



HAGURUKA
Defending the rights of women and children

MAGAZINE

ISSUE 2



Welcome to OUR MAGAZINE

This issue features Queen Kalimpinya, who has transitioned from her Miss Rwanda contest to a career as a rally driver. Her compelling story reveals how the tragic loss of a childhood friend's mother during childbirth inspired her Miss Rwanda project called Bambe, addressing maternal mortality and teen pregnancy.

We also explore HAGURUKA's impactful programs, such as MFHS and Ingo z' Amahoro, which establish safe environments for dialogue and healing. These initiatives are instrumental in reducing gender-based violence, helping communities process trauma, and fostering a more equitable society through meaningful engagement.

Additionally, we delve into the significant Law n° 71/2024 on unpaid care work – legislation that formally acknowledges the essential, often unseen, contributions that sustain families and communities.

Throughout this publication, you will encounter individuals whose stories exemplify resilience. You will witness how communities are healing, strengthening, and providing mutual support.

Welcome to the conversation.



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DISCLAIMER

The views expressed are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the editor, Haguruka, or its board.

A NOTE TO WELLBEING AND SAFETY

Some of the stories and themes in this issue touch on sensitive experiences such as gender-based violence, teen pregnancy, family conflict, online abuse, and court processes. These realities can stir difficult emotions or memories.

We aim to share information with care, dignity, and respect for personal choice. If at any point you feel overwhelmed while reading, it is okay to pause, take a breath, and step away. Reaching out to someone you trust or a qualified support provider in your community can help.

You are not alone.

JUSTICE AND WELLBEING: WHY THEY BELONG TOGETHER

At Haguruka, access to justice and psychosocial wellbeing are closely connected. When people are listened to, protected, and treated with respect, fear begins to ease, clarity replaces confusion, and hope has room to return.

Across this issue, you will see how legal support, community dialogue, and safe spaces help individuals and families rebuild trust, strengthen relationships, and regain a sense of control over their lives. Justice is not only about legal outcomes; it is also about restoring dignity and connection.

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Q&A WITH

QUEEN

KALIMPINYA

■ **What inspired you to join Miss Rwanda, and how did it shape your life?**

It was never my plan – I was not good at catwalks and only joined to accompany a friend who insisted we go because “we are not busy.” Surprisingly, I passed the auditions. Miss Rwanda was a wonderful experience; I learned public speaking, Rwandan history, media skills, and met influential people. It built my confidence and changed my life, exposing me to new opportunities.

■ **What was your Miss Rwanda project about, and what inspired it?**

My project focused on reducing maternal mortality and teenage pregnancy. It was inspired by a friend from Primary 6 whose mother died giving birth to her tenth child, which devastated her – disrupting her education and forcing her to take on family responsibilities at a young age. I wanted to help through NGO interventions and schools, as these issues persist.

■ **How did you get into rally driving, and what challenges did you face as a woman in the sport?**

After high school, I bought a motorbike and started riding. The Federation of Motorsports noticed me after Igihe posted a photo saying, “There is a woman who rides a motorcycle,” and encouraged

me to try racing. I started as a co-driver and later became a driver. Challenges included family doubts (they saw it as dangerous and questioned why a girl would do it), and practical issues such as the lack of changing rooms at races since there were few women. Not everyone understood, but I received more support than discouragement.

■ **What was your biggest setback in rally, and how did it motivate you?**

My first rally as a co-driver – we finished last due to mechanical issues. It was embarrassing, especially with the media following me as Miss Rwanda, and I downplayed it by saying we were “eighth” out of eight teams. However, it motivated me to train harder, learn, and persist.

■ **What does discipline mean to you, and how do you practise it daily?**

Discipline is fundamental because you reap what you sow – everything comes back to you. I practise it by prioritising my time, being protective of my schedule, and focusing on what is urgent and important. It helps me balance racing, work, and advocacy, even if it is not always perfectly balanced.

■ **What are the sacrifices of being a young role model, and how has it affected your personal life?**

At first, it felt like a burden – I wanted to do what everyone else did, but my actions are public, so I had to limit my freedoms. It requires some privacy and sacrifices, but it has become a positive responsibility that keeps me accountable. I have normalised it as part of my life; things you cannot do in public might not be worth doing anyway. It has been more of a blessing than a burden.

