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ACRONYMS

AESD : Actions des Eglises Evangélique pour la promotion du Développent
AJPRODHO : Association de la Jeunesse pour la Promotion des Droits de l’Homme et le Développement
ARDHO : Association Rwandaise pour la Défense des Droits de l’Homme
BCC : Behaviour Change Communication
CAs : Community Activists
CHW : Community Health Workers
CSC : Community Score Card
CSOs : Civil Society Organizations
CSW 63 : Commission of the Status of Women
DDS : District Development Strategy
EDV : END Domestic Violence
ES : Executive Secretary
ETR : End Time Review
FBOs : Faith Based Organizations
FVA : Faith Victory Association
GBV : Gender Based Violence
GEWEP : Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Program
GFPPs : Gender Focal Point Persons
GMO : Gender Monitoring Office
GS : Groupe Scolaire
HDI : Health Development Initiative
HRBA : Human Rights-Based Approach
IOSC : Isange One Stop Centre
IZ : Inteko Z’Abaturage
JADF : Joint Action District Forum
MAJ : Maison d’actions Judiciaires
M&E : Monitoring and Evaluation
ME : Men Engage
MIGEPROF : Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINALOC : Ministry of Local Government
MoH : Ministry of Health
NPA : Norwegian Peoples’ Aid
During the year 2019, RWAMREC achieved important milestones in the framework of implementing strategic interventions to end gender-based violence. As a civil society organization, we uphold our commitment of being active partners with the Government of Rwanda in promoting development programs. We acknowledge that it wouldn’t have been possible to reach our milestones without the support of our funders, implementing partners and other stakeholders. We are grateful to our beneficiaries whose plight has kept us focused to our cause of empowering men and women to end gender-based violence.

In this report, you will read about milestones captured in statistics. You will read testimonies of men and women whose lives have changed for the better after being empowered through RWAMREC’s programs. You will read about boys and girls who have been able to confront their deeply held gender biases and are, at a much younger age contributing towards building families and communities that are free of gender violence. You will read about women who have broken gender barriers to become leaders, drivers and hold other positions and contribute to the development of families, communities and the nation. Behind every achievement captured in statistics, there are stories of family and community transformation. This is a true testament that the aggregate evidences of transformations at family and community levels lay a solid and sustained transformation for Rwanda.

For us at RWAMREC, the challenges highlighted in this report provide us the energy to double or efforts, well knowing that ending gender-based violence is not an event but a journey. It’s a journey that calls us all to standup for what is right! It a journey that calls every one of us, including you the readers, to critically interrogate what you are doing to end gender-based violence in your neighborhood, community or other spheres where you have power and influence. Whether you have just started or are far off into the journey, it’s a journey that calls for persistence and unity toward the destination- gender-violence free communities and nations where women and men, girls and boys have access to resources and thrive together. Thank you all for your support during the past and present. Thank you for selflessly supporting us with resources for a sustained future.
The successful Implementation of RWAMREC’s projects during the year 2019 is result of unequalled commitment from RWAMREC Members, our field and support staff, the timely and critical feedback from our stakeholders and continued support and dedication from our partners. To all these, we express our sincere gratitude. Whereas we cannot mention everyone whose support has made our work possible, we would like to acknowledge the following:

First of all we are grateful to donors and implementing agencies for their financial, technical and logistical support and for providing necessary guidance during the process of projects implementation.

We are also grateful to our research teams and critical readers for providing us with expertise, and technical support towards the achievement of the various project milestones.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to our community volunteers (Imboni) and other individuals or groups who devoted their time and knowledge in the implementation of our projects.

Last but not least, we are honored by the honest and dedication of our project beneficiaries. Their resilience and dedication to community transformation remains one of the most important sources of our motivation for continued work. Their stories of change demonstrate the incredible transformative power education that fosters equality for the betterment of humanity.
1. WHO WE ARE

RWAMREC is a local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) created in 2006 to respond to an existing need for mechanisms and strategies to fight inequalities between men and women that proved to trigger Gender-Based Violence (GBV). It was created following an alarming situation of men perpetrating violence against women and children. After the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, the government of Rwanda initiated programs and projects aiming at empowering women as a strategy for their full participation to the rebuilding of the country. RWAMREC came into force to bring its contribution to ongoing national efforts to fight GBV through promoting positive forms of masculinities, engaging men as positive and supportive partners; and strengthening strategic partnerships between women and men.

Since its creation, RWAMREC has been implementing programmes that contribute to its vision and mission. RWAMREC works with public institutions, schools, refugee camps and communities to disseminate the male engagement approach that helps men to become caring and positive fathers, supportive of gender equality and women’s empowerment at family and community level.

Our work is made possible by a team of skilled, energetic and committed staff who upload RWAMREC’s principles for nurturing a just world.
1.1 Our Vision
We believe in a peaceful Rwandan society where women and men share roles and responsibilities of raising families and governing society in equality and respect of human rights.

1.2 Our Mission
To promote gender equality through reconstruction of a non-violent identity of men, adoption of healthy masculine behaviors and empowering men to be positive and supportive partners, role models for other men and change agents in promoting healthy families and women’s socio-economic development, eradication of sexual and gender-based violence, positive fatherhood and men’s health in Rwanda. To achieve this mission, RWAMREC engages in long-term development work and seeks to address the root causes of gender inequality.

1.3 Our Core Values
- Men are naturally loving, caring and sensitive; and may practice compassion and non-violence.
- Powerful men do not need to hurt or blame others.
- Men of quality do not fear equality.
- There are non-violent, non-abusive and non-controlling means of solving problems and conflicts.

1.4 Our Core Principles
- Building and sustaining relationships based on respect and equality
- Speaking out against violence
- Having the strength to advocate for family health
- Participating in shared decision-making/shared power
- Endorsing equitable division of labor
- Acknowledging human rights

1.5. Our Objectives
- To establish a men’s resource centre that builds people and organizations’ capacities to prevent gender-based violence through MenEngage Approaches
- To promote men’s positive attitudes and behaviors towards non-violence and gender equality practices in Rwanda
- To building partnerships and synergies between men and women for effective promotion of healthy families
- To engage in effective policy advocacy with strategic actors and partners for gender transformative agendas
- To provide general and useful resources through action oriented research and documentation on masculinities and GBV

1.6. Our interventions
- Community empowerment
- Health families
- Institutional capacity development
- Gender justice
- Child support and youth mentorship
1.7. Our approaches/Models

- Parental Evening Dialogue (PED)
- Youth 4 change Forum
- Community Score Card
- Journal of Transformation (JOT)
- Bandebereho

1.8. Our Development Partners

RWAMREC believes in working with others to achieve enormous impact. The grassroot communities, Government Ministries and agencies, other local NGOs, private sector, international NGOs and others.

