Focus on Rwanda: A Conference on Gender Research and Activism: Proceedings

11-12 March 2011, Top Tower Hotel, Kigali, Rwanda

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November 2012
Participants at the opening session of the Conference

Cover photo:
Researchers and activists participating in a Poetry Workshop at the Conference

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Shirley Randell International and Associates
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Foreword

To all the graduates of the inaugural class of Masters students in the graduate degree program in Gender and Development (MGD) based at the Centre for Gender, Culture and Development (CGCD) at the Kigali Institute of Education (KIE), we give you this Proceedings document as a reminder of all the work you have done over the past two years, as well as the things we have learned together, and the progress that has already been made. This document fills an important niche in Rwandan gender studies, giving a much better sense now of how government policy has evolved in regard to gender and the tremendous gender work being done by researchers and activists in Rwanda.

KIE established CGCD in Rwanda in June 2009. The vision of CGCD is to become a centre of gender, culture and development studies that is an internationally known centre of excellence producing professionally qualified academicians, public servants, civil society and private sector leaders, in a high-quality research environment that engages in policy development, short term trainings, certificate programs, community outreach and multicultural exchange. CGCD’s mission is to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment, cultural exchange and development in Rwanda and the Great Lakes Region (GLR).

The objectives of CGCD are:

• To develop practice and curriculum on gender, culture and development (GCD) issues that support Rwanda’s position as a world leader in participation in governance
• To align research, policy and practice
• To train high-caliber academicians, public servants, civil society and private sector leaders to meet local and Great Lakes Region needs
• To employ a human rights based approach to development
• To provide professional higher education in GCD studies to support the development of Rwanda and GLR
• To develop the potential of CGCD staff to provide a stimulating intellectual environment, carry out research, data collection and consultancies to meet Rwanda and GLR needs for research-informed GCD policy, practice and international scholarship
• To secure long-term viability, and increase visibility and influence of CGCD
• To contribute to the community within which CGCD is located and to increase the community’s awareness of GCD issues
• To increase the social integration of vulnerable groups in Rwandan society.
A key feature of CGCD is to improve research into issues related to gender in Rwanda and GLR. This Proceedings document is a contribution to making research and action on gender in Rwanda more widely available.

The ‘Focus on Rwanda’ conference was historic for several reasons. It was the first time that one of CGCD’s international partners participated in a joint venture with KIE – the Old Dominion University (ODU) donating USD 10,000 to sponsor the conference, and its Emeritus Professor Anita Fellman, retired Head of Women’s Studies, winning a Fulbright Award to organize and manage the event. It was the first time that both researchers and practitioners had come together to share their work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, which has been such a strong commitment of the President, government and people of Rwanda in encouraging men and women to work together in the development of the nation. And it was the first venture of many of the inaugural class of MGD students, themselves gender activists, to write and speak publicly about their gender studies and practice at a national conference.

The publication of this report more than 18 months after the 2011 conference sessions is a great opportunity for us all to reflect on the progress made against the challenges and aims expressed, especially in the summing up. The proceedings are interesting and thought provoking to read, though much was sobering, the statistics on child abuse and gender-based violence (GBV) being among other key evidence of a continuing need to fight against discrimination and injustice. But there is also great inspiration in reading about women getting together and taking action. Publishing the Proceedings through SRIA Rwanda Ltd will bring them to a wider audience who may not have first-hand knowledge of the many institutions and projects mentioned.

To quote from page 63 of this document, “Destroying Women and Women as Builders: Gender and the Rwandan State” by Ilaria Buscaglia, a PhD candidate in Anthropology and collaborator at our partner institution, University of Turin, “Women are like rain because they make the land fertile through their work.” CGCD Graduates, although not all of you are women, you are working towards a world in which women and our work is fully accepted, acknowledged and appreciated. Just as we should not take rain for granted, or waste it by not giving it an opportunity to nurture the earth, we are forever bound by our commitment to ensure women’s full potential is realized and our value and contributions do not run unfulfilled through gutters but rather, find soil to moisten and seeds to germinate. In our time together over the last two years we have begun to change the face of Rwanda by raising consciousness, taking action, and believing that change is possible. We will not stand by while the rain-creating forests of women’s potential are chopped down. Rather, we will work together to make sure the rains continue to fall steadily to improve Rwanda for all of her people.

I will forever remember “Focus on Rwanda”, not only because it was the first conference dedicated to building bridges between gender researchers and activists in Rwanda, but also because it was the first opportunity for us to share together in a significant public international venture, and to proudly give visible evidence of the effectiveness of our pioneering studies in gender and our commitment to the nation.

Shirley Kaye Randell
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALSO</td>
<td>Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ART</td>
<td>Anti-Retroviral Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGCD</td>
<td>Centre for Gender, Culture and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHUK</td>
<td>University Teaching Hospital of Kigali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNLS</td>
<td>National AIDS Control Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSYLI</td>
<td>National Endowment for Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil society organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dgroup</td>
<td>Internet Discussion Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDPRS</td>
<td>Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAWE</td>
<td>Forum for African Women Educationalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRSL+/RW</td>
<td>HIV positive women fighting against HIV/AIDS and advocating for the Rights of WLHIV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender-Based Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>GG</td>
<td>Global Grassroots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMO</td>
<td>Gender Monitoring Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoR</td>
<td>Government of Rwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Household Enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immuno-deficiency Virus/ Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTR</td>
<td>International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTY</td>
<td>International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICW</td>
<td>International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JADF</td>
<td>Joint Action Development Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>KIE</td>
<td>Kigali Institute of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mHealth</td>
<td>Mobile Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINEDUC</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIGEPROF</td>
<td>Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAWOCO</td>
<td>National Women’s Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR</td>
<td>National University of Rwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODU</td>
<td>Old Dominion University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PhD Doctor of Philosophy
PMTCT Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV
PRSP Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSI Population Services International
RAUW Rwandan Association of University Women
RNP Rwanda National Police
SNV Netherlands Development Organization
STI Sexually Transmitted Infections
SYTRAMER Trade Union for Domestic Workers
TB Tuberculosis
TBA Trained Birth Attendant
UN United Nations
UNAIDS UN Programme for AIDS
UNDP UN Development Programme
UNFPA UN Population Fund
UNIFEM UN Development Fund for Women, now merged into UN Women
UNSC UN Security Council
UNSCR United Nations Security Council Resolution
UN Women UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USA United States of America
USAID United States Agency for International Development
VAW Violence Against Women
VSO Voluntary Service Organization
VUP Vision 2020 Umurenge Program
WLHIV Women Living with HIV/AIDS
WWI Women for Women International

Participants attending a Conference seminar
Introduction

“Focus on Rwanda: A Conference on Gender Research and Activism” had its origins in the collaboration between ODU in Virginia, especially its Department of Women’s Studies, and the new CGCD at KIE. Prof. Shirley Randell, the instigator and founding Director of the Centre, in 2009 quickly established a working relationship with Prof. Jennifer Fish, head of Women’s Studies at ODU. Among the results of this relationship were jointly written articles, consultations on curriculum development, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between their two universities.

Other individuals from ODU were drawn into this collaboration, among them Anita Clair Fellman, Professor Emeritus of Women’s Studies (and former head of the department). Prof. Fellman focused much of her attention on the need for scholarly resources on gender at CGCD, donating a portion of her own scholarly library to the Centre (care of the KIE University Library). In researching the existing publications on women and on gender in Rwanda, she discovered a concentration of attention on a few subjects and neglect of many other aspects of women’s and men’s lives. Thus, when she was invited as a Fulbright Specialist to spend six weeks at the Centre in 2011, it seemed most useful to utilize that time to organize a conference on gender research in Rwanda, to both highlight and encourage a wider range of research projects. Prof. Carol Simpson, the Provost at ODU, had given Prof. Fish a one-time grant to implement the MOU between the two universities; Prof. Fish generously allocated those funds for the conference, which was sponsored by ODU in collaboration with KIE through the gender studies units of both universities.

A number of early decisions shaped the nature of the conference and are reflected in its title: “Focus on Rwanda: A Conference on Gender Research and Activism.” Rwanda is a small country with a newer university system and less developed scholarly tradition than some of the other nations in its region. Planning a conference on gender research in Africa or even East Africa would have meant that research on Rwanda itself would have been lost amidst the more abundant scholarship of its neighbours. Hence, “Focus on Rwanda” meant precisely that; every presentation, even if it were comparative, had to include Rwanda and use Rwandan data as part of its composition.

Another decision was made to encourage presentations, not only by those doing traditional scholarly research, but also by people who were working “on the ground” on gender issues, whether in government ministries, civil society groups, or non-governmental institutions. Given the nation’s urgent efforts at development, understandably much of the research on gender in Rwanda is policy oriented, and thus an opportunity for communication between those conducting formal research and
those working directly with the Rwandan people seemed highly desirable. It was also hoped that this chance to analyze and summarize what they were observing in their work might induce gender “activists” to think about systematizing their data gathering in future so as to produce formal research.

The decision to include both kinds of presentations resulted in a very dynamic conference. Some sessions were comprised wholly of formal research presentations, and others consisted of panelists describing what their non-government organizations (NGOs) did. Still others combined research papers with complementary information from gender activists. These juxtapositions provided interesting perspectives. One other somewhat unorthodox inclusion in an academic conference also worked out very well; a plenary session was devoted to creative writing: how to free the writer within, how to find support as a writer, as well as finding a publication outlet for what you write. This session too had its policy implications since Rwandans are engaged in efforts to promote a culture of reading and writing in the nation.

Those making presentations were a very diverse group. They included teachers and graduate students from universities inside Rwanda and from those in other countries. People doing development work in large organizations gave formal reports while those working in small NGOs made more informal presentations. Workers in civil society groups based in Rwanda appeared on panels with those who were in Rwanda on behalf of overseas organizations. There were representatives of Parliament, government ministries and the police; there were hospital personnel, businesswomen, consultants and trainers, union officials, and Human Immuno-deficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) activists. Members of the inaugural class of Masters students in the graduate degree program in Gender and Development based at CGCD at KIE made a substantial contribution to the conference as presenters, moderators, and volunteers. The institutional affiliation and status noted in the Proceedings for each participant were those current at the time of the conference.

We hope that these Proceedings convey something of the range of interests presented at the conference. Given Rwanda’s recent history and its current challenges, gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, and the Government of Rwanda’s (GoR) determined efforts to combat poverty, empower women, and fully engender governmental initiatives predictably are well represented in presentations. But attention is also paid to young girls’ hopes and fears for their lives, to the differing experiences of orphans in one province, and to efforts of unions to help beleaguered female household workers. There is a pioneering study of childhood sexual abuse among female university students and a look at the characteristics of local women leaders in one district. An inaugural gender studies conference could not encompass all the Rwandan topics on gender needing exploration, but a start has been made.

These Proceedings have been drawn from the PowerPoint files offered by the presenters, augmented by notes taken by reporters at the conference, by the videotaped recordings of some of the sessions, and in a few instances, by the abstracts or full papers written by the presenters.

Anita Clair Fellman
Opening Plenary Session
Moderator: Prof. Shirley K. Randell, AO, PhD
Director, Centre for Gender, Culture and Development, Kigali Institute of Education

Opening Remarks—Prof. Shirley Randell, AO, PhD

This conference focusing on gender research on Rwanda is an integral part of the mission of CGCD. When the Centre was created two years ago, it was with the goal of achieving excellence through quality teaching, learning and research. In a short period of time, much has been accomplished toward that goal. To begin with, of course, there is the new Masters of Social Science in Gender and Development, with the first class of students having begun their studies in January 2011. Many students from the extraordinary inaugural cohort are presenters at this conference.

From its very beginning, however, the Centre has been involved in important research projects. It has conducted consultancies on a gender baseline survey and gender audit and has then designed a strategic action plan for the National University of Rwanda (NUR). Currently the Centre has embarked on a Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) project intended to strengthen gender research to Improve Girls’ and Women’s Education in Africa with Focus on Rwanda. These are but a few of the research projects undertaken to aid institutions and organizations in Rwanda that are working to improve the situations of girls and women.

These accomplishments are a source of pride. At the same time, the Centre faces formidable challenges. There is inadequate staffing for the new Masters program. There is lack of resources for any expansion. Library resources are inadequate.

Even with these struggles, there is every reason to be optimistic about the future of the Centre and its contributions to the national goals of gender equality and women’s empowerment. It has dedicated staff, enthusiastic students, and loyal support from institutions and organizations both inside Rwanda and around the world.

How “Focus on Rwanda: A Conference on Gender Research and Activism” Came to Be—Prof. Anita Clair Fellman, PhD
Conference Organizer, Fulbright Specialist and Professor Emeritus of Women’s Studies, Old Dominion University, USA

ODU’s commitment to CGCD begins with its Women’s Studies Department’s longstanding interest in global gender issues, and more specifically, with the acquaintance of the Department’s current head, Prof. Jennifer Fish, with Prof. Shirley Randell. After CGCD was formed in March 2009, ODU was the first university to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Centre and KIE. In 2010 the Provost of ODU gave its Women’s Studies Department a grant to implement that MOU. Familiarity with the gender scholarship on Rwanda convinced the speaker that there were many aspects of Rwandan women’s and men’s lives that are little studied. It then made sense to put together those funds from the Provost with the speaker’s own appointment as a
Fulbright Specialist at the Centre to organize this first-ever conference on gender research and activism in Rwanda. It is hoped that “Focus on Rwanda”—perhaps to be followed by other such conferences—will serve to highlight current research, stimulate further research, and build bridges between scholars and the many individuals working on gender issues in government ministries, civil society groups and NGOs in Rwanda.

Welcoming Remarks—Prof. George K. Njoroge, PhD
Rector, Kigali Institute of Education

It is no accident that KIE is the university in Rwanda that chose to house the Centre for Gender, Culture and Development. The importance of gender research, which is crucial to policy formation in Rwanda, cannot be over-emphasized. This research needs to be self-analytic, attuned to the discourse of research. What is gender? What constitutes research? Researchers cannot afford to be gender blind. It is important for men as well as women to do research on women, even when the research topics do not directly involve men’s lives. It is to be hoped that this conference will initiate many important research projects.

Keynote Address—Honorable Jeanne d’Arc Mujawamariya, PhD
Minister of Gender and Family Promotion

The Government of Rwanda has made remarkable progress in putting the country on the global map through its political will in working toward gender equality. This is manifested through various government policies, including its commitment to universal primary education, in which the country has made great strides. However, there is still much to be done. Women are underrepresented at the tertiary level of education. The economic empowerment of women is far from realized. Gender-based violence remains a problem. The more that we can learn from research about these issues, the better we will be able to address them. A conference like this one is a welcome contribution to these efforts.

Prof. George Njoroge, PhD, Rector of KIE, Hon. Jeanne D’Arc Mujawamariya, PhD, Minister of MIGEPROF and Prof. Shirley Randell AO, PhD, Director of CGDC after the Opening Session of the Conference
Session 1  Plenary Session: Approaches to Combating GBV

Moderator: Angelina Muganza*, Executive Secretary, Public Service Commission

A Study on Masculinity and Gender-Based Violence in Rwanda—Edouard Munyamaliza*, Rwanda MenEngage Network

Origins of the study

The Rwanda MenEngage Network commissioned the 2010 study, which was coordinated by The Rwanda Men’s Resource Centre, because they wanted to know what it is in Rwandan males’ sense of masculinity that leads to violence against women. The study was the first national household survey in Rwanda on perceptions about masculinity and GBV. There were 3,612 respondents, of whom 1,131 (36%) were women. The mean age of the participants was 37 for men and 35 for women. Almost all the respondents had experienced war/genocide. The female participants had only half the mean income of the males. Questionnaires and interviews (both quantitative and qualitative research) delivered the results below.

Findings

Children are exposed to a good deal of violence in childhood, as witnesses, victims, and perpetrators. Both boys and girls are raped; boys not so much as girls. There is also substantial violence in school, largely in the form of abuses of power by teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violence in Childhood %</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Witness violence</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual violence</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological violence</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Witnessing or facing violence in childhood does correlate with violent behaviour in adulthood. Their findings indicate that 36% of men who faced violence in childhood become adult perpetrators of violence against women. A higher percentage of women (57.2%) reported having experienced violence by their husbands than that of men (38%) who acknowledge violence toward their wives.

Violence against women in family settings increases with women’s earning power. Men (and to a lesser extent women) are open in their belief that men should dominate women. The unequal power relations between men and women are mirrored in sexual relations, which contributes to men’s much higher rates of satisfaction with the frequency and quality of their sexual relations than women’s. Over 32% of women report ever having been forced by their husbands to have sex as compared to 3.7% of men who acknowledged having done so.

*Indicates a member of the inaugural class of the Masters of Social Science degree program in Gender and Development at CGCD at KIE
Both men and women, while aware of a new government law against GBV, consider the punishments to be too harsh, e.g. 20 years to life imprisonment for some cases of rape.

Interestingly, in terms of gender equality attitudes, men responded as more gender sensitive than women. This indicates the gap between wished perceptions and daily reality.

**Roots of GBV: social norms and practices**
- Socio-cultural practices of dowry, elongating women’s labia (*gukuna*), forced marriage, and purification (*kwezwa*), while seen as important to more than half the participants, are based on unequal gender relations and entail harmful practices
- Religious ideas are used to justify gender inequality, e.g. “God shaped Eve from the rib of Adam”, “Man is the head of the family as Christ is for the church”
- The law against VAW is perceived as unjust toward men, arguably fueling violence (due to feelings of disempowerment)

**Roots of GBV: negative masculinity perceptions**
- Men have to be tough (defenders)
- Men need more sex and are always ready for it (procreators)
- Men are the head of families and have to dominate and control women (protectors)

**Roots of positive masculinity**
- Men are positively motivated to be involved in solving problems
- Men intervene in GBV committed by others and consider GBV immoral

**Recommendations**
The Rwanda MenEngage Network has concluded that given that GBV is so tied up with deeply held notions of what it means to be a man, a new positive masculine identity is needed, one that is not dependent upon a sense of superiority and dominance over women.

**Combating Gender-based Violence in Rwanda**—Liberata Gahongayire, Department of Human Resource Management, School of Finance and Banking

**Purpose and nature of the study**
The purpose of this study was to ascertain the quality of care given to victims of GBV in the city of Kigali. The researcher used questionnaires, interviews and observation as means of collecting data. Sites of research included Kacyiru Police Hospital and other surrounding health centres, Ghanga and Kicukiro, and hospitals such as Muhima, Kibagabaga and the University Teaching Hospital of Kigali (CHUK). The researcher also observed the following caregivers for victims of GBV: *Haguruka* Association and *Avocats sans Frontières*. She administered a structured questionnaire to seven health service providers, the police gender desk, and the judiciary.

**Findings**
The care given to victims of GBV includes medical legal service, medical care, legal and paralegal support, and psychosocial care. The study found that record keeping and services of all kinds to GBV victims are inconsistently available and applied. Because
most cases of GBV occur at night when normal hospital services are not available, victims are often treated in departments that are ill equipped to deal with them. Other hospitals that receive transfer patients from health centres are overwhelmed by the demands imposed upon them. Record keeping at health centres does not specifically identify women who come in because of GBV. Throughout the city’s health centres and hospitals, no single service provider specialises in psychosocial services except Kacyiru hospital.

**Recommendations**

On the basis of this study, the researcher recommends greater uniformity of data management, of treatment procedures, of monitoring and follow-up mechanisms. Greater training for staff at all levels of service would be desirable as would an increase in legal aid service providers for victims. In sum, she is enthusiastic about the emergence of GoR’s One-Stop Centre, supported by One-UN Rwanda that is situated near the Rwanda National Police (RNP) headquarters and offers integrated care for those suffering from GBV.

