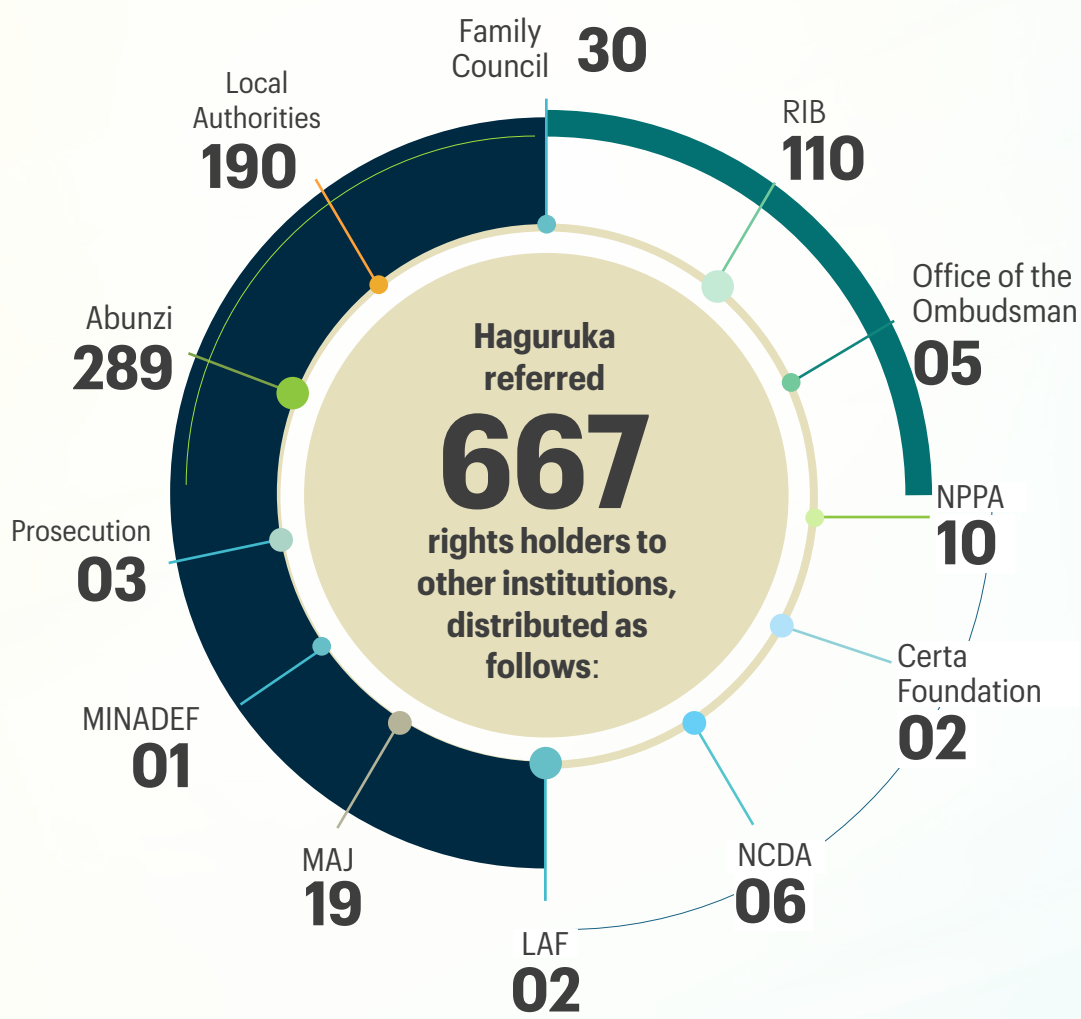
My children were terrified of their father, and I felt like I was failing them as a mother. Desperate, I reached out to Haguruka. Their legal team immediately took up my case and recommended a DNA test to definitively establish paternity and connected me with a counselor who helped me cope with the emotional trauma I had endured.

The DNA test results confirmed what I already knew in my heart: he was their father. With the test results in hand, he finally accepted his responsibility as a father. It wasn't just about their identity; it changed our whole family dynamic for the better. The violence and harassment stopped, and we began to rebuild our relationship.

Haguruka's intervention was a lifeline for me and my children. They provided emotional support, legal guidance, and a sense of hope when I thought all was lost.