2. Where we operate

![Map showing areas of operation in Rwanda, Uganda, DR Congo, and Tanzania]
Direct Beneficiaries in 2019

Total beneficiaries
14,682

Female
7,488

Male
7,194

% of Beneficiaries by sex

TWICECEKA:
300 (Students, youth out of school, Teens Mothers and Mothers of Teens Mothers)

EDV:
543 Gender Focal Persons, Anti-GBV Community Structure and PED

Bandebereho Scale Up
432 CHWs

RGB:
180 Students

GEWEP 11
5,400 Couples and community Activists

Prevention +:
7,827 School Clubs, Teachers and PED
Snapshot of achievements’

Key:

- Beneficiaries attended community Score and HRPA Care Meetings. They raised community GBV issues and held leaders accountable.
- PED supported families. Leaders became aware of problems affecting citizens.
- Local Leaders at Sector levels actively resolved GBV related issues.
- Men Engage clubs supported to develop a common understanding on their role in preventing GBV
- Opinion Leaders trained on gender, power and sexuality to support Community Activists
- Community Activists trained on activism skills in Rulindo District to support families
- GFFPs trained on use of community score cards for greater support of PED in Rulindo District
2.3. Overview of Projects implemented in 2019 and their achievements.

2.3.1. Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Program Phase Two (GEWEP II)

This is a 5-year women empowerment program that was launched in 2016 and is expected to end during the year 2020. This project was implemented by RWAMREC in partnership with Care International Rwanda. This Program covers all 8 districts of the Southern Province: Kamonyi, Muhanga, Ruhango, Nyanza, Huye, Gitarama, Nyamagabe, and Nyaruguru. This program mainly focuses on engaging men to support women empowerment strategies through an Activism Model to enable the community to understand and play their role in preventing Gender Based Violence (GBV).

RWAMREC works closely with Community Activists (CAs) from existing MenEngage (ME) clubs selected based on a set of criteria. These CAs conducted a range of activities in their respective communities aimed at preventing GBV and promoting the role of men in gender equality and women empowerment.

Achievements of GEWEP II in 2019

320 Community activists acquired skills to conduct Support and Action to community members using appropriate tools

320 CAs (157 males and 163 females) from sixteen sectors were trained on new activism skills with new activism phases which are support and action. The skills acquired from the training enhanced CAs capacity to use posters as an effective tool for community training.

One of the trained CAs expressed the effectiveness of using posters and how posters were an effective tool in conducting his work as captured in the next quote.

“It is hard to talk to men especially when you talk about GBV, but since we began using posters, some of them expressed that these posters depicted what they did in their daily lives, and they see themselves as actors described on posters” ... Posters help me as CA to reach more community members. Some men came to my
home after seeing posters to request support about fighting GBV”. Jean Bosco RUKUNDO, a CA from Ngoma sector, Nyaruguru District

It should be noted that Posters have been an effective training tool because couples have been able to relate to messages and pictures on posters to experiences in their lives. This allows for discussions in a less threatening social environment, especially on sensitive gender related issues.

Opinion leaders have been equipped with skills to support CAs and also fight gender based violence.

Through trainings, GEWEP II has built the capacity of 320 opinion leaders to support CAs with required skills as well be active agents of change in their respective communities. Participants increased their knowledge on gender rights and realities, power and sexuality. Participants reflected on how they can implement positive gender roles and how they can help their communities change attitudes related to negative masculinities.

Testimonies from leaders attest to the heightened awareness as expressed by a church leader in the next quote:

The training has been an opportunity to identify resources that are not successfully utilized to challenge negative attitude in my church. To make it more sustainable, I think we will need to engage youth to help them know the importance of balancing power at early age. Those who are planning to get married will be my priority.~ Musonera Edison is an Evangelist from the 7th Day Adventists Church in CYANIKA Sector of Nyamagabe District.

Another leader expressed:
Sometimes we as women are not aware of our rights. I don’t think we will need to wait for our husbands to allow us to enjoy our rights. We should break the silence, and support them to reflect in a constructive way without positioning ourselves as beneficiaries or victims, but rather as partners.~ A national women Council representative, Shyogwe Sector in Muhanga District.
476 Community Activists and field officers shared best practices and way forward to in creating GBV-free societies during monthly reflection meetings.

476 CAs (315 males and 161 females) from 16 sectors under community activism participated in monthly meetings. The monthly meetings have been a good framework to share experiences, best practices and challenges among CAs. It has also been an opportunity to report about their achievements and plan for subsequent interventions. Community activists have proved to be an effective force in creating a gender positive environment especially in the rural hard to reach areas.

Testimonies from Couples who received support attest to the incredible transformation regarding gender relationships between men and women as evidenced in the next testimony:

We had separated because of economic reasons. My husband was keeping all family wealth to himself. I felt I was being cheated so I decided to leave my marriage. The local leaders and members of the extended family all tried to reconcile us but failed to resolve the conflict. Then I learnt of Madeline (RWAMREC mentor) who was helping couples to reconcile. I presented my case in a PED meeting and being my village mentor, Madeline was tasked to solve it, which to my amazement my husband agreed with, and the conflict was resolved. My husband then sent our son back to school and the boy has now graduated from college.~ Mukaruziga Anastasie Female community member, Mubuga sector).

In addition to the positive stories of change, statistics also indicate a significant scope of men and women who had access to CA messages as indicated in the next graph

![Percentages of female and male and female community members who accessed CA messages in different Districts](image-url)
During the 2019 annual meeting, 301 opinion leaders and 319 CAs from 8 districts of southern province participated and exchanged experiences and strategies to resolve gender-based violence. It was revealed that whenever opinion leaders were trained, especially those at grassroots (Cell’s executive secretaries, village leaders, etc), they acquired appropriate skills to do their work and this motivated them. Community leaders also noted that their efforts are recognized by the community. as they utilize them and therefore the community has trust towards their interventions.

During annual meetings, participants shared best practice about the model they named “Community school of change” at cell level. This school of change model is a result of synergy created between local leaders and community activists. The idea of such a school resulted from the realisation that there was limited time for home visits vis a vis the number of couples in the community that needed support. Community School of change also provides opportunities for couples to adopt preventive measures to GBV especially after listening to testimonies of fellow couples.

One of the School leader’s commitment to fight Gender Violence in Schools:

*We will make GBV prevention our goal, more than ever before; we will support the creation of clubs in schools so that the lessons we were taught here reach our students from the youngest age possible; our students will also make it their goal and they will teach it to their friends and family members; so that a future free of GBV is prepared from now on.*

~The Director of ES Kirinda, Mr. Ruhumbya Mesack
MenEngage clubs have been supported to understand and implement their GBV-prevention activities

40 MenEngage clubs have been trained to ensure that they have a common understanding of their role in preventing GBV.

MenEngage clubs have developed a sustainability plan by involving other potential structures in the club activities such as NWC, Village and cell representatives, and religious leaders. Efforts to strengthen this plan are ongoing.

BCC Campaign competitions were held through International Family and Women’s day

16 BCC campaigns were conducted during the celebration of the International family and women’s day using the theme “let’s build the family we want.” In collaboration with districts, RWAMREC organized mass competitions in Huye and Nyaruguru districts. The campaign was conducted in thirteen sectors in Karongi.

In Huye and Nyaruguru districts, with support of sector authorities, RWAMREC mobilized masses of people to compete as performers in singing and drama to deliver messages through songs and sketches. The winner received an award of 30,000 frs (USD 33.3) for first place and 20,000 frs (USD 21.7) for second place. District officers delivered messages that called upon the community members to build safer families. Emphasis was placed on engaging men as allies to end GBV. Media was also used as a tool of mobilization during mass competitions. More than 800 men and women participated in these competitions.