**A Holistic Approach to Prevention and Response to Gender-based Violence: Best Practices and Challenges (Rwanda National Police (RNP) Experience)—Gorret Mwenzangu, RNP ISANGE Coordinator, and Violet Kabarenzi*, RNP Gender Desk Consultant**

**Government of Rwanda’s approach to dealing with GBV**

The laws and services pertaining to gender-based violence emerged out of the 1994 genocide in which rape was widely used as an instrument of war. Violence against women occurs even in peacetime owing to abuses emanating from unequal gender relations in both the private and public spheres. Because this violence is so woven into everyday practices, a holistic approach to its treatment and eradication is required.

The government has chosen a human security approach in which every individual is entitled to basic human rights and the possibility of living in peace. There are substantial legal and policy frameworks in place for the promotion of gender equality, ranging from the Economic Development Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) to the Law on Prevention and Punishing Gender-based Violence and Related Crimes.

**The role of the Rwanda National Police**

RNP has a key role to play in enforcing the latter law. Its initiatives toward this end include:

- Establishment of decentralized Police Gender Desks
- Clear RNP policy on child, domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence
- Capacity building for police, male and female, in GBV investigation
- Establishment of ISANGE One-Stop Centre for coordinated service delivery to victims of GBV
- Increased participation and involvement of female police officers (who in 2011 constituted 19% of the total force) in both local and regional programs and missions
• Development of community policing and outreach programs, central to the maintenance of peace and security because of the commitment to and involvement of the public in efforts to end violence toward women
• Emphasis on partnerships with all the agencies and units involved in dealing with GBV

Best practices of the Police Gender Desk include: rapid field response, free telephone hotline, rapid investigation, counselling, community mobilization, networking with partners, and training officers on GBV

In the years since 2005, statistics about violence against women and children have reduced markedly in all categories

**ISANGE One Stop Centre, operating since 2009**
• Holistic approach to combating and punishing GBV
• Quick medical expertise for evidence in courts
• Medical treatment
• Preventative treatment of HIV/sexually transmitted infections (STIs)/Pregnancy
• Psycho-social services/mental health
• Liaison with GBV desk for timely investigations
• Safe room
• Survivor follow-up
• Forensic lab

**Rwanda’s leadership role in ending violence against women and girls**

Rwanda is taking the lead among African countries in ascertaining the best role of security organs in Africa in ending violence against women and girls. The nation hosted a conference on the topic in October 2010, and was nominated to become the Secretariat of this campaign for 2010-2011.

**Challenges**

Despite these successes, many challenges remain owing to gender stereotypes, men’s investment in their male privileges, women’s poor economic status, the culture of silence on sexual issues, limited legal awareness, limited resources for research, forensics, and DNA testing, and too few women at decision-making levels in security organs.

**Recommendations**

The presenters urge the ISANGE One Stop Centre to be replicated elsewhere in the country, along with strengthening of Gender Desks, and the increased number, training, and influence of women police officers. They also urge enhancing of community awareness and sensitization programs.
Session 2a Women’s Roles in Post-Conflict Society

Moderator: Jules Sebahizi Makuza*, SMI Consulting Firm

Women in War, Conflict Reconciliation, and Peace Building—Odette Nyiramuzima*, Kicukuro District Branch Manager, Social Security Fund of Rwanda

Gendered approach to conflict prevention and analysis

There is recent global acknowledgment by international agencies and the United Nations (UN) that women are often the targeted victims of violence, especially sexual violence, during situations of conflict. As a result, international agencies through international legal instruments (e.g. UN Security Council Resolutions [UNSCR] 1325 and 1820) now require member states to integrate a gendered approach to conflict analysis, take into account the special needs of women during conflict prevention, resolution and peace building, and to address the serious matter of their exclusion from peace building in post-conflict contexts.

Relevance for Rwanda

This topic has special relevance for Rwanda, in terms of its applicability to women’s situation during the war and genocide against the Tutsi. Women’s lower status in the traditionally patriarchal nature of Rwandan society, exacerbated by colonial era policies further disempowering women, created challenges in denaturalizing women’s situation sufficiently to assess the role of gender in analysis of the conflict. Nonetheless, Rwanda has made remarkable efforts to follow international guidelines on gendering conflict and peace building. Since the 1994 genocide, Rwanda has enacted numerous gender-sensitive laws and policies intended to raise women’s status so as to make a repetition of their victimhood during conflict unthinkable and to assure peaceful, secure, and sustainable development.

Sources for this study

The researcher used documents highlighting international and national legal instruments (e.g. Rwandan National Plan for UNSCR 1325), information on government policies, and interviews with informants from different organizations who were queried on their role in women’s empowerment and in the reconciliation and peace building process after the genocide.

Overcoming the heritage of the past

The socio-economic aspects of Rwandan society most pertinent to this topic are its very high population density (408 people per km2), its still rapid population growth, its predominantly agricultural economy, the slight majority of women in the population, and the high figure of 32.13% of households headed by women.

While on the one hand, the genocide destroyed existing social, political and economic structures, it also offered the opportunity to the new government to pass legislation in keeping with the gender sensitivity of the international legal instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Hence land laws and laws on inheritance no longer discriminate against
women. GBV became criminalized. Women have come to have a part in the reconstruction of Rwandan society through their participation in women’s organizations and in Parliament (where they comprise 56% of the lower chamber since 2010) and in many other decision-making bodies in which they are guaranteed by the Constitution of at least 30% of all positions. They also comprise 29% of the judges on the local Gacaca courts where lower level genocide suspects are tried. There are Gender Desks in both the Rwanda Defense Force and RNP, and gender policies and gender committees are in place at the local level. There has been concern as well for economic empowerment, including programs that target or especially benefit women, e.g., the Girinka Project (one cow per poor family) and the Bye Bye Nyakatsi housing program (eradication of grass-thatched houses).

Challenges remaining

Despite these initiatives, substantial challenges to sustainable peace and development remain; poverty is significant, illiteracy still exists, many people have no access to electricity, not to mention information and communication technologies (ICT). Despite concerns for gender sensitivity, there is sometimes a lack of gender-disaggregated data. The Government’s gender policies are often unknown and misunderstood or even rejected in rural areas. There is inadequate capacity for gender mainstreaming, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies, plans and programs.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends consistent attention be paid to ensure participation of women in decision-making positions at all levels. Sensitization to gender issues and gender equality is especially crucial at the local level. She notes also that the eradication of genocide ideology is necessary to maintain security.

Women Strong: A Comparative Analysis of the Role of South African and Rwandan Women in Post-conflict Development—Savannah Lynn Eck, M.A. student, International Relations: Conflict and Cooperation, ODU

A comparative approach

The researcher spent time working with Grandmothers Against Poverty and AIDS in South Africa in 2010, which gave her an interest in women in post-conflict situations: South Africa, Rwanda, and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). She examines government gender policies and objectives in each country, including land and inheritance policies, contrasted with implementation of these policies, social attitudes, and the work of social and government organizations in support of government policies.

Legal frameworks

Rwanda is a special case in the amount of gender-empowering legislation passed since 1994—not usual in post-conflict societies. There is a high percentage of women in Parliament, the President’s cabinet and in the public sphere generally.

There is an excellent constitution in South Africa promoting gender equality, but implementation is lacking, owing to inadequate funding in part, and heightening class
divisions. Rural women in South Africa are disproportionately affected by poverty and by attendant GBV.

In regard to land and property rights, there has been a big push in Rwanda to encourage legal marriage to give women legal rights of inheritance. South Africa has been slow to redistribute land lost to blacks under Apartheid.

**Social attitudes lag behind policy**

This is manifested in very high rates of GBV in South Africa. Gender power imbalances are also shown in high rates of HIV/AIDS, with women making up the larger proportion of infected people.

Land policies and property inheritance in Rwanda are tied to marriage, which may be problematic in some situations owing to poverty in rural areas. In South Africa women sometimes have trouble getting access to their own property. There is the counter example in Rwanda of a genocide widow who has taken over her husband’s coffee plantation and has made a big success at it.

In the DRC, women constitute a majority. While there is a progressive constitution in regard to the abolition of discrimination, there has not been much implementation of those clauses or challenging of patriarchal attitudes as exemplified by the family code.

**How to move forward**

The researcher stressed the importance of community development/grassroots women’s groups to help implement progressive government policies. This is where traditional cultural values can be changed. Empowering women is the only sure way to ensure a country’s development, since women’s earnings more commonly than men’s are plowed back into the family, allowing the feeding, care and education of children.

**Gendered Post Conflict Tensions: A Comparative Study**—Prof. Shirley Randell, PhD, Director CGCD, KIE (Aided by Melissa Vogt, Aloys Mahwa and Emmanuel Bimenyimana*)

**Still little attention to gender**

The week before the conference, Prof. Shirley Randell attended the Second Biennial War Crimes Conference in London, which revealed that still little attention is being paid to the gendered aspects of post-conflict resolution. Consequently her paper is less thoroughly comparative than she had hoped.

**Distinctiveness of the genocide against the Tutsi**

Even when looking at countries that have experienced genocide, Rwanda is distinctive from other genocide situations in terms of

- scale—80% of the Tutsi population killed
- duration—3 months; 75% killed in 6 weeks
- cruelty—17 methods of killing
- decentralized killing—micromanagement
- symbolic use of water in the killing—Nyabarongo River, shortcut to Ethiopia
Causes
An event of this magnitude cannot have a simple cause. Complex reasons behind the genocide include high population density and land shortage, heavy dependence on subsistence agriculture, a culture of obedience, historical and political issues, lack of education and high levels of illiteracy, and lack of support from the international community.

Response of the international community after the genocide
Several international bodies, conventions and laws resulted from the international community’s response to the events in Rwanda
• The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)—1994—for masterminds of the genocide
• the recognition of rape as crime against humanity—1994
• rape recognized as a war crime—1998
• under the rubric of the creation of the Responsibility to Protect (2001) came UN Resolution 62/96, Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence

Women in the genocide and its aftermath
• Women were kept alive to be sexual slaves
• Women were strategic targets of rape and sexual abuse
• In 1995 women formed 60-70% of the population with many female-headed households
• A post-genocide mentality shift occurred, with an emphasis on equality and the need for women and girls to take on new roles
• Women’s desire grew to organize and influence government
• Women undertook entrepreneurial projects involving victims from both sides

Rwanda today
The population is more gender balanced now with women comprising about 52%. From the highest levels of government there is a strong commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment, resulting in good policies. The substantial numbers of women in Parliament are able to push through changes as “behind the scenes advisors.”

Resistance to implementation of very good policies
Nonetheless, there is resistance to implementation of the very good policies. The ICTR special investigative team to follow up on gender violence during the genocide has been disbanded. There is very little gender awareness in the universities. There is a high propensity of GBV, and research indicates a correlation between women’s employment and domestic violence, even among the well educated.

Comparison with the former Yugoslavia
The only other paper at the London conference that dealt with gender was one on armed conflict in former Yugoslavia, which has led to higher visibility of sexual violence in international law, and which coincided with increased emphasis on the intersection of gender and ethnicity in jurisprudence as expressed in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).
The tendency to see conflict through an ethnic lens needs a gender lens corrective, for gender relations often set the stage for how men and women experience conflict. Feminist analysis helps us to overcome preconceived expectations of gender roles, to be more open to seeing the roles that men and women play in conflict, as both victims and actors.

**Lessons to be learned from the situation in Afghanistan**

Women are not only the main victims of conflict situations but are very much part of the solution in post-conflict reconstruction:

- the centrality of humanitarian assistance and recovery
- reconstruction of the political, public and security sectors
- economic, social, and infrastructure development
- human rights protection, promotion and legal reform

**The importance of vigilance**

The speaker stressed the importance of vigilance after any conflict in terms of gendered post-conflict solutions, because even if women participate in political actions, they can be shunted to the side afterward, as is happening in Egypt.

What happens in South Sudan will be very interesting. There is lots of support from international women’s groups for women there, and a good interim constitution, recognizing women’s rights, has been accepted. But custom and tradition still prevail, which will offer major challenges, as do the persistent conflicts and the high rates of poverty among women. Much should be learned from the gendered solutions to the post-conflict societies of Liberia and Rwanda, for example, partly achieved because of the importance of the work of women’s rights organizations.
Session 2b Working at the Local Level
Moderator: Elizabeth Dearborn Davis (Co-founder and CEO, Akilah Institute for Women)

**Voluntary Service Organization (VSO)/Rwanda**—Emily Boost, Gender and Disadvantage Advisor

**VSO/UK and its role in Rwanda**
VSO is the world’s largest international development organization dependent on volunteers to help fight poverty in developing countries. It identifies local partners and works with them, focusing largely on education and disability issues in Rwanda.

In education, VSO volunteers serve as teaching-methodology trainers, helping primary school teachers diversify their teaching methods to allow for more active, child-centered learning.

On disability issues, their volunteers have focused on capacity building of a disability movement. This includes gender organizational assessment. VSO is beginning to tackle issues of GBV in disability.

**The challenges of VSO in Rwanda**
- Lack of baseline data to permit analysis of where problems and achievements lie
- Lack of experience with advocacy on the part of some of their partners
- Constant need for grant seeking

**The successes**
- Genuine buy-in from local partners
- Emphasis on gender provides a more holistic approach to problems

**Women for Women International** (WWI)—Eugenie Mukunde, Life Skills & Sponsorship Manager

WWI works with women in eight war-torn nations, including Rwanda. It has served 300,000 women and has given USD 97 million in direct aid. Its goals are to help effect lasting social and economic change through knowledge and literacy.

WWI has served almost 39,000 women in 18 communities in Rwanda. When a woman is sponsored by the organization, she uses the funds both for income generation and for daily necessities.

Women are enrolled in a one-year program that includes direct financial aid, rights awareness classes, job-skills training and emotional support. They are usually part of the Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative (improving women’s ability to make an income off the land through producing organic crops for market) or tailoring classes.
Global Grassroots—Christina Hueschen and Caitlin Clements, US Fellows

Philosophy of the organization

Global Grassroots (GG) is based on the philosophy that local women can identify their own issues and can find their own solutions to their communities’ problems. GG helps them with training and support for these grassroots social ventures.

Representatives of the local teams working to solve social problems are invited to participate in GG’s 12-18 months Conscious Change Academy, which involves both personal and social transformation, and healing from trauma and project development.

Examples of projects initiated by local women to solve local problems

• *Hard Worker*: A water access point has been provided that undercuts domestic violence, girls’ absence from school, malnutrition, and miscarriages from carrying water long distances over difficult terrain

• *Think About the Young Girls*: This project was started by primary school teachers who were concerned about the violence directed towards girls in same-sex latrines, and girls’ resulting tendency to drop out of school. With the financial support of the community, local women built separate latrines for girls as well as showers for them to use during their menstrual periods.

Session 2c Gender Issues in the Classroom

Moderator: Dr Olukemi Asemota, Consultant/Researcher

Gender in Literature Education in Secondary Schools in Rwanda—Peter Mugume, Lecturer, Uganda Christian University

This presentation is a gender analysis of six canonical African literary texts, all by male authors, commonly taught in East African secondary schools, including in Rwanda:

1. Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart* (TFA)
2. Cook and Rubadiri: *Poems from East Africa*
3. Francis Imbuga: *Betrayal in the City* (BITC)
4. Okot p’Bitek: *Song of Lawino* (SOL)
5. Okot p’Bitek: *Song of Ocol* (SOO)

Criteria to shine a light on implicit gender assumptions in these works of literature

Because gender assumptions are deeply embedded in culture, they are invisible to the reader as well as to the teacher and are ignored when literary texts are studied in secondary schools. Thus even when a society has forward-looking gender policies, the values being taught in literature classes in secondary schools often reinforce old ways of thinking.

In general, the manifestations of gender in literature include:

• Gendered author domination of the syllabus
• Gendered character domination of the action in texts
• Stereotypical portrayal of gender identity
• Gaps or silences on female experience and interests
• Gender oppression, exploitation and discrimination
• Gendered dichotomy of public and domestic domains
  Language use in books such as these also manifest implied gender superiority:
• Use of the ‘generic masculine’
• Use of the ‘generic he’ and its inflections
• Use of gender-related terms
• Demeaning gender images in figures of speech
• Descriptions of women as appendages of men
• Descriptions of women as goods for consumption
  The depiction of female characters in these books, whether as mothers, sisters, girlfriends or wives, is generally as weak and naturally subordinate to the more dominant male characters. The patriarchal nature of the cultures depicted is presented uncritically, with women uniformly relegated to the confines of the home. The language used in these texts depends heavily on the ‘generic masculine,’ and words and phrases referring to women and femaleness are negative and dismissive.

Recommendations
• Literature should be taught in a gender-sensitive manner because most of it is inherently biased
• The use of sexist language in teaching literature should be discouraged at all educational levels, because its use enhances and perpetuates the gender-bias inherent in the subject
• Teacher training should be backed by gender-sensitive instruction in subjects like literature
• The literature curriculum should be diversified to include female authors/women’s literature

Session 3a  Women and Entrepreneurship
Moderator: Leah Maringa, Head of Department, Rwanda Tourism College

The Business Climate for Women in Rwanda—Sifa Seraphina Bayingana*, Consultant

Obstacles to African women’s success in business
  Women’s contributions to their countries’ economies in many African nations, while substantial, are limited by unequal access to property, discrimination in the labour market, and business-related obstacles. This is also true in Rwanda.

  According to recent World Bank studies on women entrepreneurs in East Africa, the major barriers to women’s access to credit, which would allow them to grow their businesses, are the difficulties in formalizing their businesses, unfavorable land allocation policies which affect access to credit, and the lack of enforcement of the legal rights that women do have.
Rwandan context

Before the 1994 genocide, women in Rwanda could not do business without the consent of their husbands and hence few women had any business experience. Since the genocide left many women and girls without male heads of household, there was need to empower women to participate in the recovery and reconstruction of the country.

Political and legal reforms passed since then abolish customary law, allow women to inherit land, and provide for a minimum of 30% female representation in all decision-making positions. These reforms have encouraged and facilitated women’s involvement in business enterprises.

Characteristics of Rwandan women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses

Rwandan women entrepreneurs are relatively young. Their businesses represent 42% of all businesses in the country, but they predominate (58%) in the informal sector, which accounts for 30% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). There is some movement of women from traditional to non-traditional sectors, such as manufacturing and ICT. Women have had some success in owning land and in getting bank loans.

On the other hand, even today the bank loans that women get are much smaller than those of male entrepreneurs. Often women do not enter the formal business sector. Licensing and registration of their businesses are off-putting to them. Doing the paperwork is hard for “time-poor” women. The tax rates are a big challenge. Poor women’s low levels of education and their lack of management skills also handicap them. They are less able to use whatever land they own to develop their business.

To rectify this situation, some opportunities are emerging:

• GoR is committed to gender equality and women’s empowerment
• Women-owned businesses have the support of the Private Sector Federation
• There are Women Entrepreneurs networks
• Government policy on cooperatives is helpful to women, especially in rural areas
• There are supportive initiatives such as the International Finance Corporation, Rwanda Entrepreneurship Development Program, and Gender Entrepreneurship Markets

Training opportunities are needed to enhance Rwandan women entrepreneurs’ management and technical skills, which would allow more of them to enter the formal business sector.

