



HAGURUKA
Defending the rights of women and children

ANNUAL REPORT
2025

Every Woman,
Every Child –
Rights Matter.



Every Voice Matters:
Defending Rights,
Delivering Hope

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

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



TABLE OF CONTENTS

06 | MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

07 | ABOUT HAGURUKA

08 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & YEAR IN NUMBERS

12 ACCESS TO JUSTICE & PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

- Service Delivery Channels
- Case Categorization
- Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Cases
- Legal Aid Services Provided
- HAGURUKA's Efforts in Combating Human Trafficking
- Integrated Psychosocial Support for Teenage Mothers

20 CAPACITY BUILDING

- Capacity Building Programmes
- Land Rights and Governance

22 AWARENESS RAISING

- Women's Safe Spaces: From Participants to Leaders
- Building children's capacity to understand and act on their rights
- Seven-year evaluation: ingo z'amahoro (couples' dialogue)

30 ORGANIZATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (OCD)

- Building a culture of evidence and learning
- Paralegals Extending Access to Justice in Communities

34 RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

- Policy Advocacy and Law Reform
- Law Reform Contributions
- Shaping National Policy: Civil Society Voices in Rwanda's NST2
- UPR Shadow Report and Civil Society Coalition

39 | CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

40 | ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AJPS	Access to Justice and Psychosocial Support
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IECMS	Intergrated Electronic Case Management System
IZU	Inshuti z'Umuryango (Family Mediation Committees)
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MLC	Mobile Legal Aid Clinic
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLA	National Land Authority
OCD	Organisational Capacity Development
ODE	Observatory of The Rights Of The Child
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TFGBV	Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

MESSAGE FROM THE **CHAIRPERSON,** **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

“Justice endures when systems are strengthened and communities are empowered.

Haguruka deepens its impact by building capacity, advancing reforms, and ensuring that no woman or child stands alone in the pursuit of their rights and dignity.”



On behalf of the HAGURUKA Board of Directors and our dedicated staff, I am pleased to present the 2025 Annual Report. This report highlights our collective achievements, shares stories of resilience, and outlines our strategic direction in advancing justice and equality.

In 2025, HAGURUKA was at the forefront of human rights protection. We provided essential legal aid to 2,375 individuals (1,774 women and 601 men), ensuring that the most vulnerable were not left to navigate the justice system alone. Among our most significant achievements was supporting the legal registration of 200 children born to teenage mothers and connecting them to vital protection services.

Our prevention work reached 43,805 citizens through community assemblies, radio and television programmes, and community dialogues, equipping people with critical knowledge of family, land, GBV, and child rights laws. To strengthen the broader justice ecosystem, we built the capacity of 1,727 state and non-state actors in mediation, ADR, and land rights. Through evidence-based research and strategic advocacy, we advanced systemic reforms to ensure that marginalised voices influence national policy. These results reflect the unwavering dedication of HAGURUKA staff, the leadership of our Board, and the generous support of our partners.

Despite a shifting global funding landscape, HAGURUKA remains firmly committed to empowering communities and protecting the rights of women and children. Your support, in all its forms, is deeply appreciated.

Me MUNYANKINDI Monique

Legal Representative, HAGURUKA

2,375

**RIGHT HOLDERS APPROACHED
HAGURUKA SEEKING LEGAL
ASSISTANCE.**

45,532

**RIGHT HOLDERS AND DUTY
BEARERS WERE REACHED
THROUGH DIFFERENT TRAININGS
AND AWARENESS ACTIVITIES**

ABOUT **HAGURUKA**

HAGURUKA is a legally registered non-governmental organisation founded in 1991, with the mission to promote and defend the rights of women and children. Headquartered in Kigali, with regional offices in all provinces, HAGURUKA decentralises services to bring justice closer to citizens, in line with Rwanda's Vision 2050 and the national decentralisation policy. Below is the infographic showing our key areas of intervention and scope of operation.



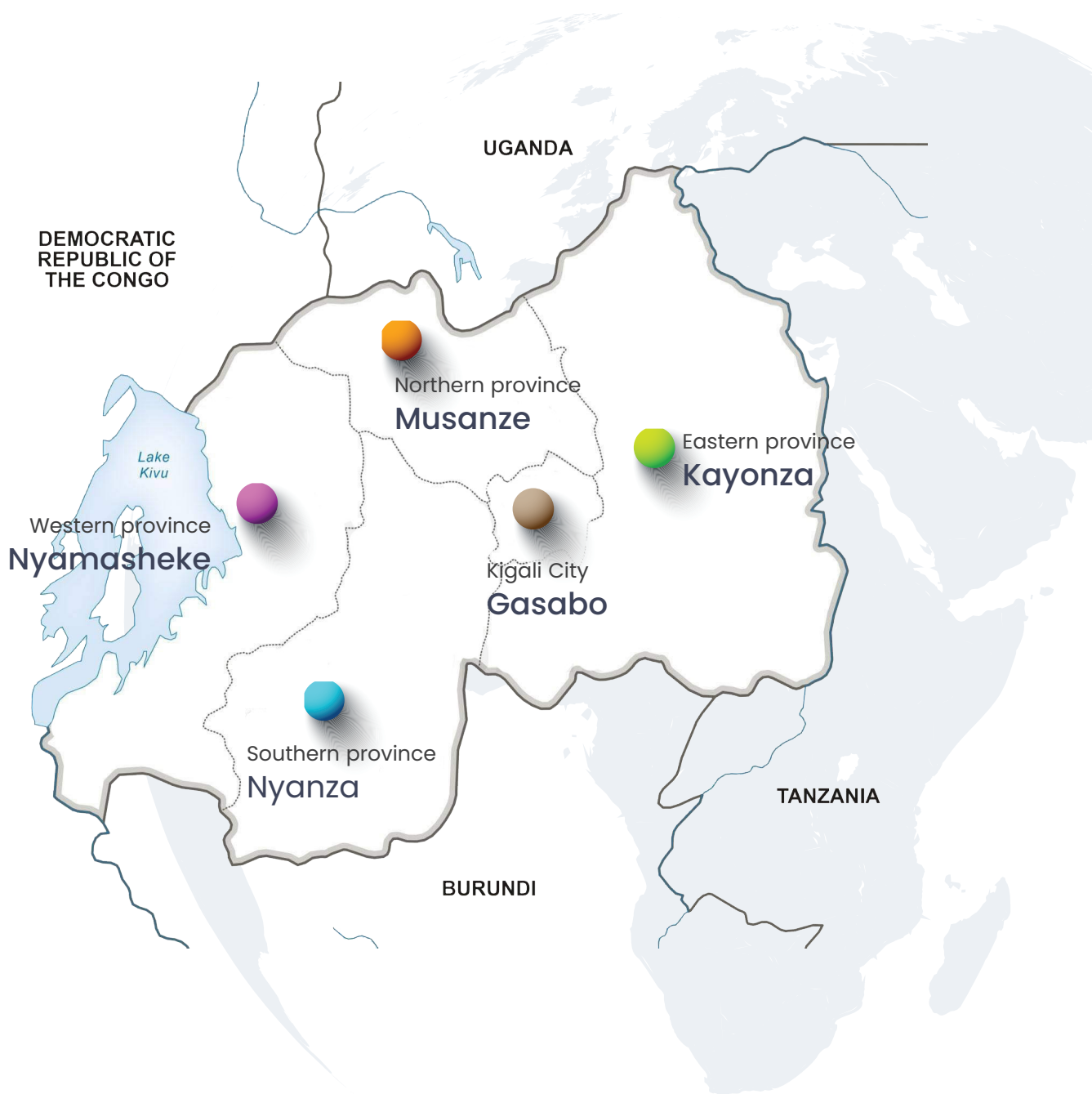
Organization
Capacity
Development
(OCD)