A similar campaign was organized in Karongi District. The official celebration of the Women’s day campaign which took place in Murundi sector was attended by various officials including members of the parliament, representatives of the Police, the Army etc. This forum served as a space for the leaders to reaffirm the need for the integration of women into development initiatives.

During the official celebration, post women’s day gatherings were organized in all 13 sectors by the District officials working in collaboration with RWAMREC. The national women council and the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) conducted activities to assess the effective operationalization of the PED. Follow up was also made on the signed family performance contracts between the District and all Karongi households.

These campaigns gathered over 4,000 people.
The EDV Project was funded by Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) and started in 2012. Beginning from 2019, the project focused on strengthening prevention and response structures for ending gender-based violence in Rulindo District, particularly in seven sectors: Shyorongi, Bushoki, Base, Cyungo, Rukozo, Ntarabana and Burega. This project targeted the GBV prevention and response structures in Rulindo district: IZUs, Parents’ Evening Dialogue (PEDs), NWC/CNF, NYCs, councilors, and local leaders among others.

The overall goal of the EDV Project is Advocacy for effective implementation of the National Policy against Gender Based Violence by engaging Rulindo District and anti-GBV actors who include Government Bodies, CSOs, Community structure and sensitizing Citizens to hold leaders accountable on fighting GBV.

Achievements of EDV Project in 2019

Conducted training for 55 GFPPs on how to use community score cards

55 GFPPs were trained on using community score cards and have been able to facilitate Community score card exercises at cell and sector levels.

In Rulindo district, especially in 7 sectors of EDV implementation, the community score cards have been implemented together with PED and these initiatives have become normal community practices.

Conducted bi-monthly reflection meetings with 430 Gender Focal Point Persons (GFPPs)

430 GFPPs from 7 sectors shared experiences and challenges encountered during PED. Most importantly, GFPPs and other anti-GBV structures and leaders jointly agreed on a common approach to conduct and interpret community score cards in view of finding solutions to community problems.

69 GFPPs representatives were issued bags to be used to carry community score cards materials

Conducted bi monthly meetings with 111 Community Leaders from anti GBV structures.

111 Community Leaders were trained on the community score cards. These leaders increased their knowledge and skills on using community score cards and its relevance to solving community problems.

Leaders and structures are supportive with no resistance from leaders and collaboration of structures.
As a result, 243 issues were collected from community and submitted to sector for feedback. 80% of those issues received responses from sector level while others were submitted at the District Level for follow up.

**Gender Based Violence mobile clinic were Conducted**

One GBV mobile clinic was organized to raise awareness on the proper implementation of the national policy against GBV in Rulindo District. This meeting engaged different actors to respond to Gender Based Violence by creating space for dialogue between GBV service providers and local community. Through this interaction, community members received appropriate guidance and answers to their respective questions.

**Supported community score card sessions at cell level.**

Advancement of the community score cards was carried out in 27 cells in Rulindo District, the community score card sessions started on May 7th 2019 in some of the sectors were EDV is implementation. The official launch of the community score card use sessions was on May 21st, in 2019 in Rwamahwa cell, Base sector in Rulindo District, and was attended by 400 citizens. During this event the citizens and leaders gathered in INTEKO Z’ABATURAGE to jointly reflect on issues that affect the wellbeing of the community and devised strategies to mitigate or eradicate them when possible.

The guest of Honor to the aforementioned event was the Director of Good Governance, Rulindo District Mrs. Mutijima Jorithe who acknowledged RWAMREC’s contribution towards GBV prevention. She also her support to ensure that the community score card exercise succeeded in all sectors.

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<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>% of estimated people who participated in the campaigns</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
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<td>Estimates of people reached by RWAMREC</td>
<td>7,661</td>
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<td>Estimates of people planned to be reached by RWAMREC</td>
<td>8,752</td>
<td>3,450</td>
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2.3.3 Prevention+ Project

A five year programme funded by Promundo US that addresses inequalities between women and men by working with men as partners with women to be agents of change in promoting healthy masculinities. The programme is based on equality, caregiving, and non-violence. Its aim is to create a gender justice society by transforming harmful social norms that result in GBV and ensure that these changes are rooted in a legal system that support them. This project is implemented in Karongi District.

Conducted reflection meeting with 52 previously trained schools

Reflection meetings with the schools have been conducted to assess the operationalization of Anti-GVB clubs, the clubs’ action plans as well as gaps and challenges. Through the use of a planning and reporting tool provided by RWAMREC, all clubs are able to share monthly reports on their achievements with the in-charge of Education at sector level. This practice enhances proper monitoring to ensure achievements of club milestones. One female student expressed the impact of club activities on her behavior as captured in the following quote:

Prevention+ trainings have helped us girls to denounce gender based violence and to speak out freely and confidently in public. Wherever there is a students’ meeting, all students (boys and girls) expect me to be the one to speak first and to open the meeting. Boys are often curious to know my position on the issues at hand because they respect me. We have been taught safer sex education practices. This has given us the capacity to make right decisions in life. For example, we now know how to resist sexual advances from boys by controlling our feelings.~ Iradukunda Dancille (Student/Girl member of youth)

Conducted Inspection of PED during the monthly meetings

Every month (except for the month of April), Prevention+ field staff attended PED monthly meetings in 4 different villages to assess ongoing discussions. The main recommendation from these inspections has been the provision of a revised reporting format.

Examples of PED reporting journals
Conduct the training of Religious Leaders

Following MOUs signed with the Rwanda Religious Leaders Forum (RRLF) and the Action des Eglises Evangéliques pour la promotion de la santé et du development (AESD) to engage FBOs in GBV prevention and promotion of equal rights, RWAMREC organized a two-day training of religious leaders.

The first one, organized in Karongi in collaboration with the Gender Monitoring Office and RRLF targeted young religious leaders countrywide and was attended by 110 youth leaders. The second one organized in Nyamata simultaneously targeted national-level religious leaders and their partners. From trainings, participants developed a common understanding for the need of FBOs to be actively engaged in preventing abuse and discrimination, understanding gender and rights, as well as discussed future collaborations. A WhatsApp group was created for easy flow of information.

Participated in Accountability week

For three days, RWAMREC participated in the District’s accountability week showcasing the work done in Karongi around Prevention+. RWAMREC was awarded a certificate of merit for the work done; and was selected as the partner of Karongi District on resolving social/family issues.

Conducted Endtime Review /Operational Research

Following the M&E meeting organized in the Netherlands in Quarter 1 of 2019, RWAMREC developed a detailed plan and collected data for the ETR and operational research. Promundo has also produced guides for various data collection methods.

Prevention+ / Men Engage regional Advocacy meeting

Organized by MenEngage Global alliance in Ethiopia and gathering representatives of Prevention+ Technical Advocacy Group and MenEngage network; the meeting allowed for a mapping of existing entry points for advocacy at regional level and stakeholders/organs. In preparation for the Continental Advocacy strategy. RWAMREC was represented by its M&E officer and Programme Manager.

Participated in Women Deliver Conference

This meeting took place in Vancouver, Canada and was attended by RWAMREC Advocacy and Communications Officer; they presented a case study on Prevention+ work with PED to fight and prevent GBV in Rwanda. A presentation was also done on research findings from the Mencare+ Bandebereho project that sought to engage men in care-giving and unpaid care work.