SUPPORT TO RIGHTS HOLDERS, LEGAL ADVICE, LEGAL BRIEF, REFERRAL

Haguruka's Support to Rights holders			
Characteristic	Legal Advice	Legal Brief	Referral
Description	Guidance on accessing justice	Court submission documents preparation	Referring cases outside jurisdiction
Individuals Assisted	1,288 individuals	316 briefs	667 Rights holders



CAPACITY BUILDING



To enhance the capacity of state and non-state actors to effectively deliver services within their mandates, we have trained 4,868 (2222F & 2646M) individuals on various topics including GBV prevention and response, forensic evidence collection, chain of custody, and relevant laws.

Training Categories



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Training of law students
Reached 50 participants | 5 Training of community facilitators
Reached 40 participants |
| 2 Training of partners and GBV actors
Reached 20 participants | 6 Training of religious leaders
Reached 30 participants |
| 3 Training of medical doctors and nurses
Reached 192 participants | 7 Training on Land
Reached 4,496 participants |
| 4 Training of conflicting couples
Reached 40 participants | |



AWARENESS RAISING



Haguruka's campaigns reached 18,730 citizens with information on family laws, land laws, GBV prevention, gender equality, SRHR, ADR, and child rights, empowering them to understand their rights and obligations. er equality and complementarity, SRHR, ADR for successful engagement of citizens and Child rights.



Number Reached, Target Audience and Topics Covered



10,631



Community Forums
Land Rights and Key Laws

845



Genocide Victims' Associations, Community Members
International Trials Based on Universal Jurisdiction

6,050



Couples, Teen Mothers, Youth, Intergeneration dialogue, Parents
Gender Equality, BGV Prevention, Self-Esteem Leadership, Empowering Individuals and Families to Heal

1,204



Multifamily Sessions
Empowering Individuals and Families to Heal

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS OF PARENTS AND TEEN MOTHERS



Haguruka-facilitated dialogues between teen mothers and parents resulted in 60% of parents committing to end harassment and support their children's education. As a result, 12 teen mothers returned to school.

In addition to these dialogues, teen mothers received empowering services, including counseling, HIV/hepatitis testing, and SRHR support. Furthermore, 32 teen mothers joined a family planning program, and 21 children of teen mothers gained legal recognition through civil registration.

TEEN MOTHERS AND PARENTS RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS



COUPLES RESTORED THEIR RELATIONSHIPS



Story of change for a former military and his wife

Their story is one of many out of 120 couples who participated, 113 pledged to live peacefully, while 3 couples chose to legalize their marriages.

My name is Twahirwa Issa, and my wife is Kuradusenge Joseline. We live in Muhoza Sector, Kigombe Cell. When we first joined the couples' dialogue sessions, we were among the most conflicted participants. I often attended while intoxicated, displaying anger and even insulting the facilitators. At times, we seriously considered not returning.

Our conflicts stemmed from economic struggles and physical violence. As former military personnel, I struggled with trauma after demobilization. Losing my job left me frustrated and hopeless, which led to physical abuse of Joseline especially when she asked for money while I spent our limited earnings on alcohol. Everything began to change after we committed to the couples' dialogue sessions organized by Haguruka.

Over 12 consistent sessions focused on gender equality, GBV prevention, and family cohesion, the facilitators provided close guidance and regular follow-ups, visiting us multiple times at home. Their patience and support helped me confront my trauma and understand the impact of my actions.

Gradually, I decided to change. I found work at a car wash and took full responsibility for supporting my family. Joseline and I learned to communicate better, resolve conflicts peacefully, and rebuild trust. By the end of the program, we had transformed into a model couple and proudly shared our testimony on graduation day.



INVESTING IN WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



Haguruka empowered 120 women in Musanze and Gasabo through training on self-esteem, confidence, and leadership, creating a supportive environment for pursuing their aspirations.

These sessions also catalyzed the formation of grassroots savings and lending groups. For example, in Rwebeya Cell, 15 women established a savings scheme, collectively contributing 10,000 Rwandan francs per month, which has driven tangible improvements in their living standards.



Uwayezu's story: from domestic life to village leader

My name is Uwayezu Henriette, and I am from Kabeza Cell, Cyuve Sector. Now, I am a village leader, but before HAGURUKA, my life was very different. We had no peace in our house; we used to fight, and economic violence was a constant struggle. It was a very difficult time. Then, I joined the HAGURUKA training. They taught us so much: self-confidence, self-esteem, public speaking, and even how to work with banks to improve our lives. Before, I was afraid to speak up, but the training gave me the courage to share my ideas in community meetings. To my surprise, people listened! They started trusting me, not because I was a woman, but because they valued what I had to say.