Access to
Justice and
Psychosocial
Support
(AJPS)



Research
and
Advocacy
(RAD)

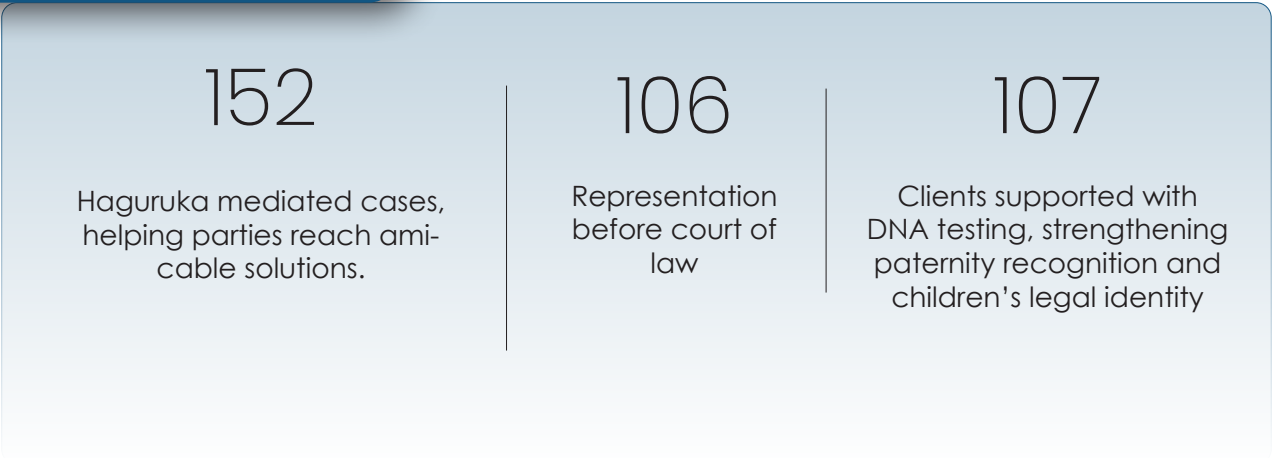


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

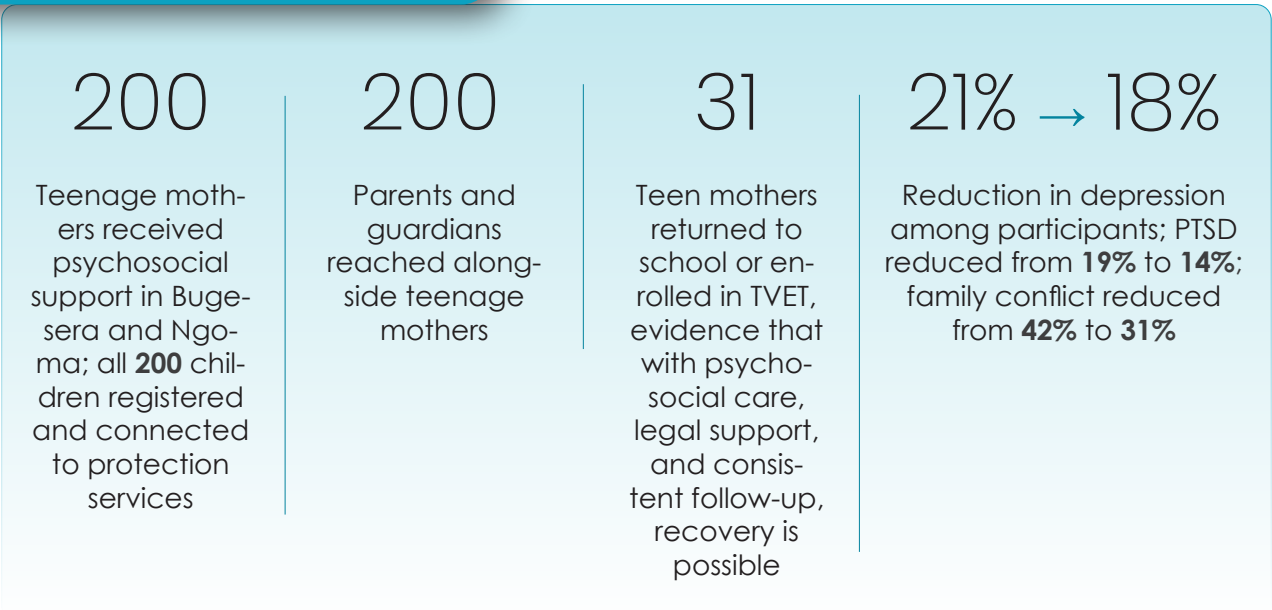
In 2025, HAGURUKA provided justice-related services to 2,375 individuals (1,774 women and 601 men) and reached 43,805 citizens through awareness and prevention activities across seven districts.

ACHIEVEMENTS SNAPSHOT

ACCESS TO JUSTICE & PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT



INTEGRATED PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR TEENAGE MOTHERS



CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

1,727

State and non-state actors capacitated (**963** men; **764** women) in alternative dispute resolution (ADR), land governance, and GBV prevention

CAPACITY BUILDING IN LAND ADMINISTRATION

606

Participants trained in land rights in partnership with the National Land Authority (NLA), Lantmäteriet, and Sida across Gakenke, Nyaruguru, and Rutsiro

PARALEGAL NETWORK

693

Cases received across Gasabo, Ngoma, and Bugesera, **505** brought by women and **188** by men, through **45** trained paralegals serving as a vital bridge between citizens and HAGURUKA's services

AWARENESS RAISING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

14,305

Reached through community dialogue sessions

28,960

Reached through awareness campaigns

WOMEN SAFE SPACE REFLECTION

81

Experience sharing of **81** women who entered safe spaces with limited confidence and little public recognition and elected as local leaders

17

Live radio sessions broadcast on Radio Rwanda in partnership with MIGEPROF, bringing the new Law Governing Persons and Family directly into households

INGO Z'AMAHORO COUPLES' DIALOGUE

107

Couples who publicly committed to improving their relationships, witnessed by peers and local leaders, as part of a programme that has reached **740** couples across Gasabo and Musanze since 2018



“

Without HAGU-RUKA, I might still be in prison, or might not have survived at all. I had no money for a lawyer. HAGU-RUKA gave me hope when I had none. My case proves how vital free legal support is, especially for women who cannot afford representation.”

