

Rwanda Women's Network, Kigali

RWN's focus is to promote women's empowerment by strengthening strategies that empower Rwandan women through DIVERSE APPROACHES, including Health Care, Education, Prevention of Gender-based Violence, Leadership, and Financial Empowerment. They operate in 17 centres throughout Rwanda. <https://rwandawomennetwork.org/>

Example 1: Lydia Busingye is a young woman who was kidnapped and subjected to sexual abuse at the age of thirteen. One of the most important lessons from the program is an African proverb that was shared during training; "if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." According to Lydia, the proverb reinforces the importance of working together and supporting one another as women in pursuing our dreams," and the capacity women have to be leaders that can contribute to meaningful change and development in society. She also learnt the importance of self-love, care, protection/safety of women and girls in any environment. Rwanda has the highest Parliamentary representation of women (64%) in the world.



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Example 2: RWN participates in the UN's SAVE80 programme,



which replaces traditional cooking fires that waste scarce and expensive firewood and charcoal, with highly efficient stoves using 80% less wood. Using the improved cook stove helps families to consume less fuel and thus save money. Family health improves since less smoke is emitted by the efficient cook stoves. (The WHO estimates that every year indoor air pollution causes the early death of about 12,500 people, especially of women and children, in Rwanda.) Households save time that would otherwise be spent on collecting wood or long hours of cooking. The Save80 can save 2.5 hours for cooking beans and 20

minutes for rice and potatoes. The reduced demand for firewood will decrease pressure on forests and reduce deforestation. The programme thus contributes to the country's vision to reduce the rate of wood use in national energy consumption from 94% to 50% by the year 2020. **Over 100 jobs have been created for stove constructors, distributors and project managers.**

[Note1: At the African Grandmothers' Gathering in 2010, Rwandan grandmothers told the most harrowing stories we heard, yet danced with the most joyful abandon at the celebratory banquet. Amazing women!

Note 2: Did you know that the book "Baking Cakes in Kigali" is available from the VG4A Library?]

Stage 2 #2, prepared by Lisbie Rae of the VG4A Education Working Group
Rwanda Women's Network is a community-based organization (CBO) partnered by The Stephen Lewis Foundation.