■ **How do you balance rally driving, work, and advocacy with your personal life?**

It is impossible to achieve perfect balance – I am always tired. I prioritise by being protective of my time, focusing on what is urgent and important, and finding ways to make things work. I look to role models like the First Lady and remind myself it is possible, even with a packed schedule.

■ **What message do you have for young women pursuing passions in male-dominated fields like rally?**

Go for it! Start with what you love – everyone has something they excel at. Persistence is important; you may not win at first, but if you keep going, you will grow. Do not focus solely on the end goal; take it step by step. Passion drives success.

■ **What was your experience naming a baby gorilla at Kwiya Izina?**

I was honoured to be selected. My baby gorilla, Impundu, is now over two years old and doing well. It showed me that the country recognises our work – our voices are heard, even in passions like racing. It was a privilege and overwhelming.

■ **Who are your role models, and what do you learn from them?**

My role models include my family (grandmother, mother, sisters), H.E. President Paul Kagame, the First Lady, and people around me, such as my boss. I learn unique things from each – they challenge and teach me every day.

■ **What advice would you give your younger self in primary or secondary school?**

Believe in yourself and be strong and courageous. In Rwandan families, parents do not often praise girls for their beauty or talents – they focus on corrections, so I grew up not thinking much of my abilities. I never expected to succeed in Miss Rwanda, so I would tell myself: You are capable, even if you feel unprepared.



HOW HAGURUKA IS GIVING RWANDA'S MOST VULNERABLE A FIGHTING CHANCE IN COURT AND BEYOND

For 24 years, Agahozo Frank did not know who he was.

He had been raised believing his grandparents were his parents. Then his birth certificate told a different story, registered under his aunt's name, fathered by a man named NDIKUMANA Alphonse who had disowned him at birth. When Frank finally reached out to his father, he was rejected a second time. He was in his mid-twenties, carrying a question most people never have to ask: Who am I, legally, to anyone?

In 2022, he walked into HAGURUKA's offices. Two years later, during pre-trial proceedings, his father acknowledged paternity on the record, committing to support Frank's upbringing, education, and basic needs. "I finally know who I am," Frank said.

His story is not unique. Across Rwanda, HAGURUKA has become the organisation people turn to when the legal system feels too distant, too expensive, or too overwhelming to navigate alone. In 2025, the organisation provided essential legal aid to 2,375 individuals, primarily women and children facing challenges that ranged from denied paternity to domestic violence, property disputes to identity documentation.

The work is painstaking and deeply personal. Drafting legal briefs. Covering DNA testing costs. Accompanying rightsholders to court. Ensuring that someone who cannot afford a lawyer does not therefore lose their case, or their children.

For many clients, the journey to justice begins not in a courtroom but in a quiet conversation, a neighbour's recommendation, a village leader's referral, a moment of courage after years of silence. HAGURUKA meets people at that moment and walks with them the rest of the way.

She had heard about the organisation through a neighbour.

Mukandamira Marie Claire came to HAGURUKA after her partner Kagabo Sylvestre denied paternity of their two children and demanded a

DNA test, knowing she could not afford one.

HAGURUKA provided legal representation, prepared all documentation, and covered the cost of testing. DNA analysis confirmed paternity. The court ordered Kagabo to provide financial support. He appealed. The lower court's decision was upheld.

"Justice was achieved," Marie Claire said. "My children now have their father's legal recognition and the financial support to which they are entitled." Without HAGURUKA, she adds, none of it would have been possible.

Behind each of these cases is a quiet but consequential truth: legal recognition changes lives in ways that go far beyond paperwork. Children learn their fathers' names. Mothers obtain child support they were always entitled to. Women fleeing abusive households secure protection orders and divorces that end years of physical and psychological harm.

Property unlawfully withheld is returned. And individuals burdened for years by rejection and denial experience something they had almost stopped expecting, relief.

HAGURUKA's approach throughout is rooted in listening without judgment, explaining without condescension, and supporting without rushing. Clients are helped to understand their options and make informed decisions at their own pace. Where legal proceedings surface deeper emotional wounds, the organisation connects people to psychosocial support, because justice, in their view, should heal rather than harm.