Women and Trade—Janet Nkubana, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Gahaya Links

Links between Rwandan women’s poverty and their involvement in too few business sectors

Women form a disproportionate part of the poor and illiterate globally and in Rwanda. Yet investing in the capabilities of women and girls is central to national productivity and sustained economic growth.

Rwandan women are involved in the following business sectors:

• Agribusiness (tea, coffee, domestic farming)
• Non-farm businesses: markets, kiosks, boutiques, beauty salons, restaurants, cross-border trade and services
• Investors: in services, tourism, export/import, etc.
  This participation by women is too limited, given that 70% of the Rwandan economy is dominated by them.

Market opportunities that are not fully exploited by women
• African Growth and Opportunity Act in United States of America (USA)
• Everything But Arms, European Union (EU)
• Local and regional markets
  We need to look to see where women spend their money to figure out the best avenues for the development of new businesses:
  • buying domestic commodities
  • providing food and clothing for their families
  • improving their homes
  • saving and investing in other small income-generating activities
  • impressing their husbands

What do women need to enable them to broaden and deepen their participation in successful businesses? Training, training, training!

Training is needed in:
• Innovation and technical capacity for competitiveness
• Marketing
• Production of relevant market products
• Knowledge of international market trade norms
• Knowledge of strategic products and services

Challenges and Opportunities—Natacha Kaneza*, Industrial Liaison Consultant, Arts, Crafts and Artisan Sector

The speaker’s experience in business promotion tells her that it is a challenge for women to get substantial credit because they have mostly banked with microcredit institutions.

Women ignore the business development funds that are there to help them from the Rwanda Development Board and Private Sector Federation. The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) should sensitize them to development fund possibilities. The Women’s Guaranteed Fund is one of them.
Session 3b  Challenges and Successes in Improving Rwandan Women’s Lives

Moderator: Emmanuel Bimenyimana*, UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

The Female Face of Poverty in Rwanda—Betty Mategeko, Lecturer of Development Studies, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Kabale University, Uganda

Poverty in Rwanda

It is essential for any country to tackle poverty because its very existence hinders human development. Rwanda has particular challenges in alleviating poverty because it is landlocked, resource-poor, densely populated, and heavily agricultural. Most of its population lives in rural areas where more than 60% of residents live below the poverty line.

Female poverty in Rwanda

In addition to sharing the disadvantages of the male rural poor, women’s poverty is exacerbated by their vulnerability to GBV and to HIV/AIDS, their lesser access to education, their smaller range of employment opportunities, their concentration in the lowest paying employment sectors, their high fertility rates, their less dependable access to productive resources, including land and credit, and their greater responsibility for housework and childcare. Some of this is owing to the after effects of the genocide.

The way out of poverty

The way out of poverty for women in Rwanda would include greater sensitization of the population concerning negative stereotypes of women, the even further expansion of the Ubudehe Program (communal problem solving), the reduction in adult illiteracy, monitoring of female inheritance of property, tackling GBV, the promotion of female-related employment projects and commercial farming. The government, NGOs, women activists, and the private sector are all stakeholders in the efforts to help women out of poverty in Rwanda.

Media and Gender Promotion in Rwanda (1962-2002)—Jean Léonard Buhigiro, Lecturer, KIE

Promotion of gender equality by the media

Media, as the “fourth power,” contributes to changes in society and thus is a powerful tool that must be watched and even controlled.

This presentation examines the role of three post-independence periodicals in promoting gender equality in Rwanda
• Imvaho is the official government voice
• Kinyamateka is a gazette published by the Catholic Church in Rwanda
• Dialogue is another Catholic publication, created in response to Vatican II
Brief overview of the place of women in traditional Rwandan society (drawing largely on the work of Alex Kagame)

Women were active in social, economic and political life, although not in the same ways as men. They were key persons within the family, receiving praise names. Killing a woman required the transfer of some children from the killer’s family to that of the victim. Their economic contributions to the family included their household labor and the dowry owed to their natal families when they married.

Within the royal families, queens and queen mothers participated in decision making at the highest levels. Queen mothers could serve as regents when the king was a minor. They were also involved in military expeditions. Queen mothers were to be buried in the same place as kings. In some parts of Rwanda, female influence in the royal families served as a counterbalance to that of the kings.

Among the population at large, women’s roles were more limited. It was forbidden for women to participate in judicial affairs. Only boys were able to inherit from their fathers. Popular sayings and taboos depreciated women and minimized their roles and contributions.

Under colonization

Women’s secondary status was maintained under colonization. When formal education was introduced at the primary level, schooling for girls only began nine years after that for boys, owing both to the lack of trained nuns to teach them and to the lack of importance attached to their education. Protestant schools, more willing to teach boys and girls together, received no subsidies from the government. Secondary school education for girls was first introduced in 1938, 26 years after boys. Even with the reforms of 1948, intended to reinforce the education of boys and girls, gender stereotyping pertained, with training for girls limited to roles as teachers, nurses, and social workers, with no scientific options open to them. The only tertiary education available before Independence was seminary training for priests. Even when a university was created after Independence, admission was limited at first to men.

The use of male labour in colonial economic enterprises imposed hardships on women, left on their homesteads to do all the necessary tasks, both male and female.

Imvaho Nshya

On the eve of Independence, Imvaho Nshya was created as an official gazette to help dispel rumours surrounding the impending change. Its first articles on gender urged women to attend school in order to prepare themselves and the nation for modern life in the postcolonial era. Several years later in 1966, an article in Imvaho suggesting that contemporary conservative male attitudes towards women’s emancipation were contributing factors to post-Independence problems, provoked anger. The journalist was called in for questioning by the security forces. On the other hand, later that year an article criticizing polygamy did not rouse the same ire.

In keeping with its focus on education, Imvaho published an article in 1972 evaluating the progress, in terms of school attendance, made during the first decade of the First Republic. At that point, there were 148,877 girls in primary school, 44% of all attendees. The ratios were less favorable for secondary schools: 3,363 girls out of 10,117 students, approximately 33%. Very little progress had been made at the tertiary
level: only 54 young women were enrolled at university. *Imvaho* noted the appointment of the first (and only) female cabinet minister in 1964, but left it up to women themselves to compete for political positions and participate in judicial affairs.

Similarly, it exhorted women to cultivate gardens themselves rather than depend on their husbands and to adopt modern techniques in agriculture and handicrafts, as well as practice rational management of household income.

*Kinyamateka*

*Kinyamateka* is an older publication, created in 1933 by the Catholic Church. Its initial purpose of evangelization was supplemented at the time of Independence by a second focus on social issues. It published the President’s speech on Independence Day, including its emphasis on the promotion of women’s advancement. By the early 1970s, family planning was discussed in the periodical, as was the under-representation of women in government and in national development.

**Dialogue**

*Dialogue* is a second Catholic journal, founded in 1967 by a European priest in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. It was meant to facilitate dialogue between Rwandans about daily life and to share views on religious themes after Vatican II. Like *Imvaho* the journal stressed the need for women’s education to facilitate their economic integration. In the early 1970s, its critique of the lack of qualified candidates for an international meeting, led to the promotion of some women in political positions.

**Development ideology and the roles of women in the Second Republic**

During the Second Republic (1973-1990), the regime’s commitment to a development ideology led to increased emphasis on improvements in women’s situations and in their potential contributions to Rwandan growth. In 1978, *Imvaho* reported the President’s speech that discussed the goals of gender equality. It later explained that female agronomists’ poor levels of success were owing to their lack of access to transport. Women’s poor representation in politics was noted both by *Imvaho* and *Kinyamateka* that highlighted injustices to female candidates during electoral periods and was influenced by Pope John Paul II’s speech on gender equality. By the late 1980s, *Dialogue*, in a pioneering stance, was calling for positive gender discrimination and for women in rural areas to create cooperatives. During the 1980s, women made very slow progress in regard to election to Parliament: there were four women in 1981 and just 12 in 1990.

Since 1994, these three periodicals have highlighted women and gender issues more consistently, describing government policies to promote women, as well as the role of women in peace building, in doing business, and in gaining education.
Experience Based Participative Gender Training: Creating Awareness, Consciousness and Commitment?—Stephany Kersten and Sandra Bootsma, Consultant-Trainers, Kigali

Gender as a social and emotional as much as a technical issue needs a specific training approach

As practitioners of gender training in Rwanda, these researchers have learned that having attendees play an active role in the workshops and basing that participation on their own experience is the most effective way to create awareness about gender bias, and in turn to embed that awareness in participants’ consciousness and to encourage their ongoing commitment to gender equality.

In experiential learning (central to adult learning), the concrete, shared experiences of the members of the group are seen to lead to reflective observation in which the group shares, reviews and reflects on their experiences. In turn, this leads to abstract conceptualization in which the group draws general lessons from what they have experienced. Active experimentation then follows, allowing individuals to apply what they have learned. This in turn can lead to more concrete experiences, allowing further learning.

Applying this to gender training, the first task of the group is to share their varied awareness of gender as concept and practice. What does it mean to be variously blind, neutral or sensitive to gender? What do we mean by empowerment? What is the difference between equity and equality? What is gender sensitive analysis? What are the gender issues in program and organization where the group participants work?

Once the members of the group become aware of gender as a concept, then they become conscious of how gender permeates all aspects of their organizations, from its gender roles to the collection of data, from differences by gender of practical and strategic needs to the possibilities of choosing and developing gender policy.

The last step in the gender training is to encourage commitment on the part of the participants to putting gender into action. At the very least, this involves recognizing women’s subordinated position and wanting change and showing leadership on this front within their organizations. In concrete terms, this might mean working toward gender sensitive organizational rules and culture, assuring gender sensitive recruitment, implementing gender sensitive activities, and changing power relations within the organization.

Some tools to put these concepts into practice

• To define gender and empowerment: Use the keyword method in which workshop participants offer words that are posted with the most important words underlined, and existing definitions mined for additional key words. Note is taken of key words not mentioned and the shortcomings of some concepts
• To recognize different gender policy approaches: Use statement diamonds (order cards with participants’ statements into a diamond shape) and explain different policy approaches using the same color codes as for the statement cards. These techniques elicit a lot of discussion and offer participants exposure to different ways of thinking
about gender. Participants from the same organization often show disagreement about their organization’s policies. The different gender approaches are eye openers for the participants. This shows them that having a gender approach can mean many things and it is up to a team to give meaning and content to it. Awareness of different approaches makes participants more certain they can find a way of effecting change that they can live with.

• To mainstream gender: Mind mapping around a project objective or activity as a way of mainstreaming gender in different planning elements (encircle an activity with these questions: who, what, where, where to, why, when and how). This is very difficult to do beyond “who.”

• To identify types of gender-based violence: Create cause and effect trees, with the roots = causes, the trunk = types of GBV and the leaves/branches = effects. This exercise results in awareness of the role of power in GBV, that consent is not always informed and voluntary, and that GBV is more than physical and sexual violence. This recognition of the different types of GBV leads to an understanding of what it does to the victim beyond physical problems and might lead to commitment to deal with both visible and non-visible damage to victims.

Conclusion
• The progressive triad (awareness, consciousness, commitment) keeps focus on the impact of a training program
• Clear understanding of concepts of gender and empowerment are needed at the start of training before moving on
• Training needs to go hand in hand with coaching: follow-up on consciousness and move-on to action (commitment)

Session 3c Aspects of Rural Women’s Lives
Moderator: Edward Steinhart, PhD, Professor Emeritus of History, Texas Tech University, USA

Factors Influencing Differences in Perception of Family Planning Between Rural and Urban Women in Rwanda: Case Study of Gasabo District, Kigali City—Rachel M. Mahuku, Lecturer, Department of History, Kigali Institute of Education (co-authored with Placide B. Dibanga, Dr Frederic Gatera, and Theophile Hafashimana)

Family planning: its advocates and critics
Family planning refers to the use of modern contraception and other methods of birth control to regulate the number, timing and spacing of human births. It allows individuals, particularly women, to have some control over their own fertility, sexual health, and life plans. Nonetheless family planning is a contested arena within broader areas of social and political conflict. It is sometimes seen to violate religious and cultural injunctions, to
threaten patriarchal subordination of women, and to destabilize social-class formation as well as global political and economic relations.

Whatever the policy goals of the state in regard to a nation’s fertility or the material circumstances affecting married couples’ decisions about the number of children to have, much of the change in fertility patterns will hinge upon women’s own perceptions of family planning.

Rwanda is among the most densely populated of African countries; its population is young and is predominantly rural and poor. These factors both make family planning essential to continued economic development and affect women’s attitudes toward the use of contraceptives and other means of limiting fertility.

**Project description**

This presentation summarizes findings from a research project on factors influencing differences in perception of family planning between rural and urban women in Gasabo district. It looks at social, cultural, and religious factors, as well as levels of education as some of the factors determining the differences in the perceptions of family planning between women in rural and urban areas in Gasabo (located in the northern half of Kigali province). Two sectors of the district, one urban (Kimironko) and one rural (Bumbogo) were the loci of the research.

Kimironko was estimated to have a population of 44,918 inhabitants (20,750 men and 24,187 women), and Bumbogo 21,289 (9,980 men and 11,309 women).

Information gathering methods included questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentations as instruments of data collection. The sample used for the study included 30 men and 35 women from Kimironko sector, and 14 men and 17 women from Bumbogo sector.

The birth control methods used by those in the study included male and female condoms, intrauterine devices (IUDs), oral contraceptives, contraceptive injections, sterilization, withdrawal, and abstinence.

**The context for family planning in Rwanda**

- Current population growth rate was estimated at 2.8% in 2008 in a population of 11,055,976 (2010)
- Rwandan women have six children on average
- The population is young: an estimated 42.7% are under 15 and 97.5% are under 65
- The birth rate is estimated at 40.16 births per 1,000 people, and the death rate at 14.91
- The life expectancy is 56.77 years (55.43 years for males and 58.14 years for females)
- Rwanda’s population growth has also led to high population density, estimated at 408 inhabitants per square kilometer, amongst the highest in Africa. This puts a strain on the country’s natural resources
- One explanation for Rwanda’s high population growth is its low contraceptive prevalence rate (10% in 2005) despite the 36% of married women of reproductive age who want to limit or space births but are not currently using any method of family planning
- Family planning is one of the national priorities in the country
Findings

Among the participants in the study, slightly fewer than 60% of those living in Kimironko indicated that they were practicing family planning, while slightly more than 40% were not. In the rural district of Bumbugo, the percentages were reversed: about 30% indicated they were practicing family planning and 70% were not.

Factors affecting adoption or non-adoption of family planning

- Pre-birth traditions
- Gender relations (e.g. polygamy and infidelity, preference for sons, power dynamics between men and women)
- Rumours surrounding family planning
- Restricted access to family planning services
- Religious influences
- Educational factors

Reasons given by women for non-use of contraceptive methods:

- 14.2% of women reported lack of knowledge
- 9.9% wanted to have as many children as possible
- 9.9% said contraception was forbidden by their religion
- 6.7% are themselves opposed to contraception
- 4.3% said it was forbidden by their husband or partner
- 3.8% indicated health concerns with the use of contraceptives
- 2.3% were afraid of their side effects

Differences in perception of family planning in Kimironko and Bumbugo

- General information on family planning
- Personal perception influenced by traditional attitudes toward family size, educational level, social, cultural and religious influences
- In Bumbugo, where educational levels were lower and knowledge of modern contraceptives was less, personal perceptions were more affected by traditional beliefs and religious influences

Researchers’ recommendations based on these findings

- Regarding changes in attitudes, intensification of relevant educational programs should be given a priority—educating both adults and younger people
- Family planning should be highlighted as the way to reduce the high fertility rate in order to improve economic development
- Since this is a preliminary study with a small number of participants, further research on this topic should be undertaken in the whole Gasabo District as well as in the entire country
Session 4a Women with HIV/AIDS

Moderator: Sidonie Uwimpuhwe*, Senior Advisor in Gender Equality and HIV, National AIDS Control Commission

Rwandan Women Living with HIV/AIDS (WLHIV) and Fighting Against It (FRSL+/RW): Successes & Challenges—Viviane Furaha* & Philomene Cyculinyana

Description of the NGO

FRSL+RW (HIV positive women fighting against HIV/AIDS and advocating for the rights of women living with HIV/AIDS [WLHIV]), a local, nonprofit, legally registered NGO was conceived and started in 2006 by university-educated HIV-positive women to do advocacy on behalf of vulnerable women living with HIV/AIDS, in or out of cooperatives, all over the country. Its constituency also includes all HIV-positive women in Rwanda, especially those dealing with the silence surrounding HIV/AIDS, and young women in universities.

The group is a member of the International Community of WLHIV (ICW) a network linking the 19 million HIV-positive women worldwide.

The group’s vision, incorporating into the familial and maternal aspects of HIV-positive women’s lives, includes greater health knowledge, social responsibility, economic strengths, and advocacy skills as articulated in its motto: “Empowered positive women for a better future”

The group's objectives include

•Bringing together HIV-positive educated women leaders in the community to build their capacity for advocacy on behalf of other women infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS
•Creating awareness among HIV-positive women of the important role they have to play in fighting against HIV/AIDS and in making decisions about HIV-related issues
•Mobilizing women in universities, state agencies and the private sector, as well as women entrepreneurs to go for testing and to break the silence about HIV status
•Building the socio-economic capacities of HIV-positive women in general and in their households in particular
•Collaborating with the government and partners involved in policies and practices regarding HIV/AIDS (e.g. its participation on the National AIDS Control Commission (CNLS) and its partnership with UN agencies and international and national organizations)

The group’s activities

Some of the group’s activities 2008-2011, undertaken with funding sources ranging from the HIV Collaborative Fund/ICW East Africa to UN Population Fund (UNFPA), from UN Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to a private benefactor, and in collaboration with ICW, UN Programme for AIDS (UNAIDS) district hospitals, health centers and CNLS, include:
Training for members of beneficiary cooperatives on family planning and adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART), antipaludic and anti-tuberculosis (TB) treatment as well as knowledge and information sharing on the treatment and feeding of the newborn babies of HIV-positive women and related cultural issues, and increasing the number of pregnant WLHIV to frequent prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) services

•Sustainable and continuous distribution of male and female condoms to members of cooperatives in seven districts, and training on their correct use

•Youth consciousness-raising campaign by live radio broadcasts and seminars on the topic of People Living with HIV having the right to love and be loved with the responsibility to protect themselves and others by using condoms

•Strengthening the socioeconomic capacities of WLHIV by goat farming (rotating distribution) among members of a cooperative in one district, and income generating through modern knitting to members of cooperatives in three districts

Other examples of the group’s outreach, collaboration, and advocacy

•Partnership with the Rwanda Pharmaceutical Students Association in working with university students (especially young women) from the National University of Rwanda (NUR)

•Involvement with ICW at various levels and with the East African regional advisory committee for WLHIV

Members of the group are constantly looking to improve their knowledge and skills by participating in training on HIV/AIDS and in the gender issues domain, and in one case, of enrolment in the Master of Social Sciences in Gender and Development Program at KIE

Challenges remain

•Lack of human resources, as all work is currently done on a part-time and voluntary basis. Full-time, trained staff are needed

•Lack of financial resources, e.g. more space for offices, more equipment, and means of transportation

•Enhancement of networking capabilities and opportunities, essential strategically for NGOs, as well as of leadership and advocacy skills

Testimony by Philomene Cyculinyana: Before free retroviral drugs became available beginning in 1996, managing HIV status was very difficult because the drugs were expensive. In 2003, the scaling of services commenced. Her first HIV-positive group was called L’Espoir (Hope). The national network for HIV has a female face. Their group is composed of intellectuals, academics who usually hide their HIV status.
Shamsi Kazimbaya*, Executive Secretary, SWAA-R

Description of Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAA)

SWAA, headquartered in Dakar, Senegal, was founded in 1988. Its Rwanda branch dates to 1992. It currently operates in three Rwandan provinces: Kigali City, Eastern and Southern Provinces. Its different projects are implemented with support from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) (through Public Sector Investment Rwanda, the Cooperative Housing Foundation, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria).