Eugenie

FROM 25 YEARS WRONGFULLY CONVICTED TO JUSTICE

My name is Eugenie, and for five painful years I endured an experience I never imagined: being wrongfully accused and convicted of killing my own child, whom I had loved and cared for over 28 years. My ordeal began on 30 March 2020 in Kiyanja Village, Nyamirama Sector, Kayonza District. I returned from the field to find my daughter, who lived with a disability, lying in the house with serious injuries. She had already passed away. I was devastated, and I suspected that a neighbour, Karangwa, might have been involved.

I had cared for my child her entire life; if I had ever intended to harm her, why would I have waited 28 years? Despite my grief, the situation quickly turned against me. Three neighbours claimed I had killed my child, though none had seen what happened. A medical report mentioned asphyxiation, but nothing linked me directly to her death. Even so, the Ngoma Court convicted me of wilful murder and sentenced me to 25 years in prison. It felt like a life sentence. My children were left confused and heartbroken. For five years, I lived with fear and hopelessness, wondering how my greatest tragedy had become a crime blamed on me. I maintained my innocence, even when I felt unheard and alone.

Everything changed because of my son. Determined to save me, he contacted the Executive Secretary of HAGURUKA through social media. That message transformed my life. HAGURUKA responded immediately, provided legal support, and initiated a review of my case. During the retrial, Case No. RPA 00973/2021/HC/RWG, the truth finally emerged. The High Court found that:

- There was no direct evidence against me.
- None of the witnesses had seen anything; their claims were based on speculation.
- The lower court relied on assumptions instead of proof.

- The prosecution failed to meet the required burden of evidence.
- My long history of caring for my daughter contradicted the accusation.

The High Court concluded that the evidence was weak and unreliable. I was acquitted, declared innocent, and released. Walking out of prison and reuniting with my family felt like regaining my life and dignity. However, freedom brought new challenges. Returning home was difficult because the same neighbours who had accused me still lived there. For my safety, I had to abandon my property and relocate. Today, I still do not have full access to my land and belongings, and I continue my struggle to reclaim what is legally mine.

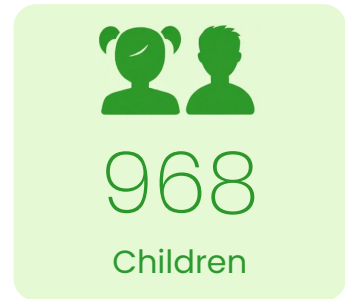
Without HAGURUKA, I believe I might still be in prison or might not have survived. I had no money for a lawyer, and the three lawyers I approached previously were scammers who made things worse. HAGURUKA gave me hope when I had none. My case demonstrates how important free legal support is, especially for women who cannot afford representation and for those who are wrongly accused. I share my story so others may find strength and so justice can reach those who need it most.

Today, I am free, grateful, and rebuilding my life step by step. My message remains: no one should face injustice alone.

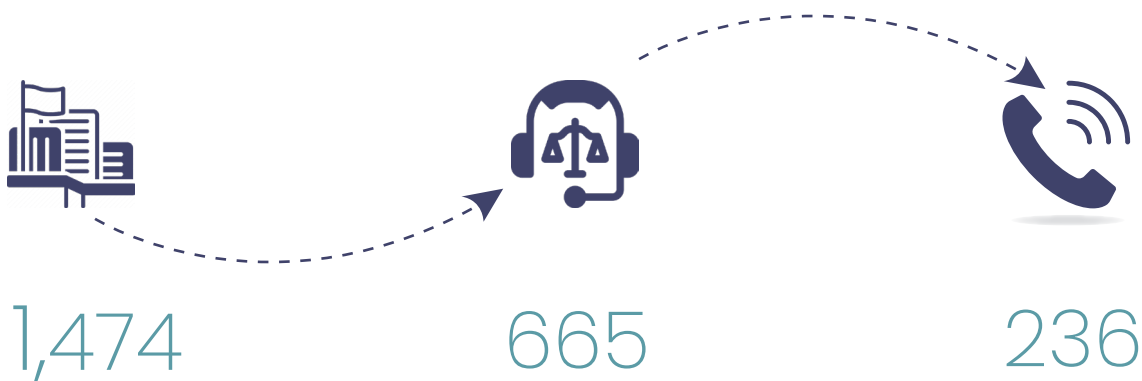
ACCESS TO JUSTICE & PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (AJPS)

HAGURUKA advanced the protection and empowerment of vulnerable women and children through robust legal aid services, including court representation, DNA testing facilitation, legal advice, mediation, and more.





SERVICE DELIVERY CHANNELS



CENTERS AND HEAD OFFICE

Served **1,474** rights-holders across Kigali (598), Ngoma (204), Musanze (180), Bugesera (161), Kayonza (118), Nyamasheke (111), Nyanza (99), and Ruhango (3).

MOBILE LEGAL AID CLINICS

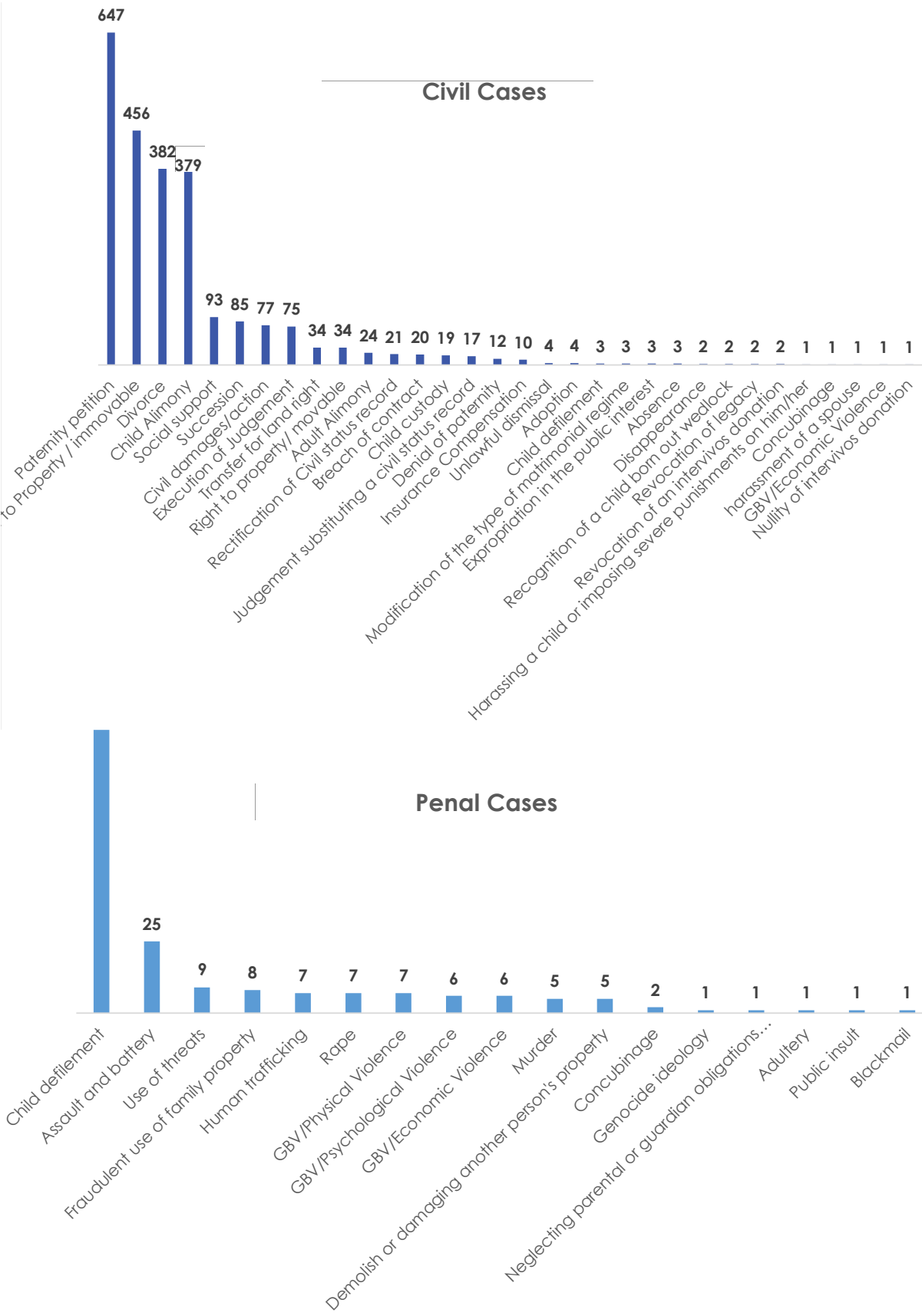
Mobile Legal Aid Clinics reached **665** individuals in remote communities across seven districts: Bugesera (226), Ngoma (254), Musanze (21), Nyamagabe (34), Nyarugenge (37), Nyaruguru (28), and Rulindo (65) offices.