And people like Frank, who spent two decades without a clear answer to the most basic of human questions, finally have one.

HAGURUKA's work rests on a simple but radical conviction: that justice should not be a privilege reserved for those who can afford it. Thousands of stories marked by inequality, silence, and denial walk through their doors every year. They walk out differently.

WHEN THE ABUSE FOLLOWS YOU HOME



Journalists and Influencers learned how to report on online GBV, without causing more harm

The screenshot arrives at midnight. A girl's face, lifted from her social media, pasted onto a naked body she has never seen. By morning, it has been shared 200 times. By noon, her phone will not stop buzzing. By evening, she has deleted every account she owns.

This is technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). And in Rwanda, a growing number of journalists and influencers are learning how to cover it, without becoming part of the harm.

In 2025, Haguruka, brought together reporters and social media creators for an intensive training on TFGBV. The topics were not theoretical: cyberbullying, online grooming, deepfakes, sextortion. The questions were not easy. How do you report on a child's abuse without exposing that child again? When does public awareness cross into public spectacle?



“Our role is to inform, not harm”

Cyuzuzo Jean Darc speaking at Haguruka's TFGBV training.

“Protecting the dignity of children while addressing sensitive issues is essential,” she told the group. “Our role is to inform, educate, and advocate, without causing harm or stigma.”

The journalists nodded. Some had covered cases where a victim's name slipped through. Some had read headlines from other countries,

sensational, exploitative, retraumatizing, and wondered if they had ever come close to that line.

Editor **Mutuyeyezu Oswald** spoke next. “Media practitioners must stay informed about best practices in child protection and digital safety,” he said. “We influence how society understands and responds to these issues.”

Edith Nibakwe, a media figure in the room,

The weight of a headline

warned against the kind of coverage that sells but destroys. *“Journalists should prioritise the well-being of those affected,”* she said, *“and craft narratives that foster healing, awareness, and justice.”*

She did not need to give examples.

Everyone in the room had seen them. A headline that names a victim. A photo that identifies a school.

Mutesi Scovia, Chairperson of RMC Rwanda, put it simply: “Empathy, accuracy, and respect are essential to safeguarding children and vulnerable groups in digital spaces.”

Phoibe Mukandayisenga left the training

what influencers can do

with a commitment. “I will actively promote awareness and safety within my community, school, and church,” she said. “Leading by example to uphold dignity and respect.”

Rameck Gisanintwari had a more specific plan. “I can help fight TFGBV by raising awareness through educational posts about doxxing and cyberstalking,” he said.



“Sharing knowledge empowers people to recognize and respond.”

Ishimwe Solange added her voice last. “I stand against TFGBV because it harms our dignity, safety, and equality,” she said. “Promoting respect and awareness is my responsibility as an influencer.”



The story still missing

One voice was absent from the room in Kigali. Not because she was not invited. Because she is not ready to speak.

Somewhere in Rwanda, a victim of TFGBV is still deciding whether to come forward. Her screenshot has been shared. Her phone has buzzed. Her accounts are gone.

When she is ready, journalists and influencers trained by Haguruka will know how to tell her story, without becoming part of the harm.

That is the point of the training. Not to fix the problem overnight. But to be ready when she walks through the door.



WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION - YES, BUT HOW?

Although the constitution guarantees at least 30% representation, this minimum is often misinterpreted: focus group participants reported that the 30% quota is sometimes treated as a glass ceiling that limits women's participation, and the system of reserved seats can discourage women from contesting against men. The problem is more pronounced at the local level: a Haguruka study attributes women's under-representation in local government to a patriarchal mindset that reinforces gendered leadership roles. Many people assume women are best suited to social affairs or secretarial posts, while economic and other influential positions are seen as male domains. The statistics reflect this bias: 77.78% (21 of 27) of deputy district mayors for social affairs are women, compared with only 14.81% (4 of 27) for economic affairs. Overall, women hold 29.63% (8 of 27) of District Mayor positions – just below the constitutional minimum and far from the equal representation required by Article 9 of the Maputo Protocol.