The organization’s mission is to increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and commitment by Rwandan society, especially women and girls, so as to take responsible actions necessary to address issues relating to reproductive health and rights, including HIV/AIDS.

Its specific objectives are to reduce the spread of HIV, to provide counseling, referral and information on HIV/AIDS, to reduce negative attitudes towards people infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS, and to provide different assistance to them.

Information sessions

SWAA’s information sessions touch on a range of health issues from HIV and STD prevention, to matters affecting the overall health of HIV-positive individuals, e.g. hygiene and malaria prevention and treatment. Their approaches include education by entertainment (sport and cultural events, etc.) and special events, such as family days. They also train peer educators among various groups, including prisoners. Additional techniques for dissemination of information include the development and distribution of brochures and posters, the production and diffusion of radio spots and radio shows, and the projection of films.

Care and support

The organization also offers care and support to infected and affected people. This includes psychological support and individual counseling, help to HIV-positive parents in regard to future pregnancies and caring for children safely, and help to those on ARV treatment. It also supports an HIV-positive widows support group as well as a married-discordant support group for couples, to help prevent cross infection, cope with tension and improve communication. Other interventions include encouragement of healthy relationships among young children and with their HIV-positive parents, exercise programs, and economic support to various cooperatives to encourage income-generating projects. Examples of the organization’s capacity building efforts include training sessions on child protection and gender matters for police and other child forum leaders working with child-focused issues.

SWAA-Rwanda has had some notable successes

• Tangible and remarkable progress with regard to HIV knowledge and awareness among its beneficiaries
• Increased utilization of HIV/AIDS-related services by beneficiaries with the outcome of positive living
• Increased number of community resource persons, e.g. community health workers, as a result of trainings organized by SWAA
• Technical support for training to other organizations with minimal experience in HIV/AIDS programs

Challenges facing the organization
• High demand for its services compared to available means
• Low involvement of men in its services; women comprise about 70% of those involved in the various programs, suggesting a need for specific programs targeting men
• Given the poverty of most of those frequenting SWAA’s counseling services, income-generating programs need to be highlighted and reinforced

Session 4b Maternal Health
Moderator: Prof. Linda Samek, Dean, School of Education, George Fox University, USA

Modeling Maternal Health in Rwanda—Erika Frydenlund, PhD student, International Studies, ODU

Reduction of maternal mortality in Rwanda
Rwanda is working hard to meet the UN Millennium Development Goal 5 (MDG5), which is to reduce maternal mortality by 75% by 2015 from the 1990 rates. In 1990, 1,100 Rwandan women of every 100,000 had a childbirth-related death. By 2009, the nation had managed to halve that rate: 540 per 100,000. That is still much too high and is related in part to the relative unavailability of trained midwives. The ideal would be to have one such midwife for every 500 women; at the moment there is only one per 29,000 women.

The government has made substantial institutional commitments to improve maternal mortality rates
• The Kigali Institute of Health Department of Midwifery began in 1996
• In 2008 training began to aid Trained Birth Attendants (TBA) in monitoring pregnancies
• A National Nurses and Midwives Board was formed in 2009

But substantial obstacles remain to the accomplishment of the MDG5 goal
• It is difficult to retain trained medical staff in rural areas, where most of the population resides. Staff members seek higher-paid positions in better-equipped medical facilities in the cities
• It has been a challenge to train enough health workers for the size of the population, e.g. the training for midwives is very rigorous, requiring three years of university

The use of technology
The Ministry of Health (MOH) is now attempting to use technology to overcome some of these obstacles. It has adopted a program called mHealth, which stands for “mobile Health.” It is using mobile phones to reach people in remote areas.
phones trained health workers, even from a distance, can provide health education and information about prenatal care, as well as reporting health records and complications. The mobile phones can be used to call for ambulances when needed and to report birth outcomes.

A pilot program for mHealth began in Musanze district in August 2008. 432 mobile phones were delivered to Community Health Workers.

**Applying modeling and simulation to this program**

This researcher’s goal is to use modeling and simulation as a method of providing deeper analysis of the data accumulated during the pilot program. As opposed to traditional statistics, modeling and simulation can better allow “dynamic experimentation” and forecasting of outcomes in new situations. They allow officials to explore various policies, leading to the efficient use of government funds and better predictions of the future impact of policies.

More specifically, this researcher demonstrates the importance of modeling and simulation for gender studies. They are a reminder that quantitative methods have a place in gender studies, that they provide policymakers with capacity for experimentation on simulated communities, which in turn inform funding and long term implementation decisions with direct impact on women’s lives.

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**The Simulation**

![Simulation Image]

**The next steps in this research project are to**

- Gather more information from the pilot study to improve the validity of the model
• Conduct experimentation on varying the numbers of mHealth providers
  - Look for the effect on maternal fatality rate
  - Look at how resources can best be distributed
• Statistically analyze results
• Expand the model to represent a larger population
  - Experiment to inform future policies
  - Investigate feasibility for larger scale implementation

**King Faisal Hospital’s Efforts to Reduce Maternal and Infant Mortality** – Josephine Murekezi, Midwife, Health and Safety Coordinator, King Faisal Hospital, Rwanda

**Hospital’s effort to reduce maternal mortality**

King Faisal Hospital is striving to help Rwanda meet the MDG 5 goal of drastically reducing maternal mortality by 2015. It has adopted Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO), a project of the American Academy of Physicians. Their licensed agreement allows the hospital to use the ALSO protocol and teach the ALSO courses to others in Rwanda.

**ALSO course**

The objectives of the ALSO course are to enable practitioners to manage obstetric emergencies utilizing evidence-based practices and to value a multidisciplinary team approach to handle maternity care. This team includes midwives, obstetricians, neonatologists, and anesthesiologists. The goal is to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality in Rwanda.

Practitioners are trained to look for more than a dozen danger signs in pregnancy and delivery, ranging from vaginal bleeding to eclampsia, from labour dystocia to post-partum haemorrhage, from caesarean delivery to neonatal resuscitation.

The trainers are local and international experts in all the relevant fields. Participants are nurses, midwives, and doctors working in maternity hospitals and health centres around the country. Upon successful completion of written and practical examinations at the end of the course they are awarded a certificate.

The goal is to reduce maternal mortality by 75% by training all health personnel working in maternity units in hospital and health centres in Rwanda in the ALSO course.

There has already been some success: the maternal mortality rate has dropped from 750 to 380/100,000 women in 2010.

Participants are selected in cooperation with the health units in which they work and with the Department of Maternal and Child Health in MOH.

**Working with the pregnant woman**

Pregnant women themselves are offered evidence-based information, support to enable them to make informed decisions regarding their care, including where they will be seen for advice about their care, and by whom.

Safe motherhood entails careful risk assessment accomplished through comprehensive prenatal care, identification of preventable risk factors and prior
pregnancy complications, careful pregnancy dating, ultrasound screenings, and screenings for infection.

The health care team is also vital, including ready availability of a TBA, well functioning, and a mutually respectful team, well practiced in emergency drills.

The five Cs of risk management include: compassion, communication, competence, charting, and confession (of mistakes).

**Challenges that remain in providing the kind of care envisaged**
- Shortage of staff
- Insufficient staff trained in obstetrical ultrasound
- Women’s lack of awareness of the importance of antenatal care

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**Session 5 Plenary Session: Beyond the Numbers: Successes and Challenges for Women Parliamentarians in Rwanda**

Moderator: Spéciose Nyiraneza, General Secretary, Rwanda Women’s Parliamentary Forum

**The Role of Women Parliamentarians in Moving Forward the Country’s Agenda for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment**—Senator Henriette Umulisa (on behalf of the Rwanda Women’s Parliamentary Forum) with the participation of Senator Spéciose Ayinkamiye

The speed with which changes have come about in regard to the promotion of gender equality, the empowerment of women, and improvement in the role of women in decision-making positions in Rwanda is truly amazing; so much has been accomplished in just 14 years. Nonetheless, we need to continuously assess results, identify challenges that impede the process and strategize about the sustainability of what we have achieved.

**Significant challenges in regard to the impact of the role of women parliamentarians**
- Illiteracy that limits opportunities for women’s participation in strategic sectors and constitutes a barrier for the capacity development of women, especially at the grassroots level, to define their own destiny
- Impact of poverty on women’s lives
- Consequences of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi
- Cultural barriers/resistance to change
- Faulty interpretation of gender mainstreaming
- Poor female political engagement at the local level
- Few coordinated mechanisms and capacities to capitalize and document our achievements and lessons learned
- Need to reinforce structures to aid new women leaders to perform their duties and young girls to be future leaders
- Tools to streamline gender analysis of different policies, programs and budget
• Capacities in assessing gender responsive budgeting

Women Parliamentarians have achieved a great deal and we have learned a lot, however we know we have a lot still to do to optimize and sustain results.

We are convinced that achieving the highest number of women in decision-making positions is very important, but to be truly meaningful this must be translated into social transformation, and benefits for both women and men towards sustainable development. Women’s active and equitable participation in this process can only be fostered by women’s empowerment.

Desirable strategic actions

There are some strategic actions that should be undertaken in partnership with all those in attendance at this conference who have experience in promoting gender equality. These include but are not limited to:

• Coaching of women in local government leadership organizations by experienced women leaders
• Mentorship of young girls to encourage their participation in secondary schools and institutions of higher learning
• Establishment of forums of women in decision-making organizations at all levels for capacity development and mutual support
• Reinforcement mechanisms for reducing the gender dimension of poverty and positively affecting women’s lives
• Development of an executive education program in gender economics and gender-responsive budgeting with a goal of training MPs as soon as possible
• Development of partnerships with men in order to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability impacts of women’s participation
• Development of women’s skills through different educational and community programs, e.g. *Itorero* (schooling in Rwandan cultural values), cooperatives, solidarity groups, unity and reconciliation clubs
• Continuation of the campaign to sensitize women on their rights and obligations in regard to representation, participation, access to resources, and freedom to define their own destiny
• Mobilization of all stakeholders for the establishment of a Center of Excellence in the Parliament to facilitate the capitalization and documentation of achievements and lessons learned.
• Development of standardized tools for monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming in government policies and programs
**Session 6 Plenary Session: Creative Writing and Women’s Lives in Rwanda: A Workshop for Freeing the Writer Inside**

*Creative Writing and Women’s Lives in Rwanda*—Lee Slater, PhD, Visiting Asst. Prof. of French and World Literature, Old Dominion University

**Why is creative writing important?**

A host of reasons, ranging from offering a space of personal and collective freedom to creating a poetry of experience and a shared building of a community; from a taming of the unimaginable to a means of education and of empathy, to a means of connecting.

**Why is literature by women important?**

Most obviously to present a woman’s point of view, indeed to make known voices and perspectives that may be valued by society but have been ignored by publishers. Women’s literature can serve to expose the realities of “women’s condition” in recent history and to give voice to the “custodians of cultural lore and to the educators of children.” Irene d’Almeida, in *A Rain of Words*, suggests that through writing, women can engage in a purposeful imagining of tomorrow, while Mariama Ba of Senegal maintains that the writer as *griote* (a storyteller in western Africa who perpetuates the oral tradition and history of a village or family) embodies a message of hope, expressing and exposing injustices. Literature is an act of creation and liberation rather than destiny, a space of reconciliation rather than compliance.

More specifically, women writing about Rwanda will trace social experience and highlight social concerns. They can contribute to the shared discussions among women and other writers throughout the African continent. Through the writing and telling stories and poetry, women can contribute to the development and future of Rwanda.

**Examples of existing publications**

Publications with these goals already exist to which Rwandan women could add their voices, eg. *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women’s Poetry in Francophone Africa* (edited by Irene Assiba d’Almeida) and *African Women Writing Resistance: An Anthology of Contemporary Voices* (edited by Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez, et al.)

A poem: “I Would Like to be a Griot” by Orthense Tiendrébéogo of Burkina Faso.

**Suggestions for freeing the writer inside you—Writing prompts**

- Describe what is in your cupboard
- Write about a ceremony
- It’s a Saturday afternoon, you’re not at home
- A forbidden activity
• Packing a suitcase
• Someone is calling your name
• These are the lies I told you
• Small scrapes and bruises

To help those in attendance write their own personal poems, the presenter reads one example (in English) by Annette Mbaye d’Erneville of Senegal and another, “Crocodile” in French.

Before breaking the audience into pairs and small groups to write their poems, the presenter concludes with the words of the American poet June Jordan: “Poetry is a medium for telling the truth.”

**Publishing Your Writing**—Kate Haines, Freelance Editor at Palgrave Macmillan Publishers

**Importance of the storyteller and of sharing your writing**

Starts with quote from Chinua Achebe: “It is the storyteller in fact who makes us what we are, who creates history. The storyteller creates the memory that the survivors must have – otherwise their surviving would have no meaning.” In order to do this, you must share your writing through publication in some format, and by doing so, you build community, making connections with others.

**Examples of various forms of support for would-be writers in East Africa**

Femrite, based in Uganda, nurtures would-be women writers, building connections between them. It has succeeded in raising the profile of women in the Ugandan literary scene.

Kwani Trust, based in Nairobi, does not focus on women writers, but in addition to publishing an important literary journal, *Kwani?* it does help locate and develop literary talent in East Africa. It also strives to expand the reading and story culture of Kenya.

Story Moja, also based in Kenya, is a book publishing collective started by five writers “committed to publishing contemporary East African writing of world-class standard.” They are determined to show that Kenyans, if presented with entertaining books, will read something besides required textbooks. They also organize the Hay Festival, an annual three-day literary event.

The presenter stressed the importance of the Caine Prize for African Writing, which, since 2000, has brought world attention to the work of writers throughout
the African continent. Women have been very well represented as winners of this prestigious award. Thus far no one from Rwanda has won this award.

Having a literary agent to place and promote your work is also important, e.g. David Godwin and Ellah Allfrey, who specialize in representing African writers, women as well as men.

There are examples of African women writers who interpret their own nation’s history through their novels, e.g. Aminatta Forna and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

**The steps to publish your writing**

Create a women’s writing group or network to provide motivation, support, feedback, and shared opportunities.

Make some basic decisions about the writing you want to do in terms of the story you want to tell and why, your prospective audience, your preferred genre or style. Learn from the writers of this genre that you most admire: where do they publish? Think about what is interesting about you as the author.

There are various ways of publishing: self-publishing (print and online); shorter work: poetry and short stories; entering competitions; and contacting literary agents.
Session 7a Examples of Women’s Activism
Moderator: Stefanie Kolbusa, Faculty of Arts and Languages, KIE

Projects of Rwanda Association of University Women (RAUW)
1) *Breaking the Silence on Menstruation Campaign*—Julian Kayibanda Ingabire, Country Director, Sustainable Health Enterprises (SHE) and Treasurer, RAUW

**Who is involved? What is the goal?**
This is an initiative of various women’s and other groups: RAUW, SHE, FAWE-Rwanda, CARE Rwanda, Plan Rwanda, National Youth Council and Young Women in Entrepreneurship and Leadership. The goal is to provide girls and women at risk of poor menstrual health with hygiene education and affordable and eco-friendly sanitary pads.

An often-unacknowledged reason for girls’ frequent absences from school (up to 50 days annually) is their lack of access to affordable sanitary pads for menstruation.

• International brands are too costly to use on a regular basis
• Affordable alternative methods, such as the use of rags, which in combination with a lack of clean and accessible water supply, are unhygienic and potentially harmful
• Girls’ poor school attendance is linked to levels of educational achievement and corresponding economic success which affects overall family welfare and even the overall progress of a developing economy

**The objectives of this joint campaign are to:**
• Demolish barriers to girls’ education, economic achievement, good health and pollution-free living caused by the lack of access to health and hygiene education, hygienic and private conditions, and affordable sanitary pads
• Ensure that menstrual health and hygiene curriculum and ‘Menstrual Dialogues’ are incorporated in school programs
• Advocate for reduction or waiver of taxes on essential sanitary products

**Successes of the campaign**
The campaign that kicked off with a march through Kigali and ended with dialogues at ’petit stade’, has achieved some successes, e.g. attracted the attention of decision and policymakers in Rwanda and among foreign missions.

• As a result of the campaign, in the 2010 financial year, the government allocated a budget for the distribution and provision of sanitary pads for girls in schools
• The National Girls’ Education Task Force recognized the need to incorporate this awareness in its programs, and strategies on how this can best be dealt with are being developed, e.g. monitoring the distribution and provision of sanitary pads in schools
• The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) is developing a health plan that includes reproductive health education to be provided in schools

Thus far one school has been the recipient of donated sanitary pads, collected by the campaign groups, on an ongoing basis. The groups involved do recognize that the donation of premium priced sanitary pads is not a sustainable solution, serving only as a temporary patch. The plan is to extend the campaign of education and sanitary pad
distribution to the entire country. At the same time, efforts are being made by SHE to train women’s groups in the distribution and eventual manufacture of low cost and eco-friendly sanitary pads using local materials.

2) Virtual Networking: The RAUW Internet Discussion Group (DGroup) and Women’s Empowerment Projects—Dinah Rwiza, Junior Vice-President, RAUW

Using the Internet to create bonds among women

Networking online has become a tool for women’s empowerment. Its benefits are multiple, including:

• To search for and share ideas on topics of multiple research interests
• To network with other smaller grassroots non-profits across borders and time zones
• To search for ideas re professional development and career progression, e.g. graduate/post graduate opportunities, scholarships, and conferences
• To forge new friendships, business partnerships, etc.
• To keep members informed about women’s situations and activism globally and locally
• To engage directly with state apparatus
• To form activist groups

RAUW’s online Dgroup affects the nature of Rwanda’s feminist community

• It contributes to its cultural diversity, allowing individuals of a range of ages, races and ethnicities, social-economic status, educational levels, political affiliations, areas of interest, and native languages to share ideas, information and support
• It affects the nature of discourse among Rwandan women; topics formerly discussed only in secret become the content of social justice campaigns, e.g. Breaking the Silence on Menstruation Campaign. The virtual space offers a safe and informative forum for a diversity of topics
• It allows the exchange of ideas on an international scale
• It informs participants of graduate school, post-doctoral and scholarship opportunities, job postings, and funding opportunities for small NGOs
• It gives activists the means to impact legislation & public policy through lobbying tools

Challenges to access and participation in the DGroup

• Not all women are institutionally affiliated so that they have ready access to computer hardware and software, as well as technical expertise, to learn successfully how to navigate the Internet
• Reaching women in remote areas as well as under-represented women
• Keeping grassroots groups connected is difficult since needs outweigh resources

Words to Action: DGroup Example

Discussion thread, “Breaking the silence on menstruation”:

• Started 25 October 2009, continued to 31 May 31 2010
• 156+ pieces of communication (including opinion pieces, ideas solicitation, formal and informal research, forwarded articles from other sources)
• 56+ contributors on four continents, 10+ countries
• Brainstormed on language re public policy, calls for rallies, billboards, public consciousness raising, training materials, etc.
  RAUW actions on “Breaking the silence on menstruation”:
• RAUW writes a letter to the Minister of Education informing and asking for their partnership in the sanitary pad distribution in four provinces of Rwanda.
• RAUW starts pad distribution in June/July with a focus on five schools in each province.
• RAUW Council members assigned to discuss sanitary pad distribution and the budget.
• RAUW members begin ‘pad-raise’ to provide free pads to young girls in school.
• RAUW head office is rally center for the street march as well as distribution center.