TOLL-FREE NUMBER

Of **59,069** calls received, **12,119** were answered and **236** registered as new cases. The high volume of unanswered calls, most outside working hours coverage hours.

CASES CATEGORIZATION

Out of the 2,375 rights holders served, their issues were classified into 2,609 case categories (2,418 civil and 191 penal). The total number of categories is higher than the number of rights holders because some cases involved multiple legal issues.



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) CASES



From the total legal cases handled,

938

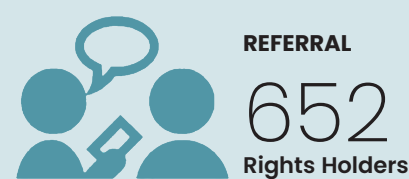
were identified as GBV

Trend: Economic violence emerged as the most prevalent form with 35% of total GBV cases, emphasizing the need to strengthen protection and prevention mechanisms against economic-related abuse.

LEGAL AID SERVICES PROVIDED



OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED



IMPACT STORY

24 YEARS WITHOUT A FATHER, AGAHOZO



I decided to seek help. I contacted HAGURUKA, and their team welcomed me, listened to my story, and helped me draft the documents I needed to take the case to court.

My name is Agahozo Frank. I am 24 years old and live in Nyarugenge District. For most of my life, I grew up without knowing who my biological father was. I was raised by my grandparents and believed they were my parents. Everything changed when I needed to obtain my birth certificate; that was when I discovered I had been registered under my aunt's name, and the truth began to unfold.

After confronting my family, I learned that the woman I had always known as my aunt, Harerinka Francoise, was actually my mother. She told me who my father was and where to find him. When I went to meet him, he rejected me and denied being my father. That moment was painful and confusing.

In 2022, I contacted HAGURUKA. Their team listened to my story, helped me draft the necessary documents, and guided me through the electronic filing system. My case was registered as RC 00129/2023/TB/GAC.

During the pre-trial stage, my father, Ndikumana Alphonse, accepted the truth and agreed to support me. After 24 years, I finally found the answers I had been searching for.

I am deeply grateful to HAGURUKA for helping me navigate the legal process and giving me the confidence to fight for my identity. After so many years of silence, I finally feel seen, recognised, and complete.

HAGURUKA EFFORTS IN **COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING**



HAGURUKA continues to address human trafficking cases, particularly those involving children and young women from rural areas who are lured to urban centers with false promises of better opportunities. Victims often face labor exploitation, sexual exploitation, or forced early motherhood.

Children are frequently sent by relatives to work in exchange for money, then forced into domestic work, hard labor, or sexual exploitation. Most victims of labor trafficking are minors. Cases are frequently reported in the border districts of Nyaruguru, Musanze, Burera, Gicumbi, Nyagatare, and Nyamasheke where cross-border movement increases trafficking risks.

HAGURUKA provided legal aid and psychosocial support to trafficking survivors, including:

- Legal aid provided to **22 victims**

- Awareness campaigns reaching **over 3,000 people** in targeted communities
- Training for **50 stakeholders** (community leaders, service providers, and local authorities) to improve prevention and case identification

CASE EXAMPLE: A 15-year-old girl sent to work in another household as part of a money exchange agreement between two families. She was subjected to abuse and sexual exploitation, resulting in early motherhood. HAGURUKA provided her with legal representation and psychosocial support. The complexity of trafficking crimes continues to pose evidence-gathering challenges.

In 2026, HAGURUKA will strengthen collaboration with border authorities and train investigators on trafficking-specific evidence protocols.

INTEGRATED PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT **FOR TEENAGE MOTHERS**

HAGURUKA's integrated support program for teenage mothers in Bugesera and Ngoma demonstrated that with psychosocial care, legal support, and consistent follow-up, recovery is possible. The program reached 200 teenage mothers and 200 parents or guardians.

Indicator	Result
Teenage mothers reached	200
Parents / guardians reached	200
Children registered	200 (100%)
Depression reduction	21% → 18%
PTSD reduction	19% → 14%
Family conflict reduction	42% → 31%
Family planning uptake	80.8% → 91%
Returned to school or TVET	31
Completed vocational training	10
Children registered on both father and Mother/teen-mothers	66



FROM ABUSE BY A NEIGHBOR TO JUSTICE: THE CASE OF A TEEN MOTHER



***You
helped me
feel heard,
protected,
and
believed.”***

At nine years old, I was taken in by a family to continue my education, but instead spent my days caring for their livestock. The husband, Gratien, began abusing me and raped me for the first time when I was sixteen. The abuse continued. He threatened to kill me if I told anyone. I became pregnant. When I reported him, I was forced out of the home. Then I contacted HAGURUKA.

HAGURUKA provided a lawyer, followed up on my complaint, and arranged a DNA test that confirmed paternity. In court, the evidence spoke for itself. Afazari was found guilty and sentenced to ten years in prison, and ordered to pay 2,000,000 RWF in damages and 200,000 RWF.

“You helped me feel heard, protected, and believed.”