Conducted National Advocacy

Following assessment on the implementation of the National Gender Policy and National Policy against GBV’ commitments towards the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1), District development strategies (DDS) and Sector Strategic Plans (SSP), completed by RWAMREC through the help of an external consultant, RWAMREC is now in the process of developing concept notes targeting...
individual sectors (Education, Health, Social Protection, Infrastructure, Governance, Justice & Rule of Law and Agriculture) these efforts are aimed at mainstreaming the MenEngage approach in GBV prevention programmes & budgets.

Developed monthly monitoring tools

To ensure the collection of reliable data from PED and Youth4change clubs, RWAMREC in collaboration with Karongi District developed monitoring tools to collect monthly outcomes from both groups. Collected data is stored in excel sheet data bank. This practice enables us to better appreciate successes and identify gaps so as to inform our coordination /advocacy meeting at district and sector level and future planning.

Organized and Conducted Partner meeting

A partners meeting was organized in Rwanda from May 14th-17th, 2019. This meeting was facilitated by an international external consultant and was attended by Country partners, the steering committee, a representative of the MenEngage Alliance and a representative of the Ministry of Gender. This meeting provided an occasion for RWAMREC to share experiences on the work done in Karongi through panel and round-table discussions/presentations with, and by the beneficiaries: (students, teachers, PED committee members) and District officials (Director of Education and in-Charge of Gender). The meeting further provided an opportunity for in-depth discussions around sustainability, institutionalization, accountability and the way forward for Prevention+. This was through experience sharing from implementing. A presentations from a representative of the MenEngage Alliance and panel discussions with the steering committee were key highlights of this event.

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<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<td>% of estimated people who participated in campaigns</td>
<td>115.9%</td>
<td>115.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated of people who were expected to be reached by RWAMREC</td>
<td>100,000</td>
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<td>60,000</td>
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2.3.4 Bandebereho Project

The Bandebereho Scale up Project is Funded by Promundo US, DFID through Promundo US and Saving Brains, Program P (Bandebereho in Rwanda) was designed to engage men and their partners in participatory small group sessions of critical reflection and dialogue, to prevent Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and promote maternal, newborn and child health, healthier couple relations, and more equitable and engaged caregiving.

This gender-transformative couples’ intervention targets expectant couples and parents of children under 5years. The intervention aims at creating safe spaces where fathers and mothers can receive valuable information, challenge unhealthy norms, and learn and practice new skills such as non-violent conflict resolution, couple communication, and co-parenting. For each cycle of Program P, a trained Community Health Worker (CHW) leads 17 weekly sessions with 12 couples (8 sessions for couples, 7 sessions for the men only) for a total of 45 intervention hours for men and 24 hours for women. Participants work towards nurturing harmonious and cooperative home environment.
The implementation of a new grant to scale up the Bandebereho project activities commenced in Musanze District in August 2019. Two cohorts of 299 elected Community Health facilitators [119 males and 180 females] have been trained. The trained CHWs facilitated trainings of selected couples using Program P approach. This 19 months’ project is targeting couples who have a child/children under five years old, a breast-feeding women and pregnant women in the family.

From the above graph, it can be observed that training targets were achieved across a range of training categories. These trainings had a positive impact for trainers regarding issues of gender and positive masculinities.

School leaders’ commitment to fight gender-based violence have a positive impact on students' development of positive gender behavior and roles. When interviewed, students expressed that they were empowered to take active roles and live healthy lifestyles.

From January to June 2019, RWAMREC conducted trainings for Boys and girls 4change club members in GS Rilima Catholique, GS Katarara, GS Mareba, Kamabuye and GS Kagasa located in Bugesera District. The objective of the training workshop was to strengthen the capacity of boys and girls in each school on gender equality, masculinities/femininities, SGBV and sexual and reproductive health. The trainings were also organized in GS Nkubi and GS Mubumbano located in Mukura sector of Huye district and in GS Kimisange and GS Mburabuturo located in Kicukiro sector of Kicukiro District.

Achievements of Bandebereho Projects

These projects’ overall goal was to engage boys as positive supporters of girls in ending early pregnancies in schools and surrounding Communities.

Achievements of TWICECEKA and RGB Project

Conducted trainings on Gender, Masculinities, SGB and SRH.

2.3.5. TWICECEKA and RGB Project

These projects’ overall goal was to engage boys as positive supporters of girls in ending early pregnancies in schools and surrounding Communities.
The training was on gender equality, men engagement, positive masculinities, gender-based violence, etc. The training workshops on gender equality, GBV, positive masculinity and femininity and sexual and reproductive health had a positive impact on both boys and girls at school, at home and even in the community. Self-confidence and self-esteem among girls increased and boys committed to change negative behaviours and attitudes towards girls, such as touching them on the back or breast, bullying them and asking them to have sex, etc. One of the girls explained how Prevention+ has empowered girls and boys to make right decisions:

Prevention+ trainings have helped us girls to denounce gender-based violence and to speak out freely and confidently in public. Wherever there is a

students’ meeting, all students (boys and girls) expect me to be the one to speak first and to open the meeting. Boys are often curious to know my position on the issues at hand because they respect me. We have been taught sex education to avoid unwanted pregnancies. This has helped us to develop power within which is the capacity to make right decisions in life. For example, we now know how to resist sexual advances from boys by controlling our feelings.~ Iradukunda Dancille, a girls Student and member of youth for change club, GS St. Joseph de Birambo.

In addition, with the knowledge acquired, boys and girls have been able to influence their peers. For example, a young girl in GS Rilima Catholique was able to influence her peer female friend to be self-confident and to adapt the right attitudes to counter bad behaviours.
The EDV project was funded by Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) and started in 2012. Beginning from 2019, the project focused on strengthening prevention and response structures for ending gender-based violence in Rulindo District, particularly in seven sectors: Shyorongi, Bushoki, Base, Cyungo, Rukozo, Ntarabana and Burega. This project targeted the GBV prevention and response structures in Rulindo district: IZUs, Parents’ Evening Dialogue (PEDs), NWC/CNF, NYCs, councilors, and local leaders among others.

The overall goal of EDV Project is Advocacy for effective implementation of the National Policy against Gender Based Violence by engaging Rulindo District and anti-GBV actors who include Government Bodies, CSOs, Community structure and sensitizing Citizens to hold leaders accountable on fighting GBV.

Achievements of EDV Project in 2019

Conducted training for 55 GFPPs on how to use community score cards

55 GFPPs were trained on using community score cards and have been able to facilitate Community score card exercises at cell and sector levels.

In Rulindo district, especially in 7 sectors of EDV implementation, the community score cards has been implemented together with PED and these initiatives have become normal community practices.

Conducted bi-monthly reflection meetings with 430 Gender Focal Point Persons (GFPPs)

430 GFPPs from 7 sectors shared experiences and challenges encountered during PED. Most importantly, GFPPs and other anti-GBV structures and leaders jointly agreed on a common approach to conduct and interpret community score cards in view of finding solutions to community problems.

The girl accepted the advice given to her by a trained girl and committed to say no to negative behaviours of boys. The quote below indicates increased self-confidence among girls:

*One day during holidays, a boy requested me to go to visit him and I refused. Another day, on the New Year day, he once again requested me to accompany him in order to buy a Soda for me, I refused once again. I told him that I am able to buy it by myself. The boy did not understand that.* ~ One of the mentored girls.