3) RAUW’s Collaboration with Benishyaka Association—Betty Gahima, CEO

Benishyaka Association background
Benishyaka is an NGO formed in Sept 1994 after the war and genocide against the Tutsi by a group of 18 Rwandan women with the aim of addressing the socio-economic needs of widows and orphans affected by the war, genocide and HIV/AIDS

Benishyaka Association vision and mission
• Benishyaka’s vision is of a Rwandan society in which vulnerable widows and orphans have better livelihoods and sustainable development
• Its mission is to restore hope through facilitating vulnerable widows and orphans affected by the war, genocide and HIV/AIDS to acquire skills, knowledge and capital for sustainable development

Program areas
• Education sponsorship program, initiated in 1995, has sponsored more than 10,000 orphaned vulnerable children at different levels (primary, secondary and university)
• Health and HIV/AIDS program began with a dispensary in 1998 in a village where Benishyaka resettled 112 households, and has now been expanded to a health center offering a wide variety of medical services. With government help, an HIV/AIDS and Voluntary Counseling and Testing Centre was established. Support is given to people living with HIV/AIDS through provision of income-generating activities
• Economic empowerment program includes an emphasis on food security (agricultural inputs to increase agricultural production and training in modern farming techniques) and other income-generating activities (e.g. provision of microcredit, goats, grinding mills, and basket weaving)

Benishyaka Association collaboration with RAUW
• Starting in 2007 with RAUW sponsorship of 10 (now 21) female orphans at various levels of schooling. In addition to paying all their education costs, sponsorship includes school visits to build personal relationships with the students, and good relationships with school administrators

Challenges in this collaboration
• Increasing number of vulnerable orphans who need sponsorship
• Budget constraints limit the number of follow-up visits to schools
• Difficult to give students career advice when their caregivers lack knowledge to help with this
Conclusion

The child-centeredness and capacity-building emphases of the Benishyaka Association mesh well with the educational focus of RAUW.

The Akilah Institute—Monique Schmidt, Academic Director

What is the Akilah Institute?

Opened in January 2010 in Kigali, the Akilah ("wisdom" in Swahili) Institute offers a two-year Business Diploma with a focus in Hospitality Management and will eventually offer another focus in Entrepreneurship. In addition to the usual business diploma courses, the curriculum includes a Leadership Program component, which includes mandatory community service, and leadership and ethics courses. Private sector partnerships, mentoring, and career development are also components of the education offered to every student. This model is intended to equip young women with the skills, knowledge and confidence to find meaningful employment and to launch ventures in the fastest growing sectors of the Rwandan economy. Akilah works closely with the local private sector to develop market-relevant curricula and to ensure job placements for its graduates. It is developing a model for a network of campuses across Africa that will offer transformational business education for young women.

What are its origins?

Co-founder and CEO, Elizabeth Dearborn Davis came to Rwanda after completing university to volunteer with grassroots projects for street children as an expression of her desire to be part of the post-genocide reconciliation process. With co-founder Dave Hughes, who had also been drawn to Rwanda because of its remarkable recent history, she decided to create an educational institution for young women, who often lack opportunities, to empower them to participate fully in the knowledge-based economy that Rwanda intends will replace the nation’s dependence on foreign aid. Their vision for the school was informed by their concern that the current educational institutions in Rwanda were not preparing students for jobs in the local economy.

Tuition and scholarships

While the yearly tuition is substantial by Rwandan standards, Akilah provides significant scholarships that pay from 80 to 90% of the tuition fees. For the final year of their academic program, students are able to apply for loans from a local microfinance institution.

Forecast for Akilah

Although the institution is still very new, all indicators point to success. There is a strong sense of pride and camaraderie among the students. Internships are going well. GoR has been helpful to the Institute in multiple ways, as have the numerous individuals and organizations that have donated money or skills in kind to launch the college. By 2020, Akilah plans to graduate 1,780 young women who are working and serving as leaders in their communities.
Session 7b Working for Wages
Moderator: Odette Nyiramuzima*, Branch Manager, Social Security Fund of Rwanda

**Gender and Employment in Rwanda**—Pamela Abbott, Director of Research IPAR-Rwanda, Professor of Sociology, University of Aberdeen, UK

The overall picture of employment in Rwanda:

- 83% of adults (15 years and over) are economically active and 82% are in employment (work one or more hours a week). (2 million men/2.4 million women)
- 55% of workers earn a poverty wage – ranging from 26% in non-farm waged work to 72% of those whose work is waged farm work
- 6% are employed in the formal sector (27% non-farm)
- 91% waged farm employment is in the informal sector as is 60% of the non-farm waged employment
- 17% non-farm formal sector employment is in the private sector
- 40% of workers are in two jobs
- Challenges in Rwanda are decent work, and issues of underemployment and unemployment—short hours of work, and population growth

**Why is productive employment important?**

- Productive employment is central to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, as indicated by the high priority (Target 1.B) accorded it in the MDGs: “Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people”
- This is in recognition of the importance to human wellbeing of engagement in productive labour
- The focus on female productive employment acknowledges the contribution of female employment to hunger and poverty reduction at the household level as well as the importance of women being economically independent of fathers and husbands
- The focus is on the individual and their relationship to the labour market and the right of the individual to a job that is secure and pays a decent wage
- Decent jobs in Rwanda are generally scarce, and are scarcer for women than men

In 2006, the largest single group of workers was dependent farm workers, comprising 39.7% of the labour force. Subsistence farmers were the next largest group: 31.6%. Only 20.5% of the labour force was engaged in non-farm employment with significantly more men engaged in this than women, save for unpaid non-farm work. Fifty-eight percent of women worked as dependent workers in one sphere or another compared to just 20.4% of men.
Significance of gender as a factor in the labour market:
• Women are predominantly located in lower status and less remunerated jobs within the segmented labour market
• Three-quarters of young women work on the family farm, compared to 50% of young men. It is men who are moving more quickly out of farm work, capturing 75% of the new jobs created between 2000 and 2006, and who are more likely to start a small business
• The largest numerical change in employment for women is in paid farm work, which is the most poorly remunerated of all work
• While the trend has been toward paid non-farm employment (11% in 2000, 19% in 2006), only 11.6% of women compared to 27.8% of men were in paid non-farm work
• Median earnings are higher for men; the ratio of female to male earnings is 0.67

Gender and Household Enterprises (HES):
• Just under 50% of HESs (46%) are managed by women, and in urban areas, Kigali (52%) and other urban areas (56.3%) women are more likely to operate a HE than men
• 73.5% of dependent family workers employed in HESs are women
• Female managers work fewer hours a week on HE activities than their male counterparts, 26 hours on average compared to 32 hours for men, but women on average spend 20 hours a week on household duties
• HESs are the primary form of employment for 48% of female operators compared with 60% of male operators
• On average, women HE operators profit is only 50% that of male operators
• Women are more likely to be engaged in trade than men and less likely to be in other sectors

Conclusions:
• Women are more likely to be dependent workers than men
• Women are more likely to work in agriculture than men
• Women are more likely to work in the informal sector than men
• When we take household duties into account, women work longer hours than men
• Women on average earn less than men and are more likely to earn a poverty wage

The Fight Against Violence and Other Forms of Ill-Treatment Inflicted on Young Girls Working in Households—Florida Mukarugambwa, President of COSYLI (National Endowment for Democracy)

Influx of young people to urban centres
A number of factors contribute to the trend of significant numbers of youngsters leaving rural areas for urban centres. Poverty, early termination of education, lack of enough arable land and bad living conditions create the push for them to leave. Some of these young people are orphans and others come from families struggling with psychological, social—and most important—economic problems.

The girls in this group are very likely to find work performing domestic tasks in urban households. They are an especially vulnerable population. Many of them have not
completed or perhaps even attended primary school in their rural areas. They arrive in urban centres completely unaware of the challenges related to domestic work.

**Mistreatment of domestic workers**

Their employers have been all-too-willing to take advantage of their ignorance, lack of experience and poverty, beginning with the meagre salaries they offer them, often ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 Rwanda Francs per month. Moreover, these salaries are often paid late or reduced for no valid reason. Their hours of work are long and arduous, denying the girls the necessary rest or the opportunity to engage in hobbies or cultural activities. Overall, they are denied workers’ elementary rights, e.g. social security affiliation, access to health care, and employment stability. When they are fired, it is often at night, and they are sometimes deprived of their identification documents, which have been confiscated by their employers.

Another unfortunate aspect of the girls’ experience as domestic workers is their vulnerability to violence: physical, sexual, psychological and moral. Physically they are often spat upon, beaten up and sometimes wounded. They are subject to insults of all kinds, to confinement and harassment. They are often ridiculed and humiliated, even in the presence of the very children they were hired to look after. Furthermore, these young domestic workers are sometimes raped by their bosses and are therefore exposed to under-age and unwanted pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and other STIs. In some instances, the domestic worker reacts by remaining silent, but even if she lodges a complaint with the proper authorities, she becomes an object of ridicule. Trapped and unwilling to return to the rural areas, in order to survive some former domestic workers go into sex work with all the consequences linked to that activity.

**Role of COSYLI in improving the situation of domestic workers**

COSYLI has made determined efforts to find solutions to the pervasive problem of the abuse of domestic workers. The organization’s main mission is to “promote and defend male and female employees’ socio-economic rights in order to improve their living and working conditions.”

Its initiatives in favour of domestic workers include:

• Establishment of a trade union (SYTRAMER) that groups male and female workers in households. Its aim is to defend and promote them.
• Undertaking of a survey on the situation related to household work in the city of Kigali. This study has revealed some problems specific to girls working in households, e.g. sexual violence, unwanted pregnancies, and STIs.
• Organization of sensitization sessions on the problems faced by male and female household workers. These sessions were organized for the benefit of civil servants in charge of working conditions, inspection and social affairs in the three districts forming Kigali city, as well as for employers, and male and female household employees. At the end of these sessions, a series of recommendations were formulated for all stakeholders (government, employers, workers and trade union) in order to improve all household workers’ socio-economic conditions.
• Organization of sessions for professional training. COSYLI organized occupational training for young unmarried mothers and those infected with HIV/AIDS as victims of
sexual violence within households. Fifty girls were trained in dressmaking and hairdressing.

*Advocacy and support of male and female household workers. COSYLI played an advocacy role and gave support to household workers by approaching relevant employers and institutions.

*In advance of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) international conference that resulted in a general covenant on domestic work, COSYLI approached ILO for assistance in organizing a sub-regional conference of trade unions from Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC in order to formulate their views on the prospective covenant.

**Conclusion**

Prevention of abuse and ill treatment of young girls working in households is going to be a challenging and a long-term undertaking, requiring cooperation from all involved. COSYLI would like to extend its efforts on this issue throughout the entire country, and despite its inadequate resources has included in its strategic plan for 2011-2013 the reinforcement of SYTRAMER and its extension to the whole country.

**Session 7c  Girlhood in Contemporary Rwanda**

Moderator: Melissa Vogt, Communications Officer, CGCD, KIE

**Challenging Rwandan Childhoods: A Preliminary Outline**—Maja Haals Londorf, PhD candidate in Social Anthropology, London School of Economics, UK

**Introduction**

This presentation offers some very preliminary findings from new research undertaken to explore some of the socio-psychological consequences of orphan-hood in rural Rwanda. On a worldwide scale, Rwanda has proportionally one of the largest orphan populations, owing first to the genocide against the Tutsi of 1994 and more recently to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The research is based in the Northern Province where the warlike situation that persisted through 1998 also created a large number of single- and double-orphaned children and youth.

Previous studies of Rwandan orphans indicate that traditional mechanisms for caring for such children have broken down since 1994, with extended families disclaiming responsibility for their care, and orphans perceiving kin as exploitative and mean toward them. However, this current research suggests that orphans are not a homogeneous group, and that some fare markedly better than others. Some preliminary patterns are beginning to emerge that may offer insights into the provision of adequate care and support for this potentially vulnerable group of children and youth. This presentation will further focus on challenges related to gender in the lives of orphans.

**Differences between villages**

One of the major findings from this research is the marked difference between the two villages being researched, with significant implications for the psychosocial
conditions of childhood. Village 1 was partly built by the government and partly by the Genocide Survivors Assistance Fund (FARG) in the late 1990s in order to resettle the many people returning from long years of exile in DRC and Uganda as well as survivors of the genocide. The result is that the village hosts many widows, orphans and non-traditional households as well as people from different cultural and social backgrounds. Despite all seeming odds the village, built in neat rows with the village centre and market located a bit further up along the main paved road, has turned into a rather tight-knit community, rapidly developing itself, moving out of the stark poverty in which it was born. Some help continues to be provided from government-supported initiatives. Residents are also receptive to the government’s agenda of rights for children and responsibilities toward children by adults.

Village 2 is older and more traditional in its arrangement of scattered households across the hillsides, far from the paved road and with little in the way of a village centre. Outside support comes from local NGOs with sporadic help from larger international ones. This village is primarily inhabited by families who have a long history in the region, but who have lost many family members in what locals call “the 1998 war”. While the experience of exile seems to have contributed to a sense of community among the residents of Village 1, the long period of conflict has exacerbated land disputes and internal family conflicts in Village 2, resulting in little sense of community and responsibility towards its children.

In Village 1 double orphans tend to live with their grandparents, aunts or uncles, some on the maternal side, some on the paternal side. While some of these children may be left more to their own devices than common for non-orphans, they are rarely outright neglected and often have sufficient care to be able to manage an everyday life without too many conscious worries. While one sees some difficulties in terms of social interaction that are likely to be related to orphan-hood, or other difficult family situations, they are not so obvious as to put the children at any obvious disadvantage or hugely affect the child’s social-moral interpretations as defined by perceptions of family, community and/or life in general.

Life as a child in Village 2 however seems rather difficult for orphans. Of all the children being studied in this village, close to 20 in total, only four go to school (unlike universal school attendance by orphans in the more prosperous Village 1). Most have left school before finishing Secondary 6 with only a few of them having even finished Secondary 3. Of the four in school, only one is a girl. All of them say that they have left school due to lack of school materials and because they have to stay at home, working in the fields, cooking food or earning money in order to be able to buy food. Of all the children and youth it is the four who attend school who have the most positive outlook on life. Another two female youth, also relatively optimistic compared to the others, attended a vocational training course and now participate in local cooperatives. In the case of those who do not attend school, family conflicts and destitution appear to weigh heavily on them. Some live near better-off relatives who provide very little if any material support.
**Significance of gender**

The situation for girls has some additional disadvantages. In both villages there are fairly clear-cut distinctions by gender for chores and tasks for children. Boys herd animals while girls carry out domestic chores such as sweeping, food preparation and child minding. As children get older the chores of boys seem to diminish while they grow for girls, possibly explaining why nationally girls are less likely to continue their schooling as far as boys. Girls may be more likely to be taken into households upon orphan-hood or other difficult situations, but are perceived as less able to defend themselves, and more likely to be abused or exploited in the privacy of the household. Boys on the other hand are more likely to find paid jobs as cowboys, which give them increased freedom to move from place to place in case of abuse and to get paid employment that the girls may be denied.

There are examples of abuse and exploitation in both villages, but with more serious consequences in Village 2, with families being split, and disheartened children leaving home and living by themselves. In trying to figure out why such children in Village 1, while perhaps less socially integrated than others, still conveyed a sense of relative comfort in life or positive view of their family and community, the researcher considers whether the greater economic and political roles taken by women in that village may have played a part. They predominate as village leaders, have occupations, and engage in small enterprises, all of which assure that they are not politically or economically marginalized. The few reported cases of domestic abuse during the researcher’s residency were dealt with instantly and apparently satisfactorily. This is in contrast to Village 2 in which no woman holds a political position or engages in economic activity beyond subsistence or small scale market trading, or is particularly visible in village life. Might the women in Village 1 give inspiration at an unconscious level to young girls to fight their situation and remain more emotionally and socially integrated? Since women are perceived as the adults with the main responsibility for children’s social and emotional welfare, might their visibly strong roles in the community heighten the entire community’s responsibility towards vulnerable children?

**Girl Hub Rwanda: Girl-Led Peer Research**—Kemi Williams, Country Director, Girl Hub

**Background**

Girl Hub, a joint initiative between Nike and the British Government, is intended to bolster the efforts of Nike’s “Girl Effect” campaign, which is based on the current premise that the fight against poverty has to start with the needs of girls and women. To know which interventions would be most useful in Rwanda, it is essential to know what Rwandan girls think, feel and believe. Girl Hub commissioned a consulting firm to generate qualitative knowledge and understanding about girls’ attitudes and realities by hearing from girls directly. The findings here are drawn on girl-led peer research undertaken by girls in Rwanda. Thus when Girl Hub works with other local partners, it can ensure that girls’ voices inform the development of programs and communications.
Methodology and approach

Thirty girls, aged 16-18, all with basic literacy skills, but some still in school and some not, were trained to do the research. The girls came from Kigali, Gitarama and Bugesera districts. There were five days of training and then one-to-one support during the interview process. Each girl interviewed six people in their community. They queried their peers on seven “pillars” of their lives:

- Pillar 1 Girlhood. Goal: “I enjoy being a girl”
- Pillar 2 School. Goal: “I want to finish secondary school, and I can”
- Pillar 3 Marriage. Goal: “I want to marry later, and I can”
- Pillar 4 Pregnancy. Goal: “I want to have babies later, and I can”
- Pillar 5 Health. Goal: “I want to look after my own health, and I can”
- Pillar 6 Money. Goal: “I want to look after my own money, and I can”
- Pillar 7 Ambition. Goal: “I can do what I want with my life”

Key findings

Overriding all seems to be the concern with agaciru—getting and keeping social value.

Pillar 1 Girlhood: More important than enjoyment to the girls was the desire for more control and decision making power over many areas of their lives. They feel that they have fewer opportunities and less confidence than boys. They also feel disadvantaged in their relationships with men, especially “sugar daddies”.

Pillar 2 School: School is given a high value for the knowledge and life skills it is believed to impart. School is a mean to an end—the good life. It also makes girls more valuable in terms of access to good jobs and to better husbands. In-school girls look down on girls who are no longer in school, although their own families value them for the income generating work that they do.

Pillar 3 Marriage: The timing of marriage seems to be less important to girls than their control over whom they marry and the agaciru gained by having children within marriage.

Pillar 4 Pregnancy: Here again, the girls were less concerned with postponing the age of childbearing than they were with not having babies outside of marriage, in order not to lose agaciru. But many factors conspire against their achieving this goal: peer pressure, desire, rape, and the need to secure financial support from boyfriends and “sugar daddies”.

Pillar 5 Health: This is a difficult area in which the girls feel little competency and little ability to get the information they need from parents on sexual and reproductive health and hygiene at a young age, without being labelled promiscuous and losing agaciru.

Pillar 6 Money: This is an important goal for the acquisition of agaciru and for girls’ ability to provide for the needs of people who depend upon them. Being self-sufficient would mean not having to depend upon boyfriends and “sugar daddies” for material things. However, the source of one’s money and the way it is used both are seen to have an impact on agaciru.