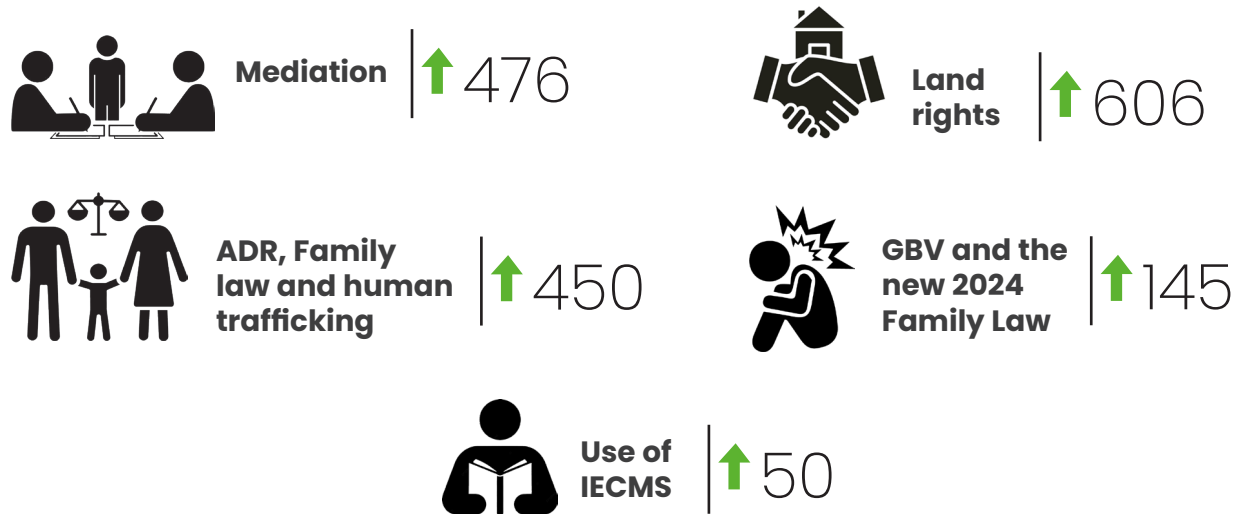
The aftermath brought new pain. My mother blamed me for his imprisonment and harassed me, especially when intoxicated. Through HAGURUKA's psychosocial support and family mediation, she pledged to stop. “I never thought I would be able to live peacefully again with my parents. I am so thankful for HAGURUKA's support.” Today, I am raising my daughter and working towards a better future.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Strengthening the institutions and individuals embedded within communities is central to HAGURUKA's theory of change.

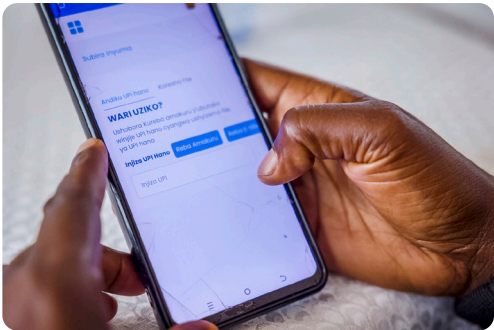


In 2025, HAGURUKA trained 1,727 state and non-state actors (963 men, 764 women) across three interconnected programs, advancing alternative dispute resolution (ADR), improving land governance, and equipping frontline leaders to prevent GBV and uphold legal rights.



LAND RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE

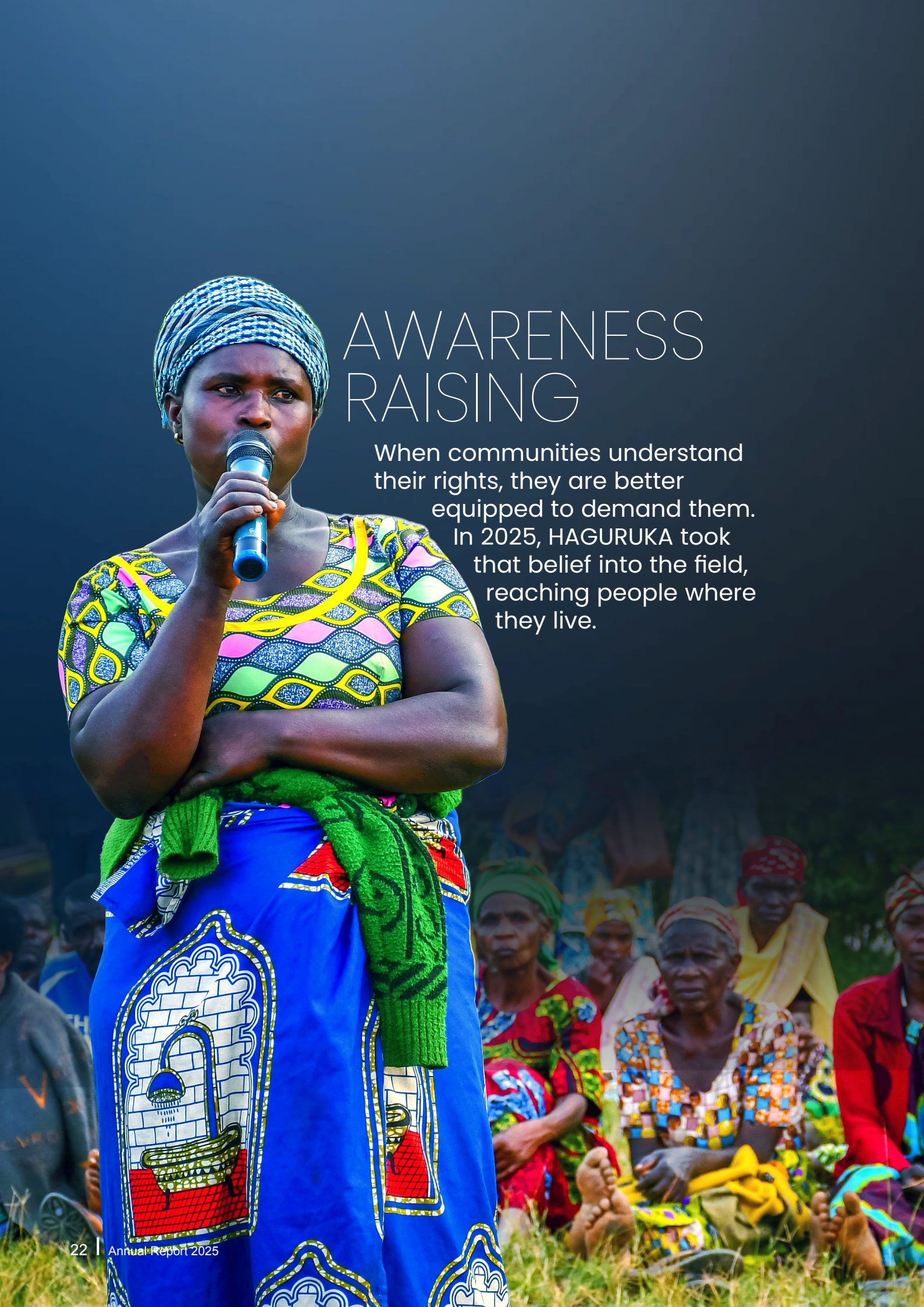
In partnership with the National Land Authority (NLA), Lantmäteriet, and with support from Sida, HAGURUKA delivered a capacity-building programme across Gakenke, Nyaruguru, and Rutsiro districts. A total of 606 participants were trained (210 women and 396 men), including Executive Secretaries, land committee chairpersons, paralegals, sector land managers, and district land administrators. In each of the three districts, systemic challenges were identified:



Rutsiro District	Nyaruguru District	Gakenke District
1. Encroachment on public land accompanied by disputes over private ownership claims.	1. High levels of statelessness and lack of national IDs, limiting access to land titles and economic opportunities.	1. Polygamous unions leading to property registered solely in men's names despite contributions from multiple partners.
2. Polygamous family structures contributing to inheritance conflicts and heightened vulnerability for women in informal unions.	2. Persistent misconceptions that inheritance is exclusively patrilineal, resulting in exclusion of maternal relatives.	2. Parents commonly donating land to children but refusing to formalize title transfers, creating legal uncertainty and disputes.

Across all three districts, several systemic issues emerged:

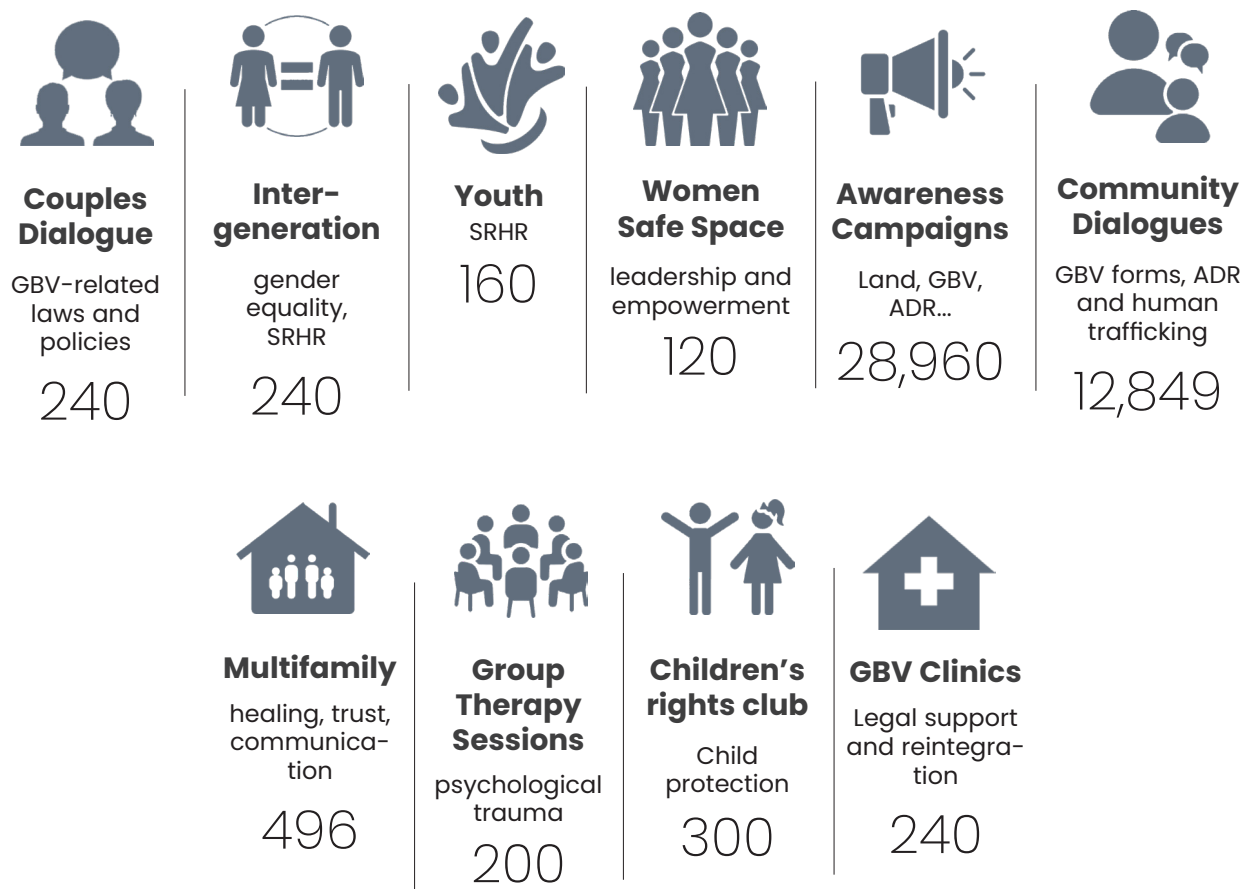
- Low participation in formal land transactions.
- Frequent sale of inherited land without completing required registration, resulting in broken ownership chains.
- Increasing land boundary disputes being addressed by Abunzi and courts rather than through formal processes.

A woman in the foreground is wearing a blue and white patterned headwrap, a colorful patterned top, and a blue skirt with a large white and red graphic. She is holding a blue microphone to her mouth. In the background, a group of women are seated on the grass, wearing various colorful traditional dresses and headwraps. The background is a soft-focus natural setting.

AWARENESS RAISING

When communities understand their rights, they are better equipped to demand them. In 2025, HAGURUKA took that belief into the field, reaching people where they live.

In 2025, HAGURUKA's awareness-raising work reached communities across seven districts: Gasabo, Bugesera, Ngoma, Musanze, Nyarugenge, Nyamagabe, and Nyaruguru. Through community dialogues, women's safe spaces, radio programmes, and integrated psychosocial support, 43,805 people (22,946 women and 20,859 men) received key messages on family law, land rights, GBV prevention, gender equality, SRHR, and alternative dispute resolution (ADR).



WOMEN’S SAFE SPACES: FROM PARTICIPANTS TO LEADERS



Despite entering women's safe spaces with limited confidence and little public recognition, 81 women were elected as community leaders. In 2025, HAGURUKA brought these newly elected women together for peer learning sessions and spaces for reflection on how leadership had reshaped their lives. Many described a remarkable shift in community perception. Women once overlooked in village meetings were now consulted on land disputes, family conflicts, and development priorities.

“People come to my door now,” one participant shared. “They want my opinion. That still surprises me.”

These sessions produced important insights:

- Balancing leadership roles with domestic duties remained a major challenge.
- Leadership preparation must include practical skills such as time management and negotiating household responsibilities
- Newly elected women need ongoing mentorship
- It is essential to engage spouses, families, and male co-leaders to create an environment where women's leadership can thrive.

INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE: TEEN MOTHERS AND PARENTS



In Musanze and Gasabo Districts, HAGURUKA facilitated dialogue sessions for 80 teen mothers and 160 parents, creating safe spaces for open communication on GBV, sexual and reproductive health, and legal rights. These sessions helped rebuild trust, reduce stigma, and strengthen family support. Taken together, this allowed parents and daughters to reconnect after years of strained communication. For many teen mothers, returning to school had once felt out of reach. Stigma, fear, and family tensions made it difficult to imagine a different future. But as families talked openly and began to understand each other, perspectives shifted. Parents recognized the importance of supporting their daughters' education, and the girl's regained confidence in their dreams.