Further, boys adopted more positive behaviors at school and homes. For example, some boys used to stigmatize their fellow female students when they were in their menstrual periods and this at times caused girls to be absent at school. Currently, when girls experience menstrual periods, they are not harassed by their male classmates.

In addition, the trained boys and some of their colleagues enjoy participating in activities traditionally reserved for girls such as cooking, fetching water or cleaning the house/school, etc. This allows girls to have time to study because they are supported in domestic work by their brothers.

For the sustainability of acquired knowledge and skills, the training in both districts resulted in the creation of Twiceceka clubs in the targeted schools and to put in practice the commitments made. Club committees were elected and action plans were made.

Briefly, both boys and girls committed to desist any behaviours that could be cause to pregnancy in their respective schools. This would be mainly through sensitization in small groups at school and in the community.

**outreach Campaigns conducted with Boys/Girls 4change Club Members**

RWAMREC organized outreach campaigns in the communities surrounding the following schools: Rilima catholic, GS Katarara, Rilima, GS Mareba, Kamabuye, GS Kagasa. The objective of the activity was to raise awareness of gender issues leading to early pregnancies and take action to engage men and boys in the surrounding communities of these six schools.

During outreach campaigns, Boys/girls 4change club members presented dramas, poems and songs through which sexual violence perpetrated against young girls by men and boys was condemned. Through such forums, club members indicated that because men and young boys are part of the problem of teenage pregnancies, they have to be part of the solution as well.

**The cause of teenage pregnancies is not only poverty of parents as many think, but it is also the negative masculine behaviors that lead to sexual violence against girl.** ~ indicated Boys/girls 4Change club members in the drama "Itonde no hanze aha" (Be careful, outside is dangerous).

The carelessness of parents was also focused on through dramas, poems and songs presented by students. As results, boys and girls committed as peer partners to end early pregnancies and other forms of violence and to promote healthy adolescent relationships at
school and in the community.

Boys/girls 4change club members presenting a traditional dance during the campaign

Action research was Conducted on teenage pregnancy

RWAMREC conducted a participatory Action Research on attitudes, perceptions and needs of teenagers, teen mothers and community members toward teenage pregnancy to advocate for issues faced by teenagers. After conducting the research, the findings were presented in a meeting on June 27th, 2019, held at Lemigo Hotel.

Based on the key findings of the study, researchers developed a policy brief to advocate for key issues faced by teen mothers.

The following issues are being advocated for:

**Issue 1:**

Rejection by parents and limited access to existing social protection scheme based on Parents’ Ubudehe category. For this issue, the advocacy will be carried out in the MINALOC, MIGEPProf, MoH for the automatic qualification of teen mothers in the first Ubudehe category irrespective of the parents’ category.

**Issue 2:**

Ineffective community reintegration. This issue will also be advocated in MINALOC,

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Through RGB Project we reached the following targets.

Through TWICECEKA we reached the following targets.

The RWAMREC chairperson closing the meeting

The consultant presenting the report
MIGEPROF, MoH for the establishment of an operational community mechanism for successful reintegration of teen mothers into their families and communities

**3. Institutional Capacity Development**

This section highlights major achievements realized in developing the capacities of the staff and institutional development with the focus on ensuring effectiveness and efficiency.

**RWAMREC staff received professional development opportunities**

RWAMREC staff were trained on new policies, rules and regulation and different approaches used in RWAMREC Projects. during their activities implementation.

Through the exchange session, all staff managed to understand what RWAMREC policies are and their respective roles in achieving RWAMREC’s mandate. Staff capacities were developed in different fields including trainings and courses like effective campaign on social norms, gender and peace building, etc.

**RWAMREC offered Internship opportunities**

To increase practical knowledge and skills in promoting Men Engage approach in combating GBV, RWAMREC hosted internees from Rwanda and abroad (e.g. USA, France). RWAMREC also promoted internships and inductions for its new staff to ensure that staff is exposed to new skills while building their professional career with hands-on training and coaching. This provided the internees from inside and outside the RWAMREC with work experience that is directly related to their areas of study and increased their practical knowledge and skills in promoting MenEngage in combating GBV, administration and finance management thus promoting their personal capabilities and community development.

**RWAMREC developed strategic partnerships with different agencies.**

RWAMREC Partnership Development for promoting MenEngage approaches in preventing and responding to GBV has been a priority.

These partnerships are aimed at contributing to effective and efficient advocacy in order to influence policy, legal framework and gender and GBV mainstreaming in programmes. RWAMREC has increased and extended its partnership and relationship for MenEngage alliance. RWAMREC has developed this partnership to sustain and preserve gender equality gains and to increase ownership and commitment for MenEngage approach by strategic partners, including the public sector and the CSOs.

In this framework, partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) were signed with Rwanda MenEngage network members including Rwanda Women Network, ARDHO, Kigali Hope, Rural development, Initiative, Chils First Initiative, Haguruka, AJPRODHO JIJUKIRWA, USADEC, Right Bright for Family Promotion, KEEPCARE RWANDA, Rwanda Women Community Network, AESD, GER, FVA, Citizen’s Voice and Action, HDI, BENIMPUHWE, SERVAS

*RWAMREC Staff during a training retreat*
RWANDA, YWCA, Karongi District and ISANGANO Radio.

RWAMREC continues to extend its partnerships with the Public sector, Faith Based Organizations, development partners and other key stakeholders interested in accountability to gender equality.

3.1 RWAMREC Participation in International & Regional Events

Participation in CSW 63

In March 2019, RWAMREC participated in the various MenEngage Alliance meetings, as well as other interesting side events on issues that are relevant to RWAMREC’s area of work and/or interest (i.e. access to SRHR for youth, prevention GBV in schools, the link between inclusive early education and women’s empowerment etc.). RWAMREC supported two events. One was organized by MoFa and hosted by the Dutch Permanent Secretary on challenging power structures to empower women. RWAMREC gave an example in a presentation on the ways in which issues of power relations are discussed in some of its beneficiaries’ training. In another side event on the link between Infrastructure and women’s empowerment, RWAMREC presented a discussion on Rwanda’s infrastructure-related interventions for social transformation, as per Rwanda’s NST1.

Participation in M&E technical working group in Utrecht

The meeting that took place in Utrecht and that was attended by RWAMREC M&E officer and project coordinator. This allowed for countries and consortium partners to work together on developing the final outcome measurement and operational research plans, as well as plans for the collection and analysis of data needed to compile the end-term review and final evaluation reports, as per the requirements of the Donor. In the case of Rwanda, it has been agreed that the operational research will look at the processes/effectiveness of the implementation of our programme at PED level, as handed to the District by RWAMREC.

Participation in FBO learning Event

In this event that took place in Rotterdam, RWAMREC was represented by the Advocacy officer, the Chairperson of the Organization and a representative of Karongi District. The event served as a space for sharing best practices in the efforts to engage religious stakeholders in the fight against GBV and the promotion of equal rights. This precedes a plan that RWAMREC has of engaging with faith-based organizations starting the second quarter of this year (When is this being reported, which year? FBOs are highly influential and can help promote more positive forms of attitudes and beliefs amongst community members.