That's how I became a village leader. Now, I help other women in my community find their own strength and resolve their conflicts. I even encourage them to take out loans from Umurenge SACCO so we can work together to improve our lives. "I never imagined I could be a leader, but HAGURUKA showed me that I had a voice and that my voice mattered. It's changed my life, and I'm so grateful."



AWARENESS ON SRHR: ENSURING RIGHTS AND CHOICES FOR ALL

Awareness of SRHR emphasized the importance of consent, particularly in sexual matters, and highlighted the role of contraceptive tools in preventing sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. This empowerment enables individuals to confidently voice their consent and stand against gender-based violence, as testified by



In my Muslim community, sexual reproductive health isn't openly discussed, as it's viewed as a sacred subject. One common misconception I learned was that acne and breast size are linked to sexual activity, which isn't true at all. I believe parents should be friends with their kids so they can talk openly about SRHR."

Alida - 20 Years Old



"Growing up in homeless shelters since I was six, I lacked the opportunity to learn about reproductive health from my family. My parents' separation and often conflicting advice further compounded my confusion. Learning about sexual and reproductive health from the sessions has helped me a lot."

Nasili - 22 Years Old

DEEPENING FAMILY COHESION THROUGH THE MULTIFAMILY HEALING SPACES

Multifamily Healing Spaces led by Haguruka are creating more nurturing family environments. We saw significant improvements in parenting approaches: parents reported increased warmth, and youth recognition of positive parenting more than doubled. These changes reflect strengthened trust, empathy, and family bonds.



Multifamily Healing Spaces

Parents Reporting
affective practices
rose from
64.1%-76.2%

Youth recognition
parenting surged from
34%-71.9%

THE IMPACT OF MULTIFAMILY SPACES ON JESSICA'S SCHOOL PERFORMANCE



Growing up in a household plagued by conflict and poor communication, Jessica's academic performance suffered. Her father, Antoine Ibyimana, often made decisions without consulting her mother, Mediatrice, leading to strained relationships, emotional difficulties, and other misbehaviors.

The tension at home affected Jessica's performance at school. Everything changed when the Ibyimana family participated in the Multifamily Healing Space program, which focuses



on fostering family relationships and improving the well-being of both parents and children.

Through the sessions, family members learned to listen, apologize, and involve each other in decision-making. As a result, their family conflicts transformed; they began to communicate openly and make decisions together.

The impact of this program extended far beyond the parents, as Jessica's academic performance and confidence soared, with her now ranking among the best performers in class. *"I feel supported at home; my grades have improved, and I'm more confident,"* she shared.



**Research &
Advocacy and Strategic
Partnerships (RAD)**

RESEARCH INITIATIVES

OUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NST2 DESIGN PROCESS

Through a coalition of 17 women's rights organizations, namely the Rwanda Women's Alliance formed by Haguruka, we advocate for the rights of women and children. Together, we developed a policy brief outlining key priorities for gender equality and GBV prevention to be included in the National Strategy for Transformation (NST) 2.

KEY PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS FOR NST-2



ASSESSMENT OF GBV SHELTER SERVICES IN RWANDA

Haguruka conducted a comprehensive assessment to identify gaps in the implementation of GBV shelters, recognizing the global challenge of Gender-Based Violence, which primarily affects the safety of women and girls. With many women in Rwanda facing similar experiences, the assessment focused on the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of existing shelters in meeting the needs of victims.

CHALLENGES IN GBV SHELTER OPERATIONS



ADVOCACY ENGAGEMENT



HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON BUILDING GBV-FREE FAMILIES

To launch the 2024 16 Days of Activism campaign, Haguruka, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, UN Women, and RWAMREC convened a high-level dialogue on creating GBV-free families. The event brought together government officials, experts, GBV survivors, and community leaders to discuss family-centered GBV prevention, enhanced community interventions, positive parenting, tech-facilitated GBV, and improved prevention and response mechanisms.

Haguruka advocated for:

- The establishment of a specialized court to advance justice for GBV victims and address delays in processing GBV cases.
- In cases where teenage mothers are victims of defilement or rape, it is crucial to pursue criminal proceedings and legal claims for damages in parallel. This ensures the victim receives justice and the compensation they deserve.