Pillar 7 Ambition: Ambition is important to girls; they want a brighter future and to succeed in life. For them, success is connected to being self-sufficient, which in turn is
connected to education and doing well in business. The girls perceive boys as having value in themselves, while girls have to get—and keep—value.

Other pillars that are important to the girls are relationships and issues of violence.

**Best and worst things about being a girl in Rwanda**

The best things centered around the pride girls felt at being in school, at not being pregnant (and perhaps not having sexual relationships before marriage), at having self-respect, and at having good relationships with their parents. The list of worst things was longer and more diverse, ranging from lesser regard and expectations of girls in comparison to boys, to girls’ greater responsibilities for domestic work, and included the loss of parents, and the inability to continue schooling because of external circumstances. A persistent thread was girls’ sense of sexual vulnerability and the costs that they and not boys or men bore in consequence.

**Levelling the Playing Field: Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities**—Nina Shalita, Youth Program Director, Imbuto Foundation

**Vision and Mission of the Imbuto Foundation**

The vision of the Foundation is ‘A nation of empowered and dignified Rwandans’ and its mission is ‘To support the development of a healthy, educated and prosperous society.’ *Imbuto* means “seed” and the Foundation conceptualizes its role as nurturing the seeds, the people of Rwanda. They challenge everyone to envision a time whereby the promotion of gender equality in Rwanda will be unnecessary because there will be no need to, when there will be absolutely no difference in the opportunities girls and boys have.

**Role of the Imbuto Foundation in creating an equal playing field between men and women**

*Imbuto*’s objectives, which are aligned to national policies such as Vision 2020:

- To strengthen value systems and leadership capacities of young girls
- To encourage innovative solutions through economic empowerment amongst women
- To involve young boys and men in these interventions in under-scoring the importance of gender equality.

The pillars on which the structures of gender equality are built include:

- Education: The promotion of girls’ education is intended to close the gap in their empowerment caused by cultural and socio-economic barriers. This is done by First Lady annual awards for the best performing girls, by rewarding ceremonies in all 30 districts, and by provision of scholastic materials, laptops, and basic computer training. The Foundation offers 1000 scholarships annually to help create equal opportunities for academically proficient, highly disciplined underprivileged boys and girls from vulnerable communities through their secondary education.
- Health: The Foundation has created a family package, which is a PMTCT initiative aimed at pregnant HIV positive mothers, with a holistic aspect that includes men/husbands and the community, involving peer educators. Services include HIV counselling and testing, comprehensive care for HIV positive women, prevention of
vertical transmission, ART and treatment of STIs and opportunistic infections, nutritional support, adherence to subscription of membership to *Mutuelles de Santé* (community-based health insurance scheme), and income-generating micro-projects that aim to support family units.

• Youth Empowerment: There are many aspects to this initiative, which has altered its focus in recent years from young women to young people of both sexes in acknowledgment of the disadvantaged status of many young men. Thus the 2007 Celebrating Young Women Achievers was redesigned in 2009 as Celebrating Young Rwandan Achievers. The youth program Rwanda Speaks! seeks the empowerment of youth through public speaking, leadership and mentorship. It includes a TV and radio show featuring a debate among youth on national issues, including gender promotion. The initiative involves mentorship of students in four secondary schools, and a Toastmasters Club Program to help university students improve oral expression and self-confidence in public speaking. A series of targeted youth forums and workshops, 11 since 2007 with over 2,400 participants, transmit messages to encourage youth to set clear and high goals for themselves and help create dialogue between youth and leaders. High-ranking leaders, both national and international, have addressed these forums.

**Session 8a Improving Rural Women’s Lives**

Moderator: Dorothy Tukahabua, Assistant Lecturer, Education, KIE

*Decentralization Policy as an Instrument of Improving Rwandan Rural Women’s Participation and Equitable Access to Services in the Last 10 Years*—John Mutamba, UN Women

**Background**

In 2000, GoR adopted a decentralization policy designed to empower local populations to fight poverty by participating actively in the development process. The policy was also seen as a vehicle for enhancing good governance by ensuring that local officials would be accountable for implementing development programs and delivering basic services equitably. The need for women’s participation at various administrative levels was highlighted from the beginning.

**How might women benefit from the decentralization policy? Why involve women in local government?**

Women are more than half the population (53%); a high proportion of them are widows or single women. Almost one-third of Rwandan households (32.1%) are headed by women, and 62% of these households live below the poverty line compared to 54% of male-headed households. The incidence of poverty is markedly higher in rural areas: 66% compared to 12% in Kigali and 19% in other towns. The Agriculture Survey (2008) indicates that 42% of the active population is involved in subsistence agriculture to support their families and 77% of those involved are women.
Women have made substantial contributions in the reconstruction of Rwandan society since the genocide against the Tutsi. The Gacaca courts are headed by a female executive secretary, and 35% of elected judges are women.

Local governments provide feasible opportunities for women to participate in decision-making. Female representation in local government has been shown to make a difference on issues that matter to women. The National Women’s Council (NAWOCO) has given over 100,000 women increased visibility and a voice in governance at various levels from the Umudugudu (village) to the national level. Organized women’s advocacy and mobilization acts as links between policy making and implementation. Performance contracts (Imihigo) ensure that elected officials carry out policies decided upon by local governing structures.

**Organizations working to facilitate women’s involvement in participatory governance**

The Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities has a mandate to represent, lobby and advocate for its members, and build their capacities. It has designed a strategy for mainstreaming gender in local government systems; its main focus will be on capacity building.

The Joint Action Development Forums (JADF) is an important consultative body for information dissemination, promotion of cooperation among people supporting local socio-economic development, and the social welfare of the population. Gender equality is one of the issues it addresses.

**Innovative policies/practices as facilitating factors in women’s participation**

*Ubudehe*—participatory planning and budgeting at the village level. There is strong participation by women, with the major beneficiaries being women-headed households.

*Himo*—involves local residents in the implementation of a given project. Often they are paid to participate. Women comprise 50% of Himo participants.

Vision 2020 *Umurenge* Program (VUP)—an integrated local development program based on the national Vision 2020 to accelerate poverty eradication, rural growth, and social protection. As VUP targets the poorest, women are beneficiaries.

*Mutuelle de Santé* —a voluntary health care system coordinated primarily at the district and sector levels, and funded by modest annual member premiums. There has been strong community mobilization and response to this program.

Community health programs, e.g. family planning, conservation of environment
Crop intensification, land consolidation and green revolution programs
Peace-building initiatives

**Achievements in incorporating women into the decentralization process**

- Increased female representation in local governance councils and executive organizations
- Increased awareness about gender equality and the rights of women
- Increased confidence among women through greater exposure in local meetings, education and training
- Increased access to health care services, e.g. family planning services, health care through health insurance schemes, and community health care mobilization, especially benefiting women
• Increased benefits from pro-poor programs, e.g. One cow per household, VUP Umurenge
• Greater community mobilization in fighting, preventing, and responding to sexual and gender based violence
• Acceleration in development program implementation

Challenges preventing decentralization policy from fully benefiting women
• Gender mainstreaming is still weak at the local government level in District Development Plans (DDPs), planning, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation
• There is poor access to sources of information, media and information technology
• There is a high rate of illiteracy and general lack of education among women
• Women are worn down by poverty and the challenges of survival
• There is limited availability of sex-disaggregated data to plan and assess progress
• There is resistance to change with regard to equality between men and women

Recommendations
• Develop capacities of local authorities and civil society organizations with gender analytical skills
• Strengthen the system of data collection, dissemination and use, to make it more gender aware
• Strengthen the gender responsiveness aspect of performance contracts (Imihigo)
• Strengthen public awareness of gender concepts
• Strengthen rural women’s economic empowerment programs

Role of the Media in the Promotion of Girls’ Education and Gender Policies—Patrick Ntwali, Marketing Manager, Oasis Gazette

What is the Oasis Gazette?

Oasis is a bi-monthly gazette published in partnership with the MINEDUC with the mission of extending an educational perspective and disseminating GoR’s educational policies to students in all schools in Rwanda from primary to tertiary. Although those working on the Gazette would like to extend its distribution to all students and teachers in Rwanda, at the moment 4,000 copies are distributed to 800 schools all over the country. It is hoped that reading the Gazette will help mobilize and unite all education stakeholders in fighting against all kinds of discrimination, including gender-based discrimination, exclusion, favoritism, illiteracy, and genocide ideology. Another objective is to inculcate and sensitize students about the importance of the environment, hygiene and health, and protection against HIV/AIDS.

Role of education

It is generally accepted that the development of human resources is one of the principal factors in achieving sustainable economic and social development, and furthermore that education is a fundamental human right to ensure that all citizens realize their full potential. Educating girls and women is now seen as fundamental to economic development and poverty reduction, as well as to the promotion of women’s human rights. It is also central to reducing maternal and child mortality rates, reducing
birth rates, and improving basic health indicators of all family members, including prevention of HIV/AIDS.

**Gender Clubs**

Despite widespread recognition in Rwanda of the importance of educating girls, young girls continue to lag behind boys in terms of enrolment and completion rates and performance in school. The establishment in schools and universities of gender clubs, intended to inform students about gender issues and the importance of gender equality, is one of the means by which GoR and its funding partners are tackling the factors contributing to girls’ lesser educational success.

Now that these clubs are increasing in number, it is time to consider a network linking them.

- This will allow gender clubs to share information and to raise awareness of gender issues specific to their district
- It will enable them to get information about where they can put much more effort
- It will enable them to work as a team and have a strong voice to achieve gender-based goals and objectives

Given the overwhelming importance of media in heightening awareness of gender issues and policies, the *Oasis Gazette* has a potentially important role in building the network between gender clubs.

- It features a special column called students’ corner where students give their ideas, express their opinions and make comments on issues affecting them in the education environment
- It will facilitate networking between gender clubs by carrying out field studies (by interviewing gender club members around the country) and sharing the outcome with all gender clubs
- Networking will help gender club members to work as a team and have a strong voice nationwide in the promotion of girls’ education and gender policies

**Recommendations**

- Training of management and technical staff in gender clubs
- Enhancing the capacities of gender clubs by providing external expertise (volunteers) to assist them in their activities
- Providing technical and financial support to enhance gender club programs
- Providing materials needed for gender club activities
- Evaluation of gender policies and their implementation
Session 8b  Gender-Based Violence as Instruments of Power and Control
Moderator: Prof. Anne-Marie Hilsdon, PhD, CGCD, KIE

All is Fair in War: Rape—The Silenced Terror, Sexual Violence as a Systematic Tool of Modern Warfare—Sabine Hirschauer, PhD student, ODU

Introduction
Rape has long been an accompaniment to war. However, against the backdrop of the end of the Cold War a new generation of regionally contained wars has surfaced (conflicts such as those in Bosnia, Rwanda or DRC) and has increasingly transformed rape from being an opportunistic side effect of conflict into a systematic tool of war to advance very specific strategic goals, including genocide and ethnic cleansing. In the early 1990s, reports about mass rapes and the existence of rape camps in Bosnia sparked global outrage about sexual violence as a systematic and strategic tool of war, animating discussion about the centrality of rape in these kinds of wars, which often take place in villages and affect civilians more than soldiers.

Using the 1994 Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi as a case study (with references back to the war in Bosnia and forward to the current conflict in DRC), this presentation looks at the evolving use of rape as a systematic tool of war and at the reluctance and hesitation on the part of the international community (including international institutions) to consider sexual violence as a security issue worthy of condemnation and even intervention. How does the lack of reliable data or the lack of research foster this intrinsic reluctance? The theoretical framework of securitization emerges as a key factor in the conceptualization of rape as a systematic tool in its transformation from the opportunistic/natural to the strategic, from the individual to the collective, from the insular/singular and incidental to national and international/global security threat. That is to say, rape comes to be advanced as a policy essential to the security of the political entity utilizing it on the one hand, and as a threat to national/regional security on the other.

Use of rape in the Rwandan genocide
The African division of Human Rights Watch, a human rights non-profit organization that reports frequently on global human rights violations, first issued a report in 1996 about sexual violence during the Rwandan genocide. Based on initial victim interviews and research, and for the first time affirming for the outside world the pervasive extent and strategic nature of sexual violence during the genocide, the report also alluded to the systematic function of sexual violence during the conflict. Civilian and military leaders at national and local levels, as well as heads of militia, both directed and encouraged the killings and sexual violence for the specific purpose of destroying the Tutsi as a group. Rape served as a calculated mechanism to destroy psychologically the fabric of Tutsi society, to damage and erase its patriarchal culture and structure, as Tutsi husbands, brothers and fathers, in efforts to emasculate them, were often forced to
witness the rapes of their wives, sisters, and daughters. Further, in general, the influx of children originating from genocidal rape in Rwanda (as in Bosnia earlier) injected yet another underlying component of social disruption.

Nonetheless, despite the earlier experience in Bosnia, attention to the deliberate sexual violence inflicted on Tutsi women and by extension on the entire Tutsi community, was very slow to come into focus after the genocide. Efforts to document sexual violence that had occurred during the genocide struggled very early on from lack of resources and proper and extensive access to victims and perpetrators alike. The UN created a special sexual violence team of ICTR in late summer 1996 to support the genocide prosecution, but according to reports the political climate remained unsafe and too dangerous at the time to allow for proper and extensive investigations and victim interviews. The shame felt by rape victims also kept women from telling their stories. The lead Rwandan prosecutor, Pierre-Richard Prosper, wrote in a report that signs of widespread sexual violence were discovered only accidentally and gradually “through hints of certain witnesses testifying about general genocidal episodes and from NGO reports.” This has led to widely divergent estimates as to the number of women (mostly Tutsi) who had been raped.

**Rape and the international rule of law**

In recent years, the understanding of rape (e.g. during the conflicts in Rwanda and Bosnia in the 1990s) has matured from a view of it as an accepted nuisance and side effect of conflict to recognition of it as a systematic and effective tool of war as it is often waged now. Nonetheless, international institutions such as the UN have only slowly and phlegmatically recognized this shift. The tribunals for Bosnia and Rwanda became the first judicial bodies to investigate crimes according to Article 2 of grave breaches of the 1948 Geneva Conventions. After the discovery of rape camps during the Bosnian conflict, UNSCR 798 in December 1992 became the first UN resolution that condemned rape of women during wartime. Several months later, the UNSC expanded and refined its definition and included the “practice of ‘ethnic cleansing’ and the massive, organized and systematic detention and rape of women.” Only since Bosnia has rape been re-evaluated and elevated to the level of “genocide-rape”/ethnic rape and legally recognized as a war crime.

In September 1998, ICTR found former Rwandan mayor Jean Paul Akayesu guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity. The court ruling was the first conviction of an international court of genocide. It also became the first conviction that acknowledged rape as a component of genocide. During the 1994 genocide, Akayesu, mayor of the town of Taba, became instrumental in ordering and supervising the systematic rape and slaughter of Tutsi women. ICTR found that “sexual assault formed an integral part of the process of destroying the Tutsi ethnic group and that the rape was systematic and had been perpetrated against Tutsi women only, manifesting the specific intent required for those acts to constitute genocide.” He was convicted of several counts of crimes against humanity (extermination and rape), genocide, and direct and public incitement to commit genocide. Akayesu is serving a life sentence in a prison in Mali.

However, while such international court rulings became paramount in elevating sexual violence from an opportunistic war nuisance to a security issue, international
institutions only reluctantly and painfully slowly put legal parameters and enforcement mechanisms in place to recognize rape as a punishable systematic tool of war. Six years after the Rwandan genocide, in October 2000, the UN Security Council (UNSC) passed a resolution for the first time in its history to protect women and children from sexual violence during warfare. In February 2001, when ICTY in The Hague sentenced three Bosnian-Serbs, Kunarac, Kovac and Vukovic, to long prison terms for sexual violence, this served as a first indicator of the recognition of rape as a “collective security problem.” In 2001, UNSC adopted the landmark Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. In a July 2004 speech, then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan asked the governments of the Sudan and Congo “to stop using violence against women as a weapon of war.” However, not until 2008, with the passage of UNSCR 1820, demanding the “immediate and complete halt of acts of sexual violence against civilians in conflict zones,” did UNSC officially acknowledge and condemn rape as a tool of war. The resolution, which asserts that, “rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide” was officially implemented on 30 June 2009. Further, the resolution interprets sexual violence in some cases as a “tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group.” This was the first time UNSC called on the UN’s readiness to combat sexual violence as “deliberately targeting civilians, or as a part of a widespread campaign against civilian populations.”

So far, efforts at implementation of this resolution have only been partial and mostly unsuccessful. In fact, unimpressed by international institutions and the various international judicial rulings, DRC since 1996 has been experiencing one of the most horrific and rampant rape crises of all times. While the UN and humanitarian NGOs try to implement protection programs for women, militia groups continue to utilize sexual violence as an effective and strategic method to intimidate, gain and control territory and access to valuable minerals. The conflict so far has claimed more than five million lives since 1996 with an unprecedented scale of sexual violence. While after Bosnia and Rwanda, the international community pledged “never again,” today the world and in particular paralyzed international institutions seem to look on yet again as sexual violence as a systematic weapon of war reaches new and unprecedented proportions.

**Destroying Women and Women as Builders: Gender and the Rwandan State**—Ilaria Buscaglia, PhD candidate in Anthropology, University of Siena
(Paper read for the author by Prof. Anne-Marie Hilsdon)

**Introduction**

Feminist scholarship is responsible for revealing the deep interrelation among gender, state and nation, and power. However, the weakness of this perspective is that it focuses on the state as the unique source of power discourses on gender and women. Instead, it is necessary to take into account the role of transnational entities (UN, World Bank, NGOs) that have helped shape the political choices of the state in recent decades, redefining their powers and competences. The way in which the state defines and uses
the concept of gender (gender promotion, gender equality) is deeply influenced by the models of governance elaborated at a global level, which have been based on ideas of participation, empowerment and democratization of civil society since the early 1990s. At the same time we should also consider another level of analysis, given the fact that even local communities develop conceptions about women and men and their respective places and roles, and that these cultural conceptions incessantly interact with the national and international dimensions.

In this paper, the author presents the discourse on gender in Rwanda as a political project elaborated by the Rwandan state in two different historical periods: the last years of the Habyarimana regime and the post-genocide era. The first part of the paper offers a brief analysis of the mass media in the 1990s and the specific forms of GBV that occurred during the genocide, demonstrating the relationship existing among gender, ethnicity and nation in the past regime in Rwanda. Local conceptions of femininity, together with colonial ideologies of beauty and race were the raw materials of all those representations. The second part draws on the author’s PhD research on gender construction in the rural Rwanda of today. The political action of the state, concretely embodied in the figure of female local leaders, is the result of a complex relationship among local culture, state power and global influences.

“Hutu nation” and Tutsi women

The target of the anti-Tutsi propaganda in the 1990s was the Tutsi as a collectivity, conceived as an ethnic group and globally presented as foreigners in their own country. However, some forms of denigration and dehumanization, as well as some forms of violence during the genocide against the Tutsi, were specifically directed against Tutsi women (and moderate Hutu) and were affecting those parts of the body symbolically connected to sexuality, fertility and reproductive capacity. Tutsi women, represented as bearers of an attractive but dangerous sensuality, could pollute the body of the nation through inter-ethnic unions (which had earlier been viewed as potential sources of reconciliation). Discourses such as these served to legitimize specific forms of gender based violence during the genocide, undertaken as a component of a precise political project of nation building inscribed on the bodies of women. The use of rape had been so widespread that ICTR officially recognized it as a true genocidal act, with the sentence of 2 September 1998 concerning Jean Paul Akayesu, the Taba burgomaster. Other forms of GBV were also prevalent: sexual slavery, forced marriage, prostitution, and forced pregnancy. A large number of women were victims of genital or breast mutilation.