As result:

- 6 teen mothers returned to formal school.
- 2 enrolled in TVET programs, pursuing practical skills and new opportunities.

These changes show how dialogue and support can open pathways for teen mothers to reclaim their futures.

CASE STUDY: REBUILDING FAMILY BONDS THROUGH DIALOGUE

Ange became pregnant at 17, with limited access to sexual and reproductive health information and little communication at home. After her pregnancy, she experienced rejection and emotional distance, particularly from her mother. Everything changed when the family joined intergenerational dialogue sessions. Ange's mother reflected on how anger had damaged their relationship and chose support instead of punishment.

After the training, she apologised and embraced her grandson for the first time. Ange's father also acknowledged his role and committed to shared responsibility. Today, the family describes their home as peaceful, communicative, and supportive. They have become a clear example of how empathy, dialogue, and community learning can transform relationships and create safer environments for teenage mothers and their children.

KNOWN RIGHTS: BUILDING CHILDREN'S CAPACITY TO UNDERSTAND AND ACT ON THEIR RIGHTS



HAGURUKA facilitated 20 participatory sessions for 300 children (150 girls and 150 boys) on understanding and acting on their rights. The approach was interactive and children explored what it looks like when rights are respected or violated. In doing so, issues surfaced that included the normalization of bullying, child labor, and caregiving burdens placed on younger siblings.

By the end of the program, many children who had initially lacked confidence were identifying rights violations and reporting them to trusted adults. Several directly engaged local leaders with clarity that impressed the adults present.

FROM CHILD RIGHTS CLUB GRADUATE TO FOUNDER OF A CHILD-LED INITIATIVE PROMOTING EDUCATION AND PROTECTION

The Children's Rights Club, established at Groupe Scolaire Kinyinya under HAGURUKA's Child Protection programme, has continued to nurture young leaders passionate about children's rights and community transformation. One of its outstanding alumni, Ngoga Leon Emmanuel, exemplifies this impact, progressing from club member to founder of his own child-led initiative in Kimironko Sector, Gasabo District.



Leon joined the club during his secondary school years, where he developed skills in children's

rights, leadership, gender equity, and community engagement. He became particularly focused on the causes of child abuse and violence affecting children from low-income families.

“Being part of the club changed how I view society. I learned to identify problems affecting children and to think of practical solutions. I began to see myself as an ambassador for children’s rights, and I could no longer remain silent when I saw children being denied their rights.”

After graduating in 2025, Leon turned that conviction into action. He noticed many children in his neighborhood were out of school because families could not afford education costs. He approached village leaders, secured office space at the village headquarters, and established a small learning and mentoring center where out-of-school children receive informal education and support to return to formal schooling. Parents who initially hesitated have since expressed renewed commitment after participating in his community dialogues. Leon is now training older youth as peer educators to extend the center’s reach.

TRAINING JOURNALISTS AND INFLUENCERS TO COMBAT TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.

HAGURUKA recognises that the media is not only a witness to gender-based violence but can also cause harm when victims’ identities are disclosed, children are insufficiently protected, or online content incites harassment. As part of its 2025 prevention strategy, HAGURUKA organised a one-day training for 30 Rwandan journalists and social media influencers on ethical reporting and responsible digital engagement.



Participants examined how decisions about what to publish, how to frame stories, and how to protect privacy directly affect the safety and dignity of women, girls, and other vulnerable groups. The session addressed ethical reporting on victims, safeguarding children’s identities, avoiding sensationalism, and understanding how social media narratives influence public perceptions of gender and power. Engaging journalists and influencers is now an intentional element of HAGURUKA’s advocacy agenda; future plans include follow-up sessions, mentorship, and closer collaboration with media institutions.

TAKING THE LAW TO **EVERY HOME VIA RADIO**



Across Rwanda, millions of families are navigating a new legal landscape, often without realising it. In partnership with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, HAGURUKA brought legal knowledge directly into households through a national radio programme on family law broadcast on Radio Rwanda. Over 17 live sessions, legal experts from HAGURUKA and MIGEPROF answered listeners' questions in real time, corrected misconceptions, and made the law understandable and accessible to the public. The programme explained key provisions of the new Law Governing Persons and Family, including marriage, parental authority, inheritance, adoption, and the social protection of vulnerable persons. It also addressed GBV prevention and response, legal remedies and reporting mechanisms, and the essential role communities play in safeguarding victims.



SEVEN-YEAR EVALUATION: **INGO Z'AMAHORO** **(COUPLES' DIALOGUE)**

Since 2018, HAGURUKA's Ingo z'Amahoro (Couples' Dialogue) programme has supported 740 couples in Gasabo and Musanze to strengthen communication, rebuild trust, and promote shared responsibility within households. In 2025, the programme engaged 120 couples in guided sessions; 107 couples publicly committed to improving their relationships, witnessed by peers and local leaders.



HAGURUKA presented findings from a rigorous seven-year evaluation. The evaluation confirmed that structured dialogue, active listening, and consistent follow-up helped couples rebuild respect and reduce conflict, including among those who initially struggled to sit together. Persistent challenges included intergenerational patterns of violence, economic stress, and alcohol misuse.



IMPACT IN NUMBERS



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INGO Z'AMAHORO FUTURE PROGRAMMING

The evaluation produced four evidence-based recommendations for scaling and deepening impact:



Pair behavioral change with economic empowerment and access to finance to make transformation more durable.



Embed inclusive practices that address the distinct needs of people with disabilities, children, and other vulnerable groups.



Adapt the approach for urban and higher-income communities while preserving core principles of dialogue, accountability, and gender equity.



Document and disseminate lessons to inform future programming, policy influence, and community practice.



I strongly recommend programmes like this that put families at the centre and leverage governments' efforts to eliminate GBV and promote family well-being."

Mireille Batamuriza, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion

ORGANIZATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (OCD)

Before HAGURUKA could transform communities, it had to transform how its own team sees, tracks, and understands change.



BUILDING A CULTURE OF **EVIDENCE AND LEARNING**

HAGURUKA's long-term strategy prioritises equipping staff with the skills to measure real change – not simply counting outputs, but capturing processes and outcomes. Staff across all departments participated in structured learning sessions to improve data collection, analysis, and use in programme decision-making.





PARALEGAL EXTENDING ACCESS TO **JUSTICE TO COMMUNITIES**

Paralegals serve as a vital bridge between citizens and HAGURUKA's services, raising awareness, guiding communities through legal matters, and following up to ensure resolution. In 2025, HAGURUKA expanded its network to **45 trained paralegals** deployed across Ngoma and Bugesera Districts. They conducted **39 awareness-raising sessions** covering GBV prevention, gender equality, and key laws affecting everyday life. Across Gasabo, Ngoma, and Bugesera, paralegals received **693 cases**, 505 brought by women and 188 by men.