Participation in MenEngage regional Advocacy meeting

This meeting was organized by MenEngage Global alliance in Ethiopia. It convened representatives of Prevention+ Technical Advocacy Group and MenEngage network. The meeting allowed for a mapping of existing entry points for advocacy at regional level and stakeholders/organs to be targeted for advocacy/lobbying. It was organized in preparation for the Continental Advocacy strategy. RWAMREC was represented by its M&E officer and the Programme Manager.

Participation in Women Deliver Conference

This meeting took place in Vancouver, Canada and was attended by RWAMREC Advocacy and Communications Officer who presented a case study on Prevention+ work with PED to fight and prevent GBV in Rwanda. A presentation on research findings from the Mencare+ Bandebereho project that sought to engage men in care-giving and unpaid care work was also done.

This section highlights key events that RWAMREC participated in during the year 2019. It is important to note that through participation in these events, RWAMREC
International Conference of Population and Development (ICPD 25)

RWAMREC attended the ICPD 25 conference in Nairobi from 11th to 14th November 2019. RWAMREC is a member of MenEngage Africa and thus, a member of Men Engage international. As RWAMREC is among PROMUNDO partners through different project (MenCare+, Prevention+ and WOW projects, it was invited to participate in MenCare Global Meeting 2019 from 19th up to 21th November 2019 at Rabat Morocco.

Participation in the Annual Norwegian Telethon event

RWAMREC participated in the Annual Norwegian Telethon with CARE Norway (fundraising event) in Oslo from 16th – 21st October 2019, and this was hosted by Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation

To achieve gender equality and women empowerment, another project proposal for 3rd phase (GEWEP III) has been developed building its objectives to the results of GEWEP II.

3.2 Other Local Events Hosted by RWAMREC

Visit of NPA Secretary General

The Secretary General of NPA came in Rwanda and visited some of their partners including RWAMREC, during their visit, they met the Executive Committee, Mayor, both vice mayors and Directors of Rulindo District for sharing the outcomes of EDV project. They visited GBV Mobile Clinic and watched how it works.
Gender Café in Kigali.

Gender café in Kigali events have been focussed on achieving the following outcomes:

- Engage diverse actors on real-life gender issues and stimulate dialogue and debate that yields to higher gender literacy

- Introduce the latest research, emerging theory and innovative tools and techniques that can be applied to foster positive masculinities in our communities.

- Spark new ideas, new theories and social change strategies and develop new networks that can lead to more impactful research, new forms of advocacy, dissemination of innovative and effective practices and raise the profile of gender expertise in Rwanda and beyond.

- Create a dynamic space for women and men to self-reflect, analyze and voice their concerns while fostering a spontaneous dialogue where the conversation is controlled as much by the audience as it is by the presenters.

Promoting gender equality in the DRC and in Rwanda:

RWAMREC participated in the aforementioned even that aimed at exploring the challenges and lessons learned for transformative European support of women’s political and civic participation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Rwanda.

RWAMREC hosted a delegation from South Africa and Uganda

RWAMREC and representatives of SONKE Gender Justice and Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU), visited the TTC Rubengera Youth4change club and the “Umugoroba w’ababyeyi” committee of Gitovu village in Cyanya cell of Gishyita sector; on the 5th and 6th of November 2019, as part of a learning visit organized by RWAMREC for Prevention+ teams of Uganda and South Africa.
Participation in JADF Meetings

RWAMREC participated in different activities organized by JADF at District level especially in Ruhango, Muhanga and Karongi during open day and JADF meetings in Gisagara, Huye, Nyamagabe, Nyaruguru and Rulindo. RWAMREC staff participated in the celebration of International women’s day in Muhanga, Ruhango, Huye, Nyaruguru and Karongi.

Days of Activism

From November 25th, 2019 to December 10th, 2019 the Prevention+ project at Karongi played a significant role in organising and conducting activities of the Sixteen Days of Activism. The objective of this event was to fight for Gender-Based Violence. Dialogues with the Local Government Authorities at Mubuga Sector, Karongi District committed to fight for GBV at their respective villages.

Celebration of International Men’s Day.

A consultative Meeting was held on November 19th, 2019 at Kigali Serena Hotel. It brought together a diversity of stakeholders to discuss and deliberate on the theme entitled “Educate Rwandan Children while fighting Child Defilement.”

Panelists during the International Men’s Day event at Kigali Serena Hotel, November 19th, 2019.

Participants during the 16 days of activism celebrations Karongi District
4. Stories of change: Personal & Community Transformation

During the implementation of RWAMREC’s projects, many stories of personal and community transformation have been collected. This section captures a few of these change stories:

4.1 From an Alcoholic and GVB perpetrator to a supportive and prosperous husband: Mungabire’s humble confession to Mukabalisa

MUNGABIRE Jean Pierre is 50 years old and MUUKAKALISA Gertrude 55 years old are a couple. They live hyorongi sector, Rubona Cell, Ngona Village and have four Children (2 daughters and 2 sons). This couple was known as living in conflicts for long time. In a discussion Gertrude said, “We had a piece of land and banana plantation but I and my children could not access the income generated from these resources. My husband would spend all the money to buy alcohol without taking of our family needs. I am the one who struggled to get means to raise our children and take care of their needs at school. He usually came late night at home disturbing everybody and beating me. We were living in extreme poverty even as we had resources.

I explained my situation to RWAMREC’s IMBONI member who came to our home 3 times, started discussing with us about how to improve our relationship for a better life. My husband first resisted but finally he joined a RWAMREC Program and later changed for the better,” said Gertrude.

In his testimony Jean Pierre said, “I used to spend the family income in alcohol, I could not take care of my wife or my children which led us in a miserable life. I used to beat my wife, but from sessions of discussions conducted by Dative, RWAMREC’s IMBONI which I followed, I decided to change. Good and positive things started occurring in our households, our children went back to school, and I even visited them at School. We now live in harmony and through our income, I have managed to buy a motorcycle for my son who later bought another motorcycle for his small brother.”

“We are role models in our community; we attend the evening parents’ dialogue and share our journey. We recommend RWAMREC to expend his program on how to build strong relationship countrywide,” added Jean Pierre and Gertrude.

This story was collected from Rulindo District, Shyorongi Sector on December 20th.
4.2. From a rich, mean and abusive husband to a remorseful, apologetic and loving husband: Sinamenye’s story of personal transformation

A couple, SINAMENYE Telesphore, seventy-six years old and NYIRANSHUTI Dorothee from Bushoki Sector, Giko Cell, Kivomo Village, have been married since 1966 and had ten Children but some of them passed on. This couple was known to in conflict for a long time. As said by Telesphore, “I was a model farmer; I had a tea plantation, banana plantations and so many other sources of income. But although I am legally married with Dorothee and have children that we raised together, I could not allow my wife to access the income generated. I could spend most of the money in alcohol, adultery and other useless stuff. I often came late night at home, beating my wife-at least once a month, we had temporary separation (Kwahukana).