The Burden of Home and Lack of Support

The roots of unequal political participation often lie at home. Haguruka's consultative meetings found that women are less likely than men to receive spousal support for political careers. Some men resist change, fearing that an elected wife might become "more powerful at home" and alter family dynamics. Women also reported feeling obliged to obtain their spouse's permission before running for office – an expectation rarely imposed on men. Traditional gender roles and unpaid care work further limit women's ambitions. Disproportionate household duties – childcare, cooking, washing – consume large amounts of time, leaving many women unable to pursue leadership roles. Low self-confidence, possibly linked to a persistent gender gap in adult literacy (30.6% for females vs 22.5% for males in 2019), was also cited as a factor in lower female representation in some areas.

Leadership, care work and wellbeing

Barriers to women's participation in leadership are not only structural; they are also emotional and psychological. The pressure of unpaid care work, fear of backlash, and harassment, both offline and online, can quietly erode confidence and wellbeing.

Practical support systems, shared care arrangements, mentorship, and safe reporting mechanisms help women sustain their engagement and avoid burnout. Recognising unpaid care work, including the mental and emotional load it carries, is essential for fairness at home and in public life.

The Call for Deeper Change

Haguruka builds capacity for more than 2,000 people each year, making it a leading voice for women's and children's rights in Rwanda. While commending the current framework, the organisation urges the Government of Rwanda to address persistent systemic challenges. Key recommendations include:

- Setting clear numerical targets in the National Gender Policy implementation plan to increase women's participation in elective posts.
- Strengthening measures that address root causes – such as patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes – that limit women's engagement at all levels.

Rwanda's gains in national politics are impressive and widely recognised. Yet, as Haguruka's report points out, true equality goes beyond legislative achievements: it requires breaking down subtle but powerful barriers embedded in cultural expectations, spousal support, and the division of labour. Achieving genuine political parity is like tending a complex garden: reserved plots can protect growth, but ongoing care is needed so that every plot can flourish and every plant can reach its potential.



FROM SILENCE TO STRENGTH: RESTORED DIGNITY AND HOPE FOR TEEN MOTHERS

Teenage mothers often face stigma, isolation, broken relationships, and a lack of awareness of their rights. Before HAGURUKA intervened, many young mothers in Musanze and Gasabo, Ngoma and Bugesera felt alone, unheard, and ashamed, while their children remained legally invisible and had limited access to basic services. HAGURUKA's Intergenerational Dialogues changed this: safe, community-based conversations that bring together teenage mothers, parents, caregivers, and local leaders to address rights, gender equality, reproductive health, and positive parenting. These sessions have transformed individual lives and strengthened families and communities.

Supporting teen mothers and families

Teen mothers often carry multiple burdens at once: trauma, stigma, interrupted education, family conflict, and economic dependence. Safe, intergenerational conversations help replace blame with understanding and shared responsibility.

When families learn together, young mothers are more likely to feel supported, regain confidence, and plan for the future. Compassionate parenting, accurate information, and community solidarity are powerful tools for healing and prevention.

Where pregnancy is linked to violence, safety and care come first. Support should never force disclosure, reconciliation, or decisions that place someone at further risk.

Restoring Families, Rebuilding Futures

When 16-year-old Nyiransengiyumva Immaculée from Gasabo became pregnant, her home was filled with conflict and blame. Her father accused her mother, and her mother blamed herself – nobody understood that Immaculée had survived gender-based violence.

Through HAGURUKA's guided dialogues, the family learned together that Immaculée needed support, protection, and love. For the first time since the pregnancy, they sat down, listened to one another, and began to heal.

Today, Immaculée says she feels “relieved and happy.” **Her parents now share responsibility, practise positive parenting, and are planning her return to school.**

Empowering Young Mothers to Claim Their Rights

For Denise, a teenage mother in Gasabo, the world felt overwhelming. She did not know that she or her child had rights or where to seek help. One rights-awareness session changed everything. “Now I know my rights – and my children too. I feel confident to speak up and to act.” Empowered by Haguruka, Denise has already begun the legal process to have her child acknowledged by their father. Her story demonstrates the power of providing young mothers with the information they need.

Fathers Becoming Allies for Change

Before the dialogues, many fathers believed teenage pregnancy was solely “the girl’s fault.” This included Bernard, a father from Gasabo, who blamed both his daughter and her mother. After joining the sessions, his views changed dramatically.