The consequences of those forms of violence, both physical and psychological, are still visible today. Suffering from sterility, HIV/AIDS, or motherhood by rape, accused of preferring prostitution to death, these women survivors, with few opportunities for marriage, have experienced isolation and ostracism, indications that the most important ties of community have been severed. Thus, raping women during wartime has been considered as “raping the nation as a whole.” To take this analogy further, in Rwanda, as well as in several African regions, women are culturally associated with land, because in general they are tireless farm labourers and do most of the agricultural work to feed
their households. Women are like rain because they make the land fertile through their work.

**Women and the Rwandan nation**

Rwanda, the country with the highest percentage of women in Parliament, also has a progressive institutional apparatus for the promotion of gender equality:

- **NAWOCO** (embedded in the Constitution of 2003) is a social forum of organized structures from the grassroots up to the national level that provides for women’s participation in local governance at all administrative levels
- Thirty percent of the members of each political organ of representation have to be women
- The Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) was created in 2009 to check that gender is mainstreamed in all policies and political institutions
- **Law 22/99 of 12/11/1999** on matrimonial regimes and succession bans any gender discrimination in inheritance processes
- **Law 59/2008 of 10/09/2008** contains a definition and repression of the crime of GBV

Efforts at the promotion of women go back to the colonial era, albeit by ameliorating the condition of African women by instilling Western family ideology into urban African life. In the postcolonial period some institutions were created, e.g. the Ministry of Women in 1965 and URAMA, the women’s branch of the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND), the only legal political party at the time. After the UN’s Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, Rwandan civil society became more active on these issues:

- The first Rwandan NGO dealing with women (*Réseau des Femmes*) was created in 1991, focusing on the rights of rural women
- In the 1990s the process of institutional recognition of gender as a political issue was pushed forward, under the influence of a new ideology of globalization, based on democratic ideas of inclusivity and participatory governance. A new Ministry of Family and Women’s Promotion was instituted in 1992 with some decentralized offices at the level of the communes and the prefectures
- In 1992 women gained the right to open their own bank accounts without the authorization of their husbands
- In 1993 **Profemmes/Twese Hamwe**, a network of all women’s associations was founded
- Nonetheless the level of female political representation remained very low, especially in the executive branch (5.26%)

The present government thus had a foundation on which to build, but has done a good deal in addition to spread the discourse about gender equality all around the country, reaching all institutions and permeating all social groups. Gender has become a cross cutting dimension in Rwandan politics and policies, becoming one central point of the 2003 Constitution. The creation of the GMO shows a deep government commitment to gender mainstreaming.

**Subjunctification of women as active agents of nation building**

The marked political interest in women in post-genocide Rwanda is owing to more than women’s numerical preponderance in the years immediately following 1994. It also takes place in the context of increased commitment to gender equality at the
global level as exemplified in the success of the Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing in 1995, and the recasting of the “development argument” to focus on the especial importance of enhancing women’s capacities as central to the economic development of poor countries.

It is also important to look at the way political power is constructing female gender in contemporary rural Rwanda (where a majority of the population resides). This research deals with the concrete exercise of politics and power in everyday life by focusing on the figures of the local leaders of NAWOCO at the cell and sector levels in two sectors in Nyagatare district. All the subjects can read and write; all of them finished at least primary school or attended some years of secondary school. The majority combines agricultural work for feeding their family with participation in collective associations or cooperatives to gain access to money. They all use modern contraceptive methods, and the majority has obtained credit at least once in their lives. Half of them have held more than one political office at the local level (Gacaca, NAWOCO sector cell councils) or have taken up responsibilities in the local women associations. All of them have undergone different training on reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, gender and development, ICT, credit management, etc.

This shows that a plurality of discourses are in action:
• medical-sanitary
• democratic participation in politics
• rights (of property, credit access and physical protection)
These are the conditions through which full citizenship can be reached, which nowadays is exercised through active participation in the state programs. This project of engaging women as active agents of nation building is largely trans-ethnic; stressing gender difference is an attempt to overlap and finally overcome the ethnic one.

**Childhood Sexual Abuse Among Female University Students (NUR)**—Grace Igiraneza*, MD, Kigali University Teaching Hospital (co-written with J.B. Kakoma, MD, PhD, School of Public Health, National University of Rwanda)

**Introduction**

Child sexual abuse is contact or interactions between a child and an adult when a child is being used for sexual stimulation. This is anytime when a child is engaged in sexual stimulation with an older person. Child sexual abuse is a common occurrence worldwide; it occurs across all communities regardless of race, religion, cultural heritage, and social or economic status. In different societies with a different background, it is often considered as a private family matter. Therefore the nature of this crime constituting child sexual abuse is always linked with the issue of victim secrecy and with under-reporting that makes official statistics on the crime unreliable.

Apart from J.P. Umurungi’s 2007 MD dissertation at NUR, “What happens to girls who are victims of rape? Using medical and police records to analyze the situation of GBV, children and HIV-AIDS in two districts of Rwanda”, there appears to be no other publications on the subject in this country.
Objectives
The aim of this study was to determine the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse and its outcomes among female students at NUR.

Study population and methods
This descriptive and cross-sectional study was conducted among 185 female students attending NUR from 1 January 2007 to 30 April 2008. Participants were randomly selected from a pre-established list of rooms occupied by female students in the main campus, and consent was required. A self-report questionnaire was administered anonymously. Information on sexual abuse experience in childhood was collected through the questions investigating occurrence of forced intercourse and its outcomes. The plan of analysis was made using the SPSS ‘Software Package for Statistical Analysis’.

The questionnaire focused on:
• The identification of the participant
• An experience of rape as a child
• The context in which the rape occurred
• The consequences emerging from the rape but also the impact on the participant’s life

Results
The results revealed that the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse was 13.5% among female university students. Only 32% of the victims were more than 15 years at the time of rape. The rest (68%) were 15 or younger than 15: 36% were 11 to 15 years, 28% were 6 to 11 years and 4% were less than 5 years.

The most commonly reported perpetrators in this study were persons known to the victims (56%): 16% were family members, 12% family friends, and 28% acquaintances. Unknown perpetrators were 44%. The study revealed that 36% of the incidents of rape took place in the victim’s home and 40% at the perpetrator’s home; school was the site of 8% of the rapes. Collective rape was reported in 20% of the subjects. Almost a quarter (24%) of the victims revealed the use of weapons.

Among these victims of sexual abuse, 12% had an unwanted pregnancy, 76% experienced a burning sensation, 60% had genital bleeding, and 32% experienced either pruritus or vaginal discharges. Psychological effects were most prominent: 72% of the victims had fear of intimacy after aggression, 68% developed loss of trust in men and 60% had loss of self esteem.

Discussion
This study showed that the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse, especially rape, was 13.5% among female undergraduate students enrolled at NUR. These results are consistent with those found by researchers in other countries, such as Turkey and Ethiopia. That a majority (68%) of the victims were aged 15 and younger is also in keeping with global patterns. According to data provided by the judiciary and centers for victims of sexual assault of Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Peru and the United States, two-thirds of sexual assault victims are aged 15 or younger. From these studies, child molesters appear to be more attracted to adolescent girls than children younger than 10 years.
There has been considerable theory and research focused on those who perpetrate child sexual abuse. Data on men who commit sexual violence also show that they mostly direct their impulses towards people they already know. In our study, unknown assailants accounted for 44% while 56% of assailants were people familiar with the victim (family members 16%, family friends 12%, and acquaintances 28%). With these figures, nobody could say that intra-familial rape does not exist in our society.

Most programs for the prevention of child sexual abuse have focused on potential victims, teaching them to avoid child molesters. Such programs can be important, but they are likely to be only part of a broad solution. In fact, most child sexual abuse is perpetrated by relatives and acquaintances, which makes it particularly difficult for children to control these interactions. Consequently, broad prevention efforts for child sex offending must include addressing the perpetrators’ behavior. Most rapes (76%) in our series occurred either at the home of the rapist (40%) or the victim (36%); once more, this is because the majority of rapists are acquaintances, people trusted by the child so that she can go to their homes without fear and without asking too many questions. Unfortunately these are the same people who betray and abuse the trust of the child.

Another finding worthy of comment is a 20% rate of mass rape, i.e. rape involving at least two perpetrators. In USA, national data on rape and sexual assault indicate that in about one out of ten sexual assaults, there are several attackers. Most of these mass attacks are committed by people the victim does not know. However, known persons can be involved in some cases; for example, in South Africa boyfriends participate in mass rape. Mass rape is also commonly found in armed conflict when it is often used as means of psychological warfare in order to humiliate the enemy and undermine their morale.

It has been shown that there is a link between gynecological complications and experience of forced sex. These complications include bleeding and vaginal infections, genital irritation, painful sex, chronic pelvic pain and urinary tract infections. Similar signs were found in our study: burning sensation (76%), genital bleeding (60%), pruritus (24%) and purulent discharge (8%). These signs suggest the presence of a genital infection. In his study conducted among 466 children victims of sexual abuse in Northern Province, Umurungi found rates of 8.65% of *Trichomonas vaginalis* infection, 6.45% of gonorrhea, and 3.9% of a combination of these two.

The finding that 12% of victims experienced pregnancies following rape is consistent with previous reports. Umurungi found a 13.3 % pregnancy rate among child victims of sexual abuse. A recent Ethiopian study of girl adolescents identified as victims of rape reported that 17% experienced pregnancy. It is less probable that a girl forced to have sex will use condoms or other contraceptive methods, thus explaining the unusually high pregnancy rates.

Each individual’s experiences and reactions are unique to that individual. However, with increasing numbers of survivors breaking the silence and talking about their experiences, it has become apparent that there are some responses to child sexual abuse that are common to many survivors. Among these are some psychological and emotional problems that emerge from sexual abuse and violence, often requiring
therapy in adulthood. Among the difficulties are inability to trust, fear of intimacy, depression, suicidal ideation and other self-destructive behaviour, low self-esteem, guilt, anger, isolation and drug or alcohol addictions. Some of these signs are highlighted in our study: fear of intimacy (72%), loss of trust in men (68%), loss of self-esteem (60%) and vaginismus (28%).

In conclusion, it is clear from this study that childhood sexual abuse is not a rare phenomenon among Rwandan female students and could be a real public health problem considering its magnitude and consequences. Therefore it would be judicious for governments to offset the outbreak of this scourge and researchers should conduct more thorough studies.

Session 8c Girls and Secondary Schooling
Moderator: Aloys Mahwa, MSc, Executive Director, Interdisciplinary Genocide Studies Centre

FAWE Rwanda: Supporting Girls and Women to Acquire Education for Development—Josephine Kobusingye*, Program Officer, FAWE

What is the Forum for African Women Educationalists-Rwanda chapter?
FAWE-Rwanda was started as a branch of the mother organization, FAWE Regional, whose headquarters are in Nairobi, Kenya. The organization’s goal is to help girls and women acquire education for development. It is well attuned to the multitude of socio-cultural factors that hamper the progress of girls and women in education:
• Economic constraints
• Negative socio-cultural attitudes
• Lack of stamina, ambition and self-assertiveness on the part of some girls and women
• Little support from some teachers and/or parents who are not gender sensitized

As a result, girls need special support and carefully planned strategies and programs, constituting affirmative action, that can help them access education, especially in those professions and occupations in which women are marginalized. Rwanda has made a good deal of progress in that 96% of children are enrolled in primary school, and girls are 52% of those enrolled. The challenge is to retain these girls in school to the completion of their education, to make sure they perform up to the level of their full abilities, and to ensure that they train for a wide variety of fields, not just those conventionally associated with women.
• In 1996, attendance at tertiary institutions in Rwanda was 83% male and 17% female.
Accordingly, FAWE-Rwanda has three main goals:
• To build a strong basis for the development of a critical mass of Rwandan women’s leadership
• To advocate for policy reforms that favour increased access of girls and women into diversified professional fields, especially scientific domains
To empower girls academically and professionally so that they may participate effectively in national development

**Areas of intervention: FAWE-Rwanda has six strategic objectives:**

- Policy influencing
- Advocacy and communication: bi-monthly radio program, website, newsletters, and partnerships with organizations such as UNICEF
- Demonstration of “best practices”:
  - *Tuseme* (speak out) process, which helps girls and boys to identify problems that hinder their education and to propose solutions through drama, music, and poetry
  - Scholarships sponsoring 10,000 students through many projects
  - Mentoring project in which university women are trained to mentor their sisters in secondary schools
- Replication and mainstreaming:
  - FAWE Girls’ School, Kigali to promote female education at the secondary school level by increasing the number of school places for girls and by providing a conducive learning environment. A second Center of Excellence was constructed in Kayonza district Eastern Province.
  - The *Tuseme* process, currently in 52 primary schools, is being expanded to more schools in Rwanda.
- Capacity building for the FAWE secretariat and local leaders
- Monitoring and evaluation of all the interventions

**Achievements**

- Participated in the formulation of GoR’s Girls’ Education Policy
- Participated in the development of the Teacher Management Policy
- Participated in the formulation of the Education for All national plan and coordinated the gender disparity group
- Participated in the mainstreaming of gender perspective in those policies
- Successful advocacy of strong government and donor commitment to girls’ education
- FAWE’s scholarship program in 2010 alone enabled 145 beneficiary girls to go to public universities and 360 were qualified to go to private universities
- Mentoring program designed to help mentees helps the mentors too

**Way forward**

- Strengthen the Girls’ Empowerment Programs in secondary schools and at upper primary level to ensure increased performance and higher achievement among girls.
- Strengthen the Scholarship and Mentoring Programs for needy girls by encouraging more partners to participate.
- Advocate for and participate in the scaling up of the Science, Mathematics and Technology program.

**Challenges**

- Resources are scarce
- Demand for FAWE-Rwanda’s help is growing among vulnerable girls as awareness of the importance of education for girls becomes widespread
- Removal of the living allowance for university students is going to affect the otherwise increasing number of girls entering university
Girls’ Education as Seen by a School Inspector—Francoise Uwumukiza*, Rwanda Education Board, Education Quality and Standards Department, Eastern Province

Role of the Pedagogical Inspector
The Inspector’s overall responsibilities are concerned with students’ access to education, and their retention in and completion of a quality education. This involves:
• Preparing educational standards and monitoring their implementation
• Disseminating education policy, laws governing education and other decisions relating to education, and monitoring their implementation
• Providing schools with advice on how to solve problems that arise
• Ensuring the crosscutting issues in Rwanda, gender (encouragement of self-esteem and advice on avoiding undesired pregnancies), health and environment, HIV/AIDS, and ICT, are being taken into consideration

To be checked during school visits
• Do all children of school age have access?
• What is occurring with the drop-out rate for boys and girls?
• What can be done to ensure a better completion rate in that school?
• Prevention of any sort of discrimination, injustice, or genocide ideology in the school
• Attention also to ensure that crosscutting issues are taken into account

Girl students’ issues
Most girls’ issues relate to family background and to problems that come up as girls enter adolescence. When a girl is herself the householder, striving to care for younger sisters and brothers, she is struggling to help them survive and to find school fees for them all. Some girls simply give up their own studies, and others find that the only way out is to have sex with anyone able to provide for her needs.

Even if they are not orphans, many girls interrupt their schooling monthly because of menstruation issues. If the school lacks a girls’ room or other facilities where a girl can take care of hygiene needs in privacy or rest if she feels pain, then the only option seems to be to stay home several days each month.

Helpful initiatives and practices in regard to the retention of girls in school
• In some schools, girls are given what they need (sanitary pads, access to a single sex bathroom) to make it easier for them to stay in school during their menstrual periods
• It helps to escort girls to and from their schools so that men and boys who are likely to tempt them may not find any opportunity
• Explicit encouragement of girls’ self-confidence, and for their participation in boy-dominated activities, such as ICT literacy, sciences, sport activities (e.g. soccer, which has been labeled as a “male sport”) etc.
• The creation of speak out clubs (Tusemi) and African and Rwandan identity clubs
• At least 30% of the authority figures running the school should be women or girls
• Affirmative action for girls considered in regard to contextualizing examination scores
Session 9a Women’s Health Issues

Moderator: Prof. Benjamin Kalui, Senior Lecturer, Social Sciences, KIE, Member, CGCD Council


Disclaimer: All written work, views and opinions in this presentation are solely Rachel Gold-Brown’s and do not belong to the US Government or Peace Corps

Sex work and HIV/AIDS

Globally, sex work has been recognized as an important factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS. Poverty and the consequences of major local or regional crises are factors pushing women around the world into sex work to generate income. Financial dependence on men, inequitable power relationships, and violent intimate relationships for women around the world heighten their vulnerability to infection due to constraints in condom negotiation, and norms and expectations of partner fidelity.

HIV in Rwanda

In Rwanda, HIV prevalence in the general population aged 15-49 is 3%. HIV prevalence in urban areas at 7.3% is much higher than in rural areas at a low of 2.2%, and HIV prevalence in women (3.6%) is significantly higher than in men at 2.3%. Most at risk population for HIV infections are HIV sero-discordant couples (2.2% of heterosexual couples are HIV positive); commercial sex workers (although the extent of the commercial sex industry remains difficult to characterize in Rwanda). Urban sites outside of Kigali show an apparent rise in HIV prevalence between 2005 and 2007.

Outside of Kigali, the Western Province has the highest HIV prevalence, possibly owing to economic opportunity for men stemming from the tea plantations and from commerce around Lake Kivu. Kamembe city is a major transportation route and hub for truck drivers transporting goods throughout the region. A high frequency of migration takes place at the four border crossings present in Rusizi district.

Sex work in Kamembe city, Rusizi district

The 1994 genocide against the Tutsi devastated Rwanda’s social, political, and economic institutions. The country’s already existing economic and health problems were exacerbated. Post-traumatic stress disorder was widespread, and people’s health in general was compromised. The numbers of widows and orphans increased markedly. Conditions were ideal both for the growth of sex work and for the vulnerability of those who engaged in the work. Based on the presenter’s work with 45 female sex workers in Kamembe city, Rusizi, she has concluded that women entered the field at relatively young ages, either by being introduced by other women to it as a way to make money or because they had been raped. Women’s poverty and lack of opportunities, their lack of education and their responsibility for children and siblings all contributed to their remaining in sex work.

In Kamembe, sex work practice is not organized. There is not a significant proportion of street-based female sex workers. Through the use of seasonal calendars,
and participatory assessment approaches, this study suggests that sex work is done part-time or on a seasonal basis. Although all sex workers admit to having regular customers with whom they have intimate relationships, they are generally a mobile group and change their activities at any given time.

The context of sex work introduces harms such as violence, sexual abuse, infection, poor self-esteem and mental health issues for this group. Street-based sex workers often experience victimization, because they are alone roaming the streets at night. They all categorize their experience at night as “very cold.” The majority of the women also maintain that client alcohol use makes it even more difficult to negotiate condom use, and they do experience higher rates of abuse from drunken clients. They are aware that their own alcohol use impairs judgment and decreases their ability to engage in safe sex and/or increases the possibility of forced sex and violence.

**Condom usage**

All women have shown knowledge and skills in proper condom use as conducted by condom promotion and education activities engaged in together with the presenter using Population Services International (PSI) Agakingirizo ni Ingabo Ikomeye! (ABC) activities, which provide condom demonstrations, visual boards and pamphlets. Women who have admitted their health status as HIV positive have been tested in the past 12 months and are receiving regular ART from their local health centres. All women receive the basic care packages and treatments available to them, which contribute to their health and willingness to carry on. However, a small portion of women continues to hold misconceptions about sex and reproductive health practices.