None of my children have reached secondary school level due to household conflicts. I was dirty because I could not buy new clothes unless my wife bought for me and from her own heard-earned revenue. We were living in extreme poverty while we had resources. In 2014, RWAMREC’s IMBONI came to our home and started talking about good relationship between couples but I could not pay attention to that until we got invited at Sector office because we were known as a couple with living in conflicts. We attended the training session organized by RWAMREC where we acquired knowledge and skills especially on GBV and healthy relationship. We continued being accompanied by IMBONI during our journey of change. I knelt down and said sorry to my wife Dorothee because I hurt her for a long time. I allowed her to access our bank account and she can deposit and withdraw money as well. We are working together to try to recover the lost times and the lost Joy. The problem is that it seems to be late as we are getting older. In 2017 we celebrated the 50th wedding anniversary and our parish provided as a certificate because we have changed,” said Telesphore.

Dorothee said, “before RWMREC programs through IMBONI started visiting us, I could not imagine that women have rights as men do. After the sensitization from RWAMREC, we realized that a household is composed by Husband, wife and children and they have to be complementary. I am happy my husband has changed and we are happy now.”
4.3. From a violent, suspicious and drunkard husband to a man of vision and supportive to the family

GATERA Marcel forty-one years old, the husband of NYIRANSABIMANA Clemence is a member of Kibilizi MenEngage club, not trained by RWAMREC, but trained by club members. In his own words he said, “I was a violent man, I beat my wife many years, she had no right to meet other people or to go out without my consent. I was a drinker. I was the only one to decide how to use resources but our family was in chaotic situation (drop out of our children in school and lack health insurance, complicated relationship with my wife and neighbours). In 2017, people trained by RWAMREC came to me and told me that I was perpetrating GBV against my wife and my children. After many visits MenEngage club members, I realized that had been so violent towards my wife and all my family and I needed to change.

Today I commend RWAMREC for I’m a different man. I have realized that that life is easy when there is no GBV. You can’t imagine that today I drink responsibly, I pay health insurance on time, my children go to school, and my wife and I, through our testimonies, have changed five neighboring couples who lived in GBV and today they are happy.

Today I have a vision, I have bought two cows and three pigs. My vision is to build a second house for rent because I have a house already.”

“I joined VSLAs,” said NYIRANSABIMANA Clemence, the wife of Gatera. “I couldn’t go before because no clothes, I was not allowed to go out without permission. I thank RWAMREC for his effort to build peace in families.”
4.4. Habimana’s Change story: How Community Activists play a major role in transforming families

The family of Habimana Innocent, born in 1970 and Mukagasana Francine, born 1964 live in Huye District, Gishamvu sector, Nyumba cell precisely in Busoro village. They have been married since 1992 and they have three daughters.

This family faced GBV cases often. The root cause of the GBV was the behaviours of the husband, Mr. Habimana Innocent. He said, “I was a pivot and only leader of my family, I considered my wife as a child who must be controlled every time because it’s a habit in Rwandan community.” He said that he always drunk and hit his wife in order to control her. If Mr. Habimana returned home later, his wife and children left the house for their safety because physical violence became routine.

Mrs. Mukagasana Francine, wife of Habimana said, “Our relationship worsened due to my husband’s bad behaviour. He beat me, I had always fear when he was around, he insulted me in public and in front of my children and he did not listen to me. In addition, my husband did not provide adequate food for our family because he used the money for alcohol .”

Mrs. Mukagasana Francine said, “I struggled until community activists Bizumutima Emmanuel and Musabyimana Mariane visited us at home. With them we discussed Gender based violence. Mainly how to make a healthy relationship. Since that visit my husband began to change positively.

Nowadays we enjoy the same rights in our relationship, I can go to the SACCO microfinance myself to withdraw money for home use. It was the first time my husband bought the clothes (Kitenge) for me and I was surprised. In addition, he helps me for domestic works mainly cooking. Briefly I am happy.”

The family plans to build a house next year and now are members of the Village Saving & Loan Associations where they save money. Their two children are now happy and will get married this year.

The family thanks the two Community Activists who visited them and RWAMREC in general for their approach to engage men in gender-based violence prevention. Mr. Habimana said,” without the Community Activists intervention the separation and destruction of my family was inevitable, so I found that positive communication reduces the use of alcohol and balancing economic power is important in partners’ relationship.”

Mrs. Mukagasana Francine added that she applauds her husband and the relationship between her family members. The family joined the MenEngage clubs and want JOT training from RWAMREC.
4.5. Ndayisaba’ Change Story: Breaking away from negative gender norms to become an exemplary role Model in Community

Ndayisaba Daniel was born in 1968 and his wife Mukeshimana Odette was born in 1971. They were legally married on March 3rd, 1999. They gave birth to twins in 2000, a boy and a girl. They live in Ruduha 2 village, Tambwe cell in Ruhango sector.

“Just after my wedding, life was beautiful, but I didn’t know it was going to last for a short time,” said Odette. “After a while, my husband continued to drink as before as if he were still single. He left the house very early in the morning to return at night. Every time he came from the cabaret, he told me that he was going to kill me one day. He didn’t give me money to buy food and clothes. All the money we earned was for him alone. It is from this moment on that I realized that my life had changed, and I had to struggle to be able to live.

Note that we had a different nursery trees including fruit trees and vegetables. That's what we had as our income activity and that is what he was consuming the hall day even sometimes it was me who was doing that work. Even local authorities knew our case because almost every three months, I had to leave the house to go to my parents to have peace,” said Odette.

From Daniel’s perspective, he said, “I was a drunk and I was proud because I lived that way. A real man must take a lot of alcohol, that’s how I lived at home. Note that after our wedding, our house collapsed due to lack of maintenance. We didn’t have our own house.”

At the moment of JOT training, our couple was chosen to be part of it as it was known by authorities.

“During the training, when the trainer talked about alcohol (because there were lessons about alcohol), when he started telling us the bad effects of alcohol, I started to feel anguished and realized how much I hurt my lovely wife. It is by that time I asked for forgiveness to my wife and I promised her to reduce alcohol consumption, share household tasks but also decide together with her,” said Daniel.

“Since the time of JOT training in 2013, I have honored my promise until now. As you see we live in our own house. We share household tasks,” said Daniel.

For now, they manage to pay school fees for their children which amounts to 131,000 per quarter. They bought a plot at 400,000RWF, chicken and sometimes they eat eggs to improve their diet. They decide together on the projects they will undertake while that was not the case before. Now they can eat 3 times a day whereas before they could only eat once. Now their life has completely changed. They are members of the Urumuri MenEngage club of Ruhango sector among activists who fight against GBV. Their neighbors always come to ask for help regarding the fight against GBV. Note that even local authorities use them as a good example of a couple who have totally changed within the neighborhood and encourage people living with GBV to approach them for advice. They are among people who pay their medical insurance on time. They are happy and consider RWAMREC as a guardian angel that was sent by God to save their marriage.
4.6. Journey of Transformation Model: A vaccine to toxic masculinity in Rwanda

By Jean Bosco RUDASINGWA, Project Coordinator who challenged Toxic Masculinity in Rwanda to transform the self and community through Journeys of Transformation (JOT) Model

In the patriarchal system that dominates in most societies including Rwanda, the place of women has always been insignificant compared to that of men. Men are seen as a dominant group whereby all great decisions, powers, favors, opportunities, are to be for and from them. Jean Bosco, a project Coordinator of GEWEP recounts with pride and humility, when he narrates how he has families, especially men have changed for the better by adopting positive gender roles. What is even more rewarding is that Jean Bosco has changed along the families he has changed.