“I have stopped blaming my daughter. Supporting her is my responsibility.”

Bernard now stands beside his daughter as a source of strength, not judgment. His transformation shows how male engagement can create real, lasting change.

Marlene’s Story: Mediation in Action



After her husband refused to give her three million Francs—her rightful half—Marlene reported the case to the Isange One Stop Centre. The centre’s GBV department referred her to Haguruka.

Instead of rushing to court, Haguruka’s legal team recommended mediation. They invited both Marlene and her husband to sit down together.

Through mediation, her husband learned something he had never understood: under Rwandan law, a wife has equal rights to family property. Withholding her share was not just unfair—it was economic abuse.

He acknowledged his wrongdoing and apologised. Then he gave her three million Francs, keeping three million for himself. He has since returned home. They are now reconciled.

For vulnerable people—especially women and children—mediation does more than settle disputes. It empowers them to understand and claim their rights, fostering harmony, accountability, and

lasting social cohesion.

Through stories like Marlene’s, Haguruka proves that mediation is not merely a legal tool. It is a pathway to healing, reconciliation, and stronger communities.

SHAPING NATIONAL POLICY: CIVIL SOCIETY VOICES IN RWANDA'S NST2

All six priorities submitted by women-led organisations and gender advocates were reflected in Rwanda's Second National Strategy for Transformation (NST2).



In 2025, Haguruka convened a two-day workshop that brought together these organisations to analyse how their proposals had been integrated into NST2, identify remaining gaps, and define concrete implementation actions. This is the story of what they advocated for and what comes next.

1. The Work Nobody Counts: Unpaid Care

She wakes before the household. She cooks, cleans, fetches water, and cares for children. By the time the formal economy stirs, she has already worked hours that will never earn a salary or count towards a pension.

Unpaid care work is one of the most significant structural barriers to gender equality. Women's organisations brought it to NST2 with a clear demand: recognise it, reduce it, and redistribute it. NST2 now identifies it as a barrier. The next step is to make that recognition enforceable in law.

2. The Bus Journey Nobody Should Fear: Public Transport Safety

For many women, getting to work is not simply a matter of transport; it is a calculation of risk: which route is safer, which time is less dangerous.

Public transport safety is an economic issue for women. The inability to move freely restricts participation in employment, civic life, and all activities outside the home. NST2 now commits to gender-sensitive transport approaches. The women-led organisations will not stop until funding and concrete action plans are in place.

3. The Court That Must Be Built: A Specialised GBV Chamber

Rwanda has laws that protect women from gender-based violence, but too many GBV cases are dropped, mainly due to delayed evidence and overworked judges. What Rwanda does not yet have is a court designed to deliver justice for victims, with trained judges, prioritised cases, and a process that does not retraumatise.

The chamber has been called for. NST2 carries that call. The chamber does not yet exist. Haguruka and partners are committed to working directly with justice institutions to advocate for its establishment.

4. The Seat at the Table: Women with Disabilities

Rwanda Women Alliance has called on Government to reserve adequate political representation for women with disabilities through an electoral process. All institutions across all sectors, including private and civil society, must facilitate the use of sign language, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and all other accessible means, modes, and formats of communication chosen by persons with disabilities in official interactions.

NST2 now mandates their inclusion at every level of governance. The next step is ensuring accessible infrastructure and sign language training.

5. After She Gives Birth: Maternity Protections in the Informal Sector

Formal workers receive 14 weeks of paid maternity leave. However, most Rwandan women work in agriculture or the informal sector, with no protection at all. This gap contributes to maternal and infant mortality.

What NST2 now recognises: establishing maternity coverage for vulnerable women through the Ejo Heza scheme, funded by a 0.2% contribution from employers and the government.

6. The Contract She Cannot Reach: Women in Procurement

Between 2016 and 2019, women-owned businesses secured only 5% of the total value of government tenders. They received “soft” contracts, while men received construction and agriculture contracts. Women-owned businesses win only a fraction of government procurement contracts, not because their products are inferior, but because the system was built around networks and financial histories that most women do not have.

What NST2 now states: Guarantee 30% participation for women in procurement and supply chains. Require partnerships with women-owned companies.