Not all the onus for condom use should be placed on the shoulders of sex workers. Interventions should be made at local levels to address condom use amongst the male population; addressing violence and alcohol use as well through local programs would be useful for reducing the transmission of HIV in such border towns as Kamembe, Rusizi. According to the Rwandan National Policy on Condoms, “Prevention and contraception are most effective when serving the combined education and behaviour change, condoms can be a powerful and cost-effective antidote to HIV/AIDS. Therefore it is also recommended that condoms and educational posters should be available and respectively viewable in the places where most sex worker to client initiations are made.”

**Empowering sex workers to make changes in their lives**

HIV care programs need to include holistic methods and practices that include and consider female sex workers’ mental health and empowerment. There is a need to build on sex workers’ strengths and involve them in designing individual level, community, and structural interventions that could help in reducing women’s vulnerability to intimate partner violence and HIV in Rwanda. Using participatory assessment tools (individual interviews based on an in-depth questionnaire, followed by meetings of a group of sex workers desirous of changing their lives), the presenter ascertained that the women’s needs were to develop a support group, micro-lending program, and income generating activity to provide options and other sources of income.
Through weekly meetings to assess the groups’ needs and group discussions, the women have begun to see themselves as a support group with the potential to become a productive cooperative. They are aware of how they are viewed in society; as sex workers and as HIV positive, they are stigmatized by the community in which they live. Indeed, sex workers are often discriminated against in access to other development programs such as income generation, adult education, and education for their children.

Their inability to integrate into their community means that they are unable to get respectable employment or to generate adequate income to provide for their families. They do not know of any other work that will provide them enough means to support their families, and the children they care for. They stated: “We want to change, are willing to change but do not know where to start.” They believe if they can begin to do some sewing and art activities (such as jewelry making) they would stop sex work and focus on creating an income-generating business as a group.

Since the first intervention, the women have made significant progress in organizing themselves, micro-lending, and participating in group activities. They have come to believe that they can learn new skills, and will gain the power to change, to help others and to earn the respect of other people in the community. All of them are now interested in the Savings and Credit Cooperative Office (SACCO) savings program and are currently working on micro-lending activities to contribute to their first savings account. This group has great potential to develop a productive business with the right interventions, such as comprehensive programming that includes empowerment, leadership, literacy, mental health, business development activities that will in effect educate them on care and prevention methods and reduce the transmission of HIV. It would help significantly if the women were to be made aware of the business development funds available in Rwanda for women wishing to start businesses.

_Rwandan Women’s Health: An Update_—Agnes Binagwaho, MD, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health. Government of Rwanda

**Government policies and strategies affecting health care for women**

There are key government initiatives that underpin current programs to improve the health of Rwandan women and children:

• *Health Sector Policy*, in recognition of the dramatic declines in the health and mortality profiles of the population in the years following the genocide of 1994, the Government laid down major policy objectives for the health sector, including improving the availability of quality drugs and vaccines, expanding geographical accessibility to health services, improving the financial accessibility to health services, and improving the quality of and demand for services in the control of disease

• *National Policy on HIV and AIDS*, emphasizes the gender rather than the female dimension of HIV/AIDS, despite women’s greater exposure to the disease, in order to create a family-based approach to prevention and treatment and thus gain the involvement of men

• *EDPRS* includes an aspect entitled “Sustainable Growth for Jobs and Exports,” a key component of which is improving the health care infrastructure so as to maximize
preventative health measures and build the capacity to have high quality and accessible health care services for the entire population
- *Poverty Reduction*, because of the strict correlation between poverty and the leading causes of death in Rwanda: infant death, HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB, maternal mortality (higher rates than from HIV/AIDS)
- *Gender Budgeting*, which is a critical tool for mainstreaming gender into policy implementation

**What has been accomplished thus far?**
- Election of community health workers: three in each village—a man and woman for general health issues and a woman for health matters specific to women
- Most health care is given at the local level, but MOH is careful to provide all services countrywide
- 95% of Rwandans have health insurance
- There is a high participation rate in antenatal testing for HIV and in access to ART (by husbands too)
- The maternal mortality rate spiked in the years immediately following the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994, but has come down to 350 per 100,000 women, with an immediate goal of reduction to 153/100,000
- An increasing percentage—now 60%—of women deliver their babies in health services facilities with TBAs
- Concerted effort are made to have women attend all four prescribed antenatal clinic visits
- Infant mortality rates are dropping too, owing to highly effective, almost universal immunization rates for childhood diseases
- Village health workers have been trained to administer antibiotics (packaged in dosages keyed to the age of patients) to infants especially, to avoid infections that can kill infants overnight. If there is no improvement by next day, the infant is sent to district hospital
- Village health workers use SMS to report disturbing health incidents or trends to MoH
Session 9b  Gendering Governance

Moderator: Prof. Jennifer Fish, PhD, Head of Women’s Studies, ODU

Engendering Development Planning in Decentralized Entities: Lessons from the SNV-UNDP Partnership in Rwanda—Béatrice Mukasine, SNV Rwanda; Antoinette Uwimana, SNV Rwanda; Oswald Iyabuze Christian, JADF Permanent Secretary at Ngororero district

Discussant: John Mutamba, UNWomen

Background

The evaluation of the first phase of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) that Rwanda implemented in 2002-2006, revealed that gender was not adequately taken into consideration in the PRSP design and processes. Recommendations regarding policy priorities and budget commitments for gender equity were not sufficiently incorporated into sectors’ priorities. There was not yet a culture of tracking gender-disaggregated data in order for policy makers and civil society to be able to identify the differential impact of development activities, policies and service delivery on both men and women. In most cases, gender issues were not included in the districts’ plans and no clear budget commitments about gender equality were made.

The reasons behind the lack of gender integration were, among other factors, attitudes, low capacity to plan, and an inadequate monitoring framework. Phase two of PRSP, known as EDPRS, recommended that extra efforts on gender were needed during the implementation phase, as well as partnering with decentralized levels.

As a response, the Activity Agreement 4 (AA4) 2008-2010 project, which was initiated by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV Rwanda), committed to assist the gender mainstreaming efforts at district level. An extensive network of partnerships was formed: UNDP and SNV Rwanda collaborated with Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, United Nations Capital Development Fund, MIGEPROM, UNIFEM and NAWOCO to implement the AA4 project.

Rationale

These partnerships made sense on many levels and were an acknowledgment of the complexity of gender mainstreaming. SNV Rwanda and UNDP were key partners with GoR in the development of EDPRS during 2007, especially in ensuring that gender was integrated as a crosscutting issue. The Decentralization Implementation Strategy, a central emphasis of GoR, emphasizes the integration of gender in DDPs. Global funding partners were determined to support GoR to achieve its goals of gender equality, a pillar of Vision 2020, EDPRS and its international commitments. They also supported the project’s aim to localize the MDGs, in particular MDG 3: gender equality and women's empowerment.

The aim of the AA4 project in Rwanda was to contribute to capacity enhancement of district officials to be able to effectively mainstream gender in DDPs
and practices. Another goal was to enhance participation of civil society in decision-making, ensure accountability, and promote gender equality.

The project was designed to achieve the following outputs:
• Improved baseline information on gender in five districts (Nyarugenge, Musanze, Bugesera, Ngororero, and Nyamagabe)
• Improved integration of gender-based analysis into the EDPRS district policies and plans
• Improved implementation and monitoring of gender sensitive EDPRS district plans
• Increased understanding of gender issues amongst the population in districts

**Actions**
• Setting up of a steering committee of the various units and organizations involved
• A gender survey methodology was developed and a Gender Baseline Survey conducted
• The survey established the existence of good practices at district level in information sharing, HIV/AIDS prevention, campaigns to promote girls’ education, and the health insurance scheme
• The baseline survey report written in English was translated into Kinyarwanda for large distribution
• The project conducted various gender mainstreaming training involving women and men from districts (senior staff, local leaders, women’s council leaders, youth forum leaders etc) and stakeholders at central level
• The training topics included: gender concepts, gender analysis and planning, gender responsive planning and budgeting, gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation
• Training of trainers (district cadres and community workers) who in turn would train various categories of decision makers and implementers of DDPs
• With support of JADFs at district level, gender awareness campaigns to leaders from village level to district level were conducted
• The project developed a methodology and tools, and conducted a participatory Gender Audit.
• SNV and partners provided continuous support to districts in terms of facilitating participatory planning process
• Designing tools for collecting data for monitoring and evaluation of gender equality targets in DDPs (booklet available)

**Assessment of results**
• The District gained the capability to deliver on development objectives, through acquisition of necessary tools to develop gender sensitive plans
• The development of the sense of ownership with regard to plan developed, hence the goodwill required to implement them along with the capability to commit and act
• The documentation of gender practices helped to develop knowledge about practices, attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders on gender issues
• Districts are cautious during the recruitment processes to ensure gender parity, and district staff members are careful when working with partners to ensure every action observes gender balance
• Districts involved in the AA4 Project conducted training from village up to sector level to share knowledge with community members
• The creation of gender clubs, especially in VUP sectors
• Elaboration of strategies to combat GBV, targeting the police, local defence and the community (legal clinic)
• Economic empowerment projects targeting women, health, education, sanitation and pro-poor projects aimed at reducing the gender gaps

Way forward
• Undertake internal and external gender audits to guide recognition of best performing districts and individual units within a district
• The gender audit recommended including gender dimensions in the performance contracts that the districts sign with the President of the Republic each year, conducting gender audits regularly, and using the monitoring and evaluation tools that have been developed to ensure gender mainstreaming
• In order to capitalize on what was achieved, replicate and up-scale (discussions with different partners on how the project can be deepened or further extended to remaining districts)
• The scaling up phase would seek to go further, train professionals into gender mainstreaming, monitor gender mainstreaming inputs, processes and outputs and evaluate gender mainstreaming outcomes and impacts
• Set up a government-run project on gender equality in EDPRS implementation at district level, with the support of different partners to replicate project best practices

Closing Plenary Session: Looking to the Future
Moderator: Prof. Shirley K. Randell, AO, PhD, Director CGCD, KIE

Looking to the Future: Opportunities and Challenges in Policy Analysis, Research and Data Management for Gender Equality—Judith Kazaire, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, ProFemmes/Twese Hamwe

Introduction
Rwanda has made a substantial commitment in recent years to gender equality and empowerment of women. Many policies and programs are in place to promote gender equality, but it is apparent that the research and well-analyzed data required to formulate good policies are sometimes lacking.

Policy, legal and institutional frameworks
• The National Constitution of 2003 as amended to date
• International conventions ratified by Rwanda
• The national gender machinery
• The national gender policy
• Decentralization policy
• Girls education policy
• EDPRS, Vision 2020
• Other laws and commitments, e.g. draft GBV policy
**Strategic opportunities present**

• Political will at the highest level—and political stability—to promote gender equality
• Gender sensitive legal, policy and institutional frameworks in place (both international and national instruments)
• Large numbers of women in decision-making positions in the country (although their impact still needs to be measured)
• Decentralized administrative structures
• ICT-focused country
• Availability—for the time being—of many development partners
• International recognition as a gender sensitive country

**Challenges**

Many of these challenges have to do either with failure to communicate gender equality policies to all levels of society or with failure in the collection and analysis of data, leading to poor planning.

• Limited information on and awareness of the existing policies on the promotion of gender equality
• Ineffective coordination framework in implementation of overlapping initiatives and policies
• Absence of policy debates in public and civil society, i.e. possible lack of participatory approach in elaboration and implementation of policies that end up as gender insensitive
• Civil society organizations are not strong enough to demand accountability from the government
• Lack of gender equality indicators
• Lack of harmonized, published and gender-disaggregated data, which leads to poor planning, as well as lack of skilled and competent personnel on policy and data analysis
• Lack of regulatory impact assessment of existing policies in relation to timing and cost
• Poor research methodology leading to unrealistic data and ungendered planning and budgeting
• Lack of resources (human, financial and frequency) to collect regular and reliable data
• Existing research findings are not put to good use
• Lack of specific studies on gender issues, e.g. impact of unpaid care work done mostly by women

**Recommendations**

• Support national stakeholders to create awareness and disseminate existing policies
• Support relevant institutions to collect, analyze and disseminate gender-disaggregated data
• Conduct regular research and use existing research on gender issues to inform policies
• Conduct capacity development in data analysis and gender analytical skills, e.g. trainings, exchange visits, software
• Build capacity in gender responsive planning and budgeting
• Strengthen the coordination framework to bring together government, civil society, and development partners working in the gender domain
• Strengthen the capacity of relevant civil society organizations (CSOs)
• Support enhancement of policy debates from formulation, implementation phases to monitoring and evaluation phases at grassroots and national levels
• Support the elaboration/harmonization of gender equality indicators
• Facilitate community dialogue between men and women to change any negative attitudes towards gender equality

**Where to From Here? A Response to ‘Focus on Rwanda’**—Oda Gasinzigwa*, Chief Gender Monitor, Gender Monitoring Office

Speaking as a government official, the presenter promises that this conference will have an impact on the national gender machinery because of the questions raised and the research findings presented.

Thanks are due to the organizers of “Focus on Rwanda” and also to KIE for having the foresight to pioneer a gender studies centre and degree program. The conference and her experience as a student in the Master of Gender and Development program have reinforced her realization that research is needed to ensure that gender policies are properly formulated and implemented. Hearing beneficiaries of programs directed toward women was very important to her because it is not often that she hears their perspective. There were issues raised during the conference with which she and other government people were not so familiar. The session on creative writing was especially enjoyable and inspiring; it made her realize how important writing is in conveying people’s experiences and needs. An attention to writing can be applied to all government reports.

Where do we go from this successful conference? To begin with, it should be scaled up and taken to the communities. We all need to act on what was learned from the various sessions at the conference. We know now that there needs to be continuous assessment of the gender programs. And as Focus on Rwanda demonstrates, the coordination and sharing of information is vital to the success of those programs.

**Acknowledgements and Thanks**—Prof. Shirley Randell AO, PhD

CGCD would not have its long list of accomplishments in the two brief years of its existence were it not for its many partners, inside the country (the gender machinery, GoR and CSOs) and around the world. ODU was the first university to sign an MOU with the brand new Centre in 2009. When the Centre was asked with short notice to prepare an urgent application for a UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality in the Great Lakes Region, within three days 20 offers of support came in from around the world, amounting to USD 600,000 commitments in kind for joint research projects, conferences, faculty and
student exchanges, etc. UNESCO invited KIE to take up the Chair, however, delays at KIE over acceptance of the contract, and changes in staff in Paris meant that this advantageous offer for both KIE and Rwanda was not acted on. With its support for this conference, ODU is the first outside university to contribute actual dollars, thanks to the help of ODU Provost Carol Simpson. ODU’s Women’s Studies faculty members, Professor Jennifer Fish and Emeritus Professor Anita Fallman, have given their expertise, and many of their books to help the Centre get started. Prof. Anita has used her Fulbright Specialist Award to organize this conference and Prof. Jennifer has come with three of her graduate students to help in the final stages of organizing and to contribute their scholarship.

Let me extend thanks to all those who work with or volunteer at the Centre, either on an ongoing basis or for the duration of this conference. We could not manage without you. Thank you to those who served as moderators and recorders for this conference, and to those who gave papers. I can promise that with the 47 students in the Masters program, there are 47 individuals who will go on doing research on gender and that by 2012 there will be at least 45 original research theses that can be used to convince policy makers about how best to go forward in pursuing gender equality. Plans are already in hand to enroll annual cohorts of Masters students.

**Closing Remarks**—Prof. James Vuningoma, Vice-Rector Academic, KIE

KIE has been privileged to be a part of this historic conference and extends its thanks to ODU and the faculty from that institution who organized “Focus on Rwanda” in collaboration with CGCD.

KIE, the first university in Rwanda to include a centre for the study of gender, has had a dynamic relationship with the Centre and its founding director, Prof. Shirley Randell, with the university wishing to move cautiously on creating the Centre and its degree programs and Prof. Shirley insisting on moving ahead rapidly. Somehow a balance was struck. It was a challenge to initiate a Master’s program before there was an undergraduate degree to feed students into it. However, India offered models of M.A. programs at institutions without undergraduate courses of study. Furthermore there are so many university graduates working in various government ministries, international organizations and local NGOs focusing on issues of gender in Rwanda that a well-prepared cadre of potential Master’s students exists even without an undergraduate course of study. This conference has convinced the KIE administration that an undergraduate gender studies program is highly desirable.

“Focus on Rwanda” has helped put gender studies on the map in Rwanda. It has showed the viability of gender research at this institution and has given the Masters students a valuable opportunity to present their original gender research in a professional setting as an important part of their training.

Congratulations to all who were involved in this conference.
Conference Participants

Abakunzi Anne
Abbott Pamela
Ayinkamiye Spéciose
Asemota Olukemi
Bimenyimana Emmanuel
Binagwaho Agnes
Boost Emily
Bootsma Sandra
Buhigiro Jean Léonard
Buscaglia Ilaria
Christian Oswald Iyabuze
Clements Caitlin
Cyculinyana Philomene
Dearborn Davis Elizabeth
Dibanga Placide B.
Eck Savannah Lynn
Fellman Anita Clair
Fish Jennifer
Frydenlund Erika
Furaha Viviane
Gahima Betty
Gatera Frédéric
Gahongayire Liberata
Gasinziga Oda
Gold-Brown Rachel
Hafashimana Theophile
Haines Kate
Hilsdon Anne-Marie
Hirschauer Sabine
Hueschen Christina
Ingabire Julian Kayibanda
Igiraneza Grace
Kabarenzi Violet
Kakoma J.B.
Kalui Benjamin
Kaneza Natacha
Kazaire Judith
Kazimba Shamsi
Kersten Stephany
Kobusingye Josepheine
Kolbusa Stefanie
Londorf Maja Haals
Mahuku Rachel M.
Mahwa Aloys
Makuza Jules Sebahizi
Maringa Leah
Mategeko Betty
Mugume Peter
Muganza Angelina
Mujawamariya Jeanne d’Arc
Mukarugambwa Florida
Mukasine Béatrice
Mukunde Eugenie
Munyamaliza Edouard
Murekezi Josephine
Mutamba John
Mwenzangu Gorret
Njoroge George K.
Nkubana Janet
Ntwali Patrick
Nyiramuzima Odette
Nyiraneza Spéciose
Randell Shirley K.
Rwiza Linda
Samek Dinah
Schmidt Monique
Shalita Nina
Sifa Seraphina Bayingana
Slater Lee
Steinhart Edward
Tukahabua Dorothy
Uwimpuhwe Sidonie
Umulisa Henriette
Uwimana Antoinette
Uwumukiza Francoise
Vogt Melissa
Vuningoma James
Williams Kemi
The Minister for Gender and Family Promotion after her address at the opening session with representatives from the two sponsoring universities: Prof. Shirley Randell, AO, PhD, Founding Director of CGCD, Savannah Eck, graduate student, ODU, Prof. Jennifer Fish, Head of Women’s Studies, ODU, the Hon. Jeanne D’Arc Mujawamariya, PhD, then Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, ODU Emeritus Prof. Anita Fellman, Fulbright Specialist, Erika Frydenlund and Sabine Hirschauer, graduate students, ODU

Melissa Vogt, Organizer Extraordinaire and Anne Abakunzi, Facilitator