Being a RWAMREC staff, Jean Bosco has committed to practicing the change that he wants his trainees to emulate. While working with men and women to promote Gender Equality, he noted, “My personal motivation has also been highlighted through GEWEP. Though I was aware of what gender equality was, and the significance of human right, but my understanding has increasingly shifted from theory to practice. My commitment then, goes along with not only my personal involvement in household tasks, but also in the decision-making process, increased awareness on certain attitudes, and being an activist who speaks out against every form of violence and who knows to deconstruct prevailing toxic masculinities.

Perhaps, nothing else can illustrate the transformative influence of Jean Bosco’s work than through the remarkable testimonies of the families he has trained. For example, Mr. Damascene from Nyamagabe district who followed the training in 2013 recounted in a tone that echoed pride and remorse, “Before this training I used to go home very late around 2:00am. I had warned my wife not to ever close the door to our room before I got from the bar. I used to wake my wife up when I got back, I used to beat her”. I have changed now. I know mine is a story of pride and regret. Every time I reflect back on my behavior, I feel ashamed and always ask for forgiveness.

One of Jean Bosco’s trainees who benefitted from Journey of Transformation model has experienced economic gains and jointly works with his family for prosperity. In his testimony, he noted, “Before being trained, I sold our 2 cows without my wife’s consent, I misused money and I remained one of the poorest of my community. Currently, I have changed my attitude, I can enjoy my life with my family and we managed to build a big house, and we bought cattle as we work and plan together”. There are many stories of formally abusive and drunkard men who have totally transformed their lives for the better, ad such testimonies will begin to multiply.
4.7. The story of Mrs. Consolée Mukeshimana: “RWAMREC provides employees with a sense of worth

It’s being able to connect families and sharing their stories that make RWAMREC a place to be and work! Since January 2015, I have been motivated by its motto of Men Working with Women to promote Gender Equality. I much adhered to its vision and mission. I played the role of Field Officer in 2 different projects like Agents for change (Indashyikirwa) that aimed to prevent and fighting against Gender Based Violence through Bandebereho Scale up for engaging men in promoting Maternal New Born and child health (MNCH) as well as in recognizing, redistributing and reducing unpaid care and domestic works (UCW) for Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE).

I treasure the great moments I enjoyed in RWAMREC for 5 years, a period that positively impacted my personal & professional life.

I much appreciated the induction period: The program and HR services build strong individuals and groups of staff with same vision, mission, and objectives. They also empower staff with knowledge and skills about the different approaches and policies used by RWAMREC.

I have highly enjoyed the domain of working with couples, especially to assist them embark on the process of change from domestic violence and intimate violence partner to life free from GBV. I had the opportunity to work with 60 couples in Burera District for 4 years, and 40 couples for a short time of 1 year, almost all of them experienced all forms of violence: physical, emotional, sexual and economic violence. After some trainings on couples’ curriculum, I was surprised by their stories of change. For example, 8 couples committed to do their civil marriage, which in Rwanda guarantees equal right between husband and wife to family wealth. One couple lived separately and they decided to live together while another couple had the problem of unequal sharing of household chores where the woman was overloaded and her husband refused to help her even to pay someone else to support her but this later changed and the husband is supportive. The capacity building of staff through sharing experience on new approaches and opportunities, support of other projects and representation of RWAMREC in different meetings or trainings, conferences in and outside the country.

The social events and activities among the RWAMREC staff consolidate personal and professional relationships. I am thankful to RWAMREC that empowered me to support couples improve their relationships. I have also greatly adopted more caring and assertive communication with my children, husband and colleagues at work. I model gender equality among my sons and daughters.

Professionally, I am confident and proud to perform Men Engage approach in my area of work zone and also extend beyond my zone through community activism sessions where I like to engage the discussions in different opportunities with spontaneous groups of only men or men and women at the bar, in community work (Umuganda) or in the family events.
A few months before my internship, I started wondering which Organization would offer me opportunities to know more about Gender equality. RWAMREC offered the best choice because I identified with its vision on promoting Gender quality.

From Internship to being Driver.

I still remember with Joy and gratitude, especially when I remember the cordial and surprising welcome. RWAMREC selflessly guided me to understand all I needed to understand about Gender. Staff at RWAMREC allowed me to visit project activities and in so doing, participants explained to me how they experienced GBV including domestic fights. Gradually, they stopped these fights after using RWAMREC’s teaching on Gender equality. Men told me they were not driven by superiority complex in their homes which had always been a source of disagreements between women and men. I use this grounded and firsthand experience to teach others to live peacefully together.

The impact of the aforementioned experience on my professional and personal life is that at the professional level, it has helped me to change my approach to work. For example, before, it was difficult to see a female driver. I am now a driver at RWAMREC and I feel accomplished. I drive with pride, just like any one of my other male colleagues. I have shared my driving experience to my neighbors and my community and they are supportive. On my personal level, there are many things that have changed in my family because. As a result, I explain to my sons that they have an important role to nurture a conducive environment for women and men to thrive. I try to model what I tell my sons by taking time to openly discuss issues with my husband. My wish is that RWAMREC’S intervention are scaled up to reach many men and women, boys and girls and everyone else. This is because the need for Gender equality between men and women is paramount for Rwanda to be a healthy nation.
5. Challenges

There have been some challenges during the implementation of RWAMREC’s projects. As a result, some projects targets were not fully achieved or may have taken long to achieve. Some of the Major challenges are highlighted below:

- The empowerment has not been able to reach out of school youth. During future planning, there is need to consider this population because they also experience GBV related issues.

- There has been turnover among opinion leaders. When a trained leader is replaced by a non-trained leader, it has been observed that it has been on continuity of mobilization efforts sustainability of project gains is affected. Equally, in Prevention + there has been challenges when mentor teachers for the Youth4change club are replaced.

- The District fiscal year (June-July) differs from that of RWAMREC (Jan-Dec). This creates a gap in activities to be put in the Annual District performance contract (i.e. only specific Prevention+ activities planned for July-Dec can be incorporated in the District’s plan). This misalignment creates challenges in the Districts priorities vis a vis what Preventions + can support, thus requiring re-allocation of funds.

- Late disbursement of funds slows down some of the activities to be conducted by Quarter 2

6. Lessons learnt

The behavior change impact of RWAMREC’S project is a practical indication that boys can positively change their attitudes towards sexual behaviors. Throughout the change stories collected, there have been testifying to having regulated their sexual advances, sometimes, even when a female student made advances for sexual intercourse. Such male students may not be as many but such a trend is remarkable.

Both boys and girls can become agents of change among their peers at school and in the community. For example, a young girl in GS Rilima Catholique succeeded in convincing her female peer colleague, who used to have sex with boys, to avoid such sexual relationships to avoid getting pregnant or other related infection and thus, miss out on life opportunities that education offers.

Any project need very concrete mechanisms for sustainability. To sustain project results, Boys/girls4change clubs have put in place and each club has a committee for one-year period that’s renewable upon presentation of a detailed plan of action. However, sustainability remains a challenge for short term projects.

Expansion and replication of RWAMREC interventions can change people’s lives. RWAMREC’s project can be replicated to other sectors and schools without re-inventing similar interventions. Not reached by the projects in order to change more people’s lives.

When projects are closely aligned with leaders existing targets, there is increased ownership and uptake of projects by leadership