What Comes Next

The coalition left with a clear plan. None of this is easy. However, these women wrote the priorities, saw them included in the national strategy, and are now monitoring to ensure they become reality.





THE SHADOW OF INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

In the aftermath of the genocide against the Tutsi, many Rwandan families faced deep and lasting wounds. In response, HAGURUKA partnered with Interpeace to introduce Multi-Family Healing Spaces, a group-based therapy model involving multiple families who have experienced similar or different forms of trauma. This approach combines psychoeducation on the intergenerational transmission of trauma and hostility, healing dialogues, and the development of socioemotional skills. The aim is to strengthen collective responsibility and agency, while also improving patterns of intergenerational communication within and between families.

“I realised that I too had contributed to our conflict”

MY JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION: NDUWUMUREMYI EUGENIE'S STORY

I am Nduwumuremyi Eugenie, a genocide survivor living in Shyira Sector, Nyabihu District. At 45, my life had been trapped in a painful cycle of gender-based violence. For over a decade, conflict with my husband turned our family life into turmoil. After ten years of marriage, everything changed drastically. My husband, a promising district employee, became unfaithful, diverting his earnings to a concubine and neglecting his responsibilities at home.

I owned a small business supplying food to local schools, which provided some financial stability, but it did little to ease the emotional burden. Our household became a battleground – constant clashes over raising our children, dividing responsibilities, and communicating. Our lives were filled with shame, resentment, and daily arguments. Neighbours saw us as a source of tension, a threat to community peace. We stopped sharing meals, conversations became arguments, and love faded away.

In 2022, I reached a breaking point and reported my husband for gender-based violence. He was detained for a year – a painful chapter filled with anger and bitterness. Upon his release, I feared the toxic cycle would resume. However, that was when everything changed.

An invitation from community facilitators to join the Multifamily Healing Sessions, offered by Haguruka in partnership with Interpeace, became a pivotal moment for us. Entering that safe space with our youngest child, I did not know what to expect. What followed was a profound journey of self-discovery and healing.

The sessions introduced us to the 'tree of life', enabling us to visualise our family dynamics and understand the roots of our behaviour. Through guided dialogues, I confronted painful truths about my own character – my tendency to fight for responsibilities, my silence, and behaviours that had troubled my spirit. I realised that I too had contributed to our conflict. Gradually, I recognised that transformation is possible for both individuals and relationships.

Today, our home is filled with love and peace, completely different from the chaos we once experienced. My husband now comes home early, and we share household expenses. The bonds we thought could never be repaired are now healed, and violence has ceased. We are now seen as a harmonious family. Recently, a neighbour sought my advice on resolving her own marital conflicts, and knowing I could help bring peace brings me great joy.



Seven years of dialogue.

740 couples transformed.

A quiet revolution in Rwandan homes

Jean and Marie's kitchen arguments could be heard three houses away. Money disappeared without discussion. Chores accumulated; resentment grew. After eight years of marriage in Gasabo District, they reached a crossroads: change or separate.

Then came Ingo z'Amahoro's Couples' Dialogue sessions.

"At the first meeting, I sat with my arms crossed," Jean admits. "I thought, 'What can strangers teach me about my own marriage?'" But as facilitators guided couples through exercises on communication and shared decision-making, something changed. He listened as other husbands described struggles similar to his own. He heard wives, including Marie, express truths he had never truly listened to before.

"We make decisions together now. Not just about money, about everything"

The transformation was not immediate. Jean started with small steps: asking for Marie's input before buying supplies for his motorcycle taxi, sharing evening duties with the children. Marie, long silenced by tradition and fear, began voicing her ideas, including a bold suggestion to pool resources with neighbouring couples.

That conversation led to their cooperative. Six couples now run a joint savings group and a small agricultural venture. Their combined income



has doubled. More importantly, their partnership has become the foundation for everything else.

“We make decisions together now,” Marie says, standing beside Jean at their thriving vegetable stand. “Not just about money, about everything.”

Their neighbours noticed. Soon, other couples began asking questions and seeking advice. Jean and Marie became informal ambassadors for the programme—living proof that marriages can heal and thrive.

Seven Years of Change: By the Numbers

Since 2018, the Couples' Dialogue approach under Ingo z'Amahoro has reshaped the relational, social, and economic fabric of families across Rwanda.