45
Paralegals
22F
23M



39
Awareness Sessions



693
Cases Supported



03
Reflection Meetings Held



I am **Félicité**, born in 1952. My siblings and I agreed long ago to entrust our family land to our brother so that he could manage it for all of us. We trusted him completely, knowing he would protect the land on behalf of the entire family. When my brother passed away, his wife tried to take the land as if it belonged only to her, and she even planned to sell it without informing us. This caused a serious conflict, and I feared we were about to lose what rightfully belonged to our family.

During a community outreach meeting, I shared my situation with the community paralegal in Remera Sector, Ms Kayitesi Zainab. She listened to me, reassured me, and promised to support me through the necessary steps. She accompanied me to the HAGURUKA office, where we prepared letters to the authorities requesting that the sale of the land, worth about 8 million RWF, be stopped until the proper inheritance process could be completed.

Ms Kayitesi also accompanied me several times to meet the Executive Secretary of Remera Sector and advocated on my behalf. As a result of these efforts, the authorities agreed to suspend the sale while the succession process is being handled. Thanks to the support I received from HAGURUKA, the land to which I have a rightful claim is now protected.

RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

In 2025, HAGURUKA strengthened its role as a policy actor and knowledge generator, translating frontline experience into evidence, evidence into advocacy, and advocacy into institutional change.



POLICY ADVOCACY AND LAW REFORM



HAGURUKA's advocacy in 2025 was grounded in field evidence and directed at institutional change. Across four legislative and policy processes, the organization contributed technical input that influenced how Rwanda's legal frameworks address gender equality, GBV, children's rights, and land rights.

LAW REFORM CONTRIBUTIONS



GBV Law Reform:

Contributed evidence-based technical input to the review and amendment of Rwanda's law on the prevention and punishment of Gender-Based Violence, drawing directly from community engagement and case experience.



Violence Against Children:

Provided recommendations to the Parliamentary Committee on National Unity, Human Rights, and the Fight Against Genocide, addressing protection gaps for children.



Land Law:

Contributed technical input on the 2021 Land Law and its associated legal framework to support a more gender-responsive land rights environment.



Women's Leadership:

Presented research findings and policy recommendations at the 24th National Women's Council Session at the Parliament of Rwanda, addressing the structural barriers limiting women's representation at local governance level.

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

All six priorities submitted by women-led organizations and gender advocates were reflected in Rwanda's Second National Strategy for Transformation (NST2), a clear demonstration of civil society's power to shape national agendas. HAGURUKA convened a two-day workshop bringing together these organizations to analyze how their proposals had been integrated into NST2, identify remaining gaps, and define concrete implementation actions.



The six adopted priorities are:

01

30% affirmative action for women's participation in procurement and supply chain processes.

02

Regulation policy on unpaid care work (Recognize, Reduce, Redistribute – the 3Rs).

03

Special Gender-Based Violence Chamber at the Intermediate Court of Justice.

04

Two dedicated seats for persons with disabilities (one male, one female) in Parliament, district councils, and sector levels through electoral law amendment.

05

Safety “dos and don'ts” in public transport for women, girls, elders, and persons with disabilities.

06

Maternity leave for vulnerable women in agriculture and the informal sector, financed by a 0.2% contribution scheme managed under Ejo Heza.

UPR SHADOW REPORT AND CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION

Building on this success, HAGURUKA led the production of a landmark shadow report on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), marking a new level of civil society engagement in international human rights accountability.



KEY OUTCOMES

A comprehensive shadow report on the implementation of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was successfully produced and validated through a collaborative process involving a coalition of 16 women's rights organizations.

The report delivers an independent and evidence-based assessment of national progress in advancing gender equality, addressing gender-based violence (GBV), and promoting women's economic empowerment.

The coalition-based approach reinforced civil society coordination and strengthened the collective voice of women's rights organizations in international human rights accountability and advocacy processes.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ADVOCACY

Haguruka, in collaboration with the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), organised a high-level policy dialogue with 76 duty bearers focusing on children's rights, particularly those of children with disabilities, achieving significant impact in advocating for children's well-being.

The dialogue drew attention to critical issues such as inadequate family support, lack of medical treatment for children with disabilities, and challenges in integrating children with disabilities into family care programmes. As a result, key recommendations were made to accelerate assessments, implement a Disability Management System, establish systems for uninsured children with disabilities, and address inadequately equipped schools.



During policy dialogues, the following key decisions and recommendations have emerged to address child rights issues:



- Accelerating approval of the Kinyarwanda Sign Language dictionary, and highlighting the need for designated sign language schools in each province.



- Evaluating programmes such as Tubarere Mu Muryango / Let's Raise Children in the Family, which revealed both challenges and positive outcomes, and emphasised the financial burden on families with disabilities.



- Increasing government efforts to reduce stigma and raise awareness about disabilities, thereby fostering transformative change towards inclusive and equitable treatment of children with disabilities in Rwanda.



CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDATION
Statelessness, polygamous family structures, persistent cultural misconceptions about inheritance limit vulnerable populations' access to land rights.	Deepen grassroots legal empowerment in high-need districts. Intensify community education on inheritance rights and strengthen preventive administrative systems before disputes escalate.
Poverty and alcohol misuse continue to contribute to family conflict and gender-based violence. Behavioural change programmes alone are insufficient without improved economic stability.	Integrate economic empowerment across all programmes. Link participants to savings groups and livelihood opportunities alongside behavioural interventions.
Many teen mothers face challenges in returning to school or accessing vocational opportunities due to stigma, economic hardship, logistical barriers, and limited family or community support.	Establish a dedicated school re-entry pathway with scholarship linkages, peer mentorship, and sustained family mediation.
Global funding instability threatens the sustainability and continuity of long-term initiatives.	Diversify funding sources through local private sector partners, government co-financing, and activation of the existing fundraising strategy.
High demand for hotline and remote legal services exceeds current response capacity, resulting in unanswered calls and missed opportunities to assist vulnerable individuals.	Implement a callback system for missed calls and pilot automated legal information for common questions.
Delays in GBV victim cases in court can prolong trauma and weaken access to timely justice.	Establishing specialized chambers or dedicated court pathways for GBV cases, alongside stronger case follow-up and coordination.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

HAGURUKA's 2025 achievements were made possible by the vital support of our donors, the collaboration of our partners, and the unwavering dedication of our staff and volunteers. Together, we are advancing justice for Rwanda's women and children and building a future where no one is left to face the system alone.



A young woman with short dark hair, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a dark skirt, is sitting and holding a baby. She is looking off to the side with a gentle smile. The baby is wearing a light-colored patterned shirt. The background is a textured, light-colored wall. The lighting is soft and directional, coming from the side.

**Breaking Barriers,
Building Futures**



Haguruka KG 182 St 19, Remera Kigali-Rwanda | P.O. Box 3030 Kigali-Rwanda
Telephone + 250 788 300834 | E-mail: info@haguruka.org.rw | www.haguruka.org.rw