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING: STRENGTHENING CHILD RIGHTS ADVOCACY

Haguruka partnered with the National Human Rights Commission to host a high-level meeting on children's rights, gathering 85 experts, officials, and representatives from various organizations. Discussions centered on empowering families to advocate for children and identifying solutions to enhance their capacity in this role. Thirty recommendations were documented and provided to relevant organizations for action.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MEETING

- Monitoring and addressing family problems to seek sustainable solutions (MIGEPROF)
- Conducting in-depth research on family conflicts to find sustainable solutions (MIGEPROF, NISR)
- Establishing better interaction mechanisms between institutions responsible for monitoring children's issues (NCDA, NRS)
- Implementing measures to accompany and rehabilitate children from correctional institutions and Nyagatare Prison (NCDA, MINALOC, NRS)
- Strengthening efforts to provide legal protection to children who have been raped and assisting them throughout the justice process (MINIJUST)



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENTS



SIGNING MoU WITH RFI

Haguruka signed an MoU with the Rwanda Forensic Institute (RFI), strengthening collaboration in forensic expertise, DNA services, chain of custody, and community awareness. This partnership enhances access to justice by ensuring reliable forensic evidence, particularly for GBV victims.

HAGURUKA AT AFSA2024



This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has opened opportunities for Haguruka to attend the African Forensic Sciences Academy conference and a three-day exhibition hosted by the Rwanda Forensic Institute in Kigali in September 2024. This international gathering of forensic science professionals provided

opportunities to showcase Haguruka's work, increase visibility, and highlight the vital role of DNA testing in supporting justice. The event facilitated valuable networking, idea exchange, and exploration of collaborative opportunities to enhance access to justice.

PeaceTalks

Geneva



Our Executive Secretary, Ninette Umurerwa at Peace Talks

HAGURUKA'S VOICE FOR PEACE AT THE GENEVA PEACE TALKS



“

"I firmly believe that there can be no peace without the protection of human rights. It is only when we respect and uphold the rights of every individual that we can achieve lasting peace for all."

"Peace starts within families. This conviction drives my daily work, where I lead some initiatives and projects focused on building peaceful families, and social cohesion.

Our programs, reflect my commitment to fostering peace at the individual, family, and community levels."

THE VISIT OF THE EMBASSY OF SWEDEN IN RWANDA

Haguruka welcomed a delegation from the Embassy of Sweden in Rwanda, led by Head of Cooperation Martina Fors, to our shelter in Musanze District.

The visit highlighted HAGURUKA's innovative approaches to addressing GBV and providing comprehensive support to victims. The delegation observed the shelter's operations, including counseling and legal aid services.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FOWARD

1. Strengthen the teen mothers' reintegration program to facilitate them to return to formal and informal education through scholarships, catch-up programs, and vocational training, to sustainably overcome economic, emotional, and relational challenges.
2. Expand Haguruka's legal aid and psychosocial support by securing additional funding to meet the growing demand for legal aid services, strengthening partnerships, increasing community legal education.
3. Strengthening GBV prevention programs that promote sustainable solutions to GBV by addressing resistance to social norms and cultural barriers, challenge harmful practices, hence reducing divorce rates.
4. To increase Haguruka's shelter capacity to accommodate GBV victims, as the demand for temporary accommodation significantly exceeds current capacity due to budget constraints.
5. To address the persistent challenges related to land and property conflicts, through awareness raising, training, and advocacy initiatives, while advocating for stronger legal frameworks and support mechanisms to effectively resolve these disputes.
6. Advocacy for establishment of specialized chambers for GBV cases to prevent delays in handling GBV cases in courts, ensure timely execution of court decisions, and provide comprehensive support to rights-holders, including assistance with court fees.



EMPOWERING OUR TEAM FOR GREATER IMPACT

We are committed to their professional development and well-being. In 2024, staff received training in gender mainstreaming and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), enhancing their capacity to deliver impactful programs and achieve our strategic goals. We also foster staff well-being and team building, recognizing that a thriving team is the foundation of sustainable change.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TO OUR DONORS

We sincerely thank all our donors and partner organizations whose generosity empowers us to advance the rights of vulnerable women and girls in Rwanda and create lasting, meaningful change.



**AMBASSADE
DE FRANCE
AU RWANDA**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*



Interpeace
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
FOR PEACEBUILDING

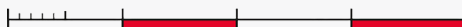
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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Advocates for International Development
Lawyers Eradicating Poverty

RCN Justice & Démocratie