Through structured dialogue sessions, workshops, and guided reflection:



740 couples have experienced measurable change in their relationships

Fifteen cooperatives formed by programme graduates now operate in Musanze alone

Participating households report stronger communication skills, reduced conflict and violence, increased mutual respect, shared decision-making, and a deeper understanding of gender roles rooted in equality rather than hierarchy.

Men describe embracing more constructive forms of masculinity. Women report greater confidence in

asserting their rights, voicing concerns, and participating actively in household decisions.

Economic and Social Empowerment

Dialogue has unlocked economic cooperation within households. Couples who once struggled to work together now jointly plan their finances, form savings groups, and engage in small cooperative ventures. These skills have strengthened household stability and, in several cases, lifted families out of extreme vulnerability.

Fifteen cooperatives formed by programme graduates in Musanze stand as living examples of how relational healing can translate into long-term economic growth.

Community-Level Transformation

The seven-year dialogue process has extended beyond individual households. Communities now foster a culture of accountability, where neighbours encourage peaceful conflict management and challenge harmful behaviours. Religious institutions and local leaders have become active partners, using their influence to reinforce positive change and prevent gender-based violence.

Healthy couples are becoming role models for others, spreading lessons of respect and equality throughout their neighbourhoods.

After seven years, the Couples' Dialogue has proven that when communication heals the home, the whole society transforms.

Across Rwanda, Ingo z'Amahoro has reached thousands of couples, strengthening families and, by extension, entire communities. But statistics do not capture what truly matters: the quiet revolution taking place in kitchens and living rooms, where conversation replaces conflict and partnership replaces power struggles.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: UNPAID CARE WORK IN 2024 RWANDA'S FAMILY LAW

Rwanda's new legislation, Law n° 71/2024 of 26/06/2024 governing persons and family, introduces explicit definitions and mechanisms for recognising and valuing 'unpaid care work' within marriage. This is particularly relevant in divorce proceedings and matrimonial agreements, ensuring that domestic contributions have legal and economic recognition.

Definition of Unpaid Care Work

The law provides a clear definition of this labour, emphasising its non-compensated nature within a household:

- **Scope of Duties:** 'Unpaid care work' includes duties related to caring for the health and well-being of household members.
- **Specific Tasks:** These duties include, but are not limited to, childcare, care for the sick, elder care, cleaning, and meal preparation.
- **Key Characteristic:** The defining feature is that this work is performed by either spouse without financial compensation.

Valuation in Divorce Proceedings

The new law allows for the economic value of unpaid care work to be considered if a marriage is dissolved:

- **Court's Discretion:** During divorce proceedings, the court may take into account the value of unpaid care work performed by one or both spouses, upon request by either of them.
- **Calculation Method:** The value of this work is calculated as a percentage ranging from 10% to 39% of the property acquired since the spouses' cohabitation, after deducting any debts incurred after the marriage.

Inclusion in Matrimonial Regimes

Unpaid care work is also incorporated into the design of the custom matrimonial regime:

- **Custom Regime:** The law introduces a fourth type of matrimonial regime, known as the 'Matrimonial regime based on agreement drawn up by intending spouses'.
- **Content Requirement:** The authentic deed establishing this custom regime must explicitly address matters related to unpaid care work.

This legislative approach ensures that domestic contributions are formally recognised and given economic significance, particularly when a marriage ends, thereby acknowledging the often-overlooked value of such labour.

YOUTH CORNER: SRHR

WHAT WE USED TO BELIEVE AND WHAT WE KNOW NOW

Our magazine had the opportunity to engage with young people involved in our SRHR youth empowerment programmes. In a refreshing and honest conversation, they addressed common myths and misconceptions surrounding sexual and reproductive health, highlighting the realities they face and the knowledge gaps that need to be filled. Their stories show how misinformation can influence behaviour – and how accurate education can transform lives.



Testimony from Muzima Gentile, 29, Kigali

I once held many misconceptions about reproductive health. I believed a girl could not get pregnant when she was not on her period, and that a boy could not cause a pregnancy before reaching full maturity. I also thought girls were not allowed to speak or make decisions about reproductive health within the family. Today, I know the truth. I now openly discuss reproductive health with adolescent girls – how to behave responsibly, how to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and the importance of family planning. I also tell them that they have the right to access family planning services. We need to create more spaces where young people can gather and learn about reproductive health.



Testimony from Aline Ntaganda Twambazimana, 24, University Student

I used to think that anyone seeking reproductive health services was either a sex worker or someone who had had an abortion. I also believed that family planning was only for married women, that girls could not access it, and that using it might prevent you from ever giving birth again. I have since learned that these beliefs were wrong. Everyone has the right to seek information, understand how to protect themselves, and know what to do when facing any sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) challenge.



Testimony from Ndamukunda Patrick, 29

Growing up, I heard people say that a boy could not cause a pregnancy when it was raining, and that a girl who had not started her period could not conceive. I later discovered that girls between the ages of 10 and 18 can get pregnant, and boys of the same age can also cause pregnancy. I have learned how to talk to young people about responsible behaviour. My message to them is simple: Stay vigilant and avoid risky behaviours that could change your life forever.

ENTERTAINMENT CORNER:

SONG, FILM AND BOOK

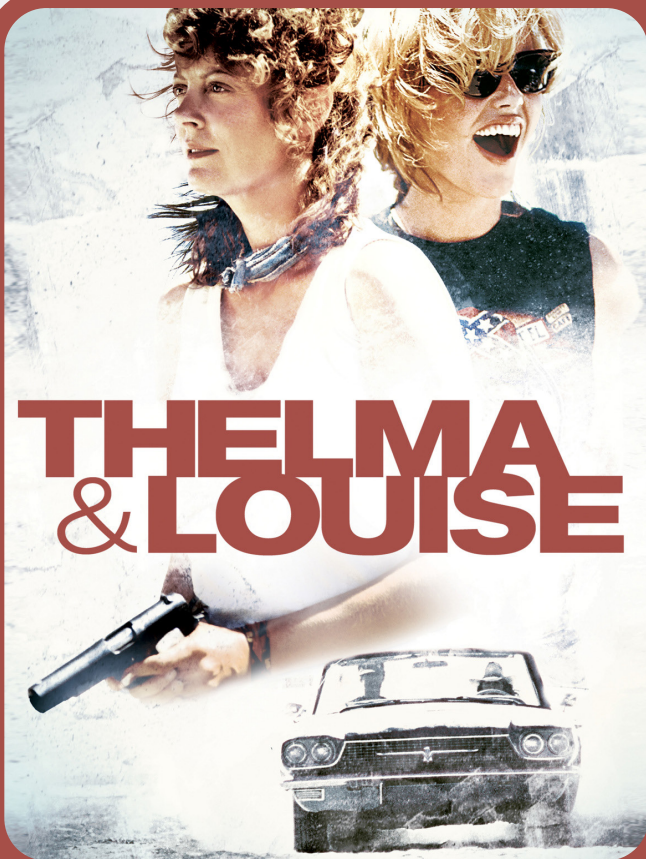
These recommendations were selected by young participants in Haguruka's programmes—stories of strength, independence, and resilience from around the world and here at home.

BEYONCÉ



“Run the World (Girls)” – Beyoncé (2011)

An energetic, modern anthem celebrating female solidarity, power, and dominance. It asserts that women are capable of leading and shaping the world—on their own terms.



Thelma & Louise (1991) –

Autonomy and Liberation

This iconic road trip film is a radical statement on female friendship and freedom. After a devastating incident, the two women choose to seize control of their own lives and destinies—regardless of the consequences.

MUST-READ BOOK



We Should All Be Feminists by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014)

Based on her renowned TED Talk, this concise, accessible essay offers a fresh, modern definition of feminism—making the movement relevant to a new generation worldwide while including an important African perspective.

About the author: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of Africa's most celebrated literary voices: a brilliant, award-winning writer whose work combines intellectual rigour, sharp humour, and moral clarity. She challenges inequality without bitterness, using wit and everyday stories to make feminism accessible, human, and compelling. Her writing reminds us that the struggle for equality can be serious in purpose while remaining generous, playful, and deeply humane.

**“Healing is not the end of the story, it is the beginning of a new one.
See you in Issue 03.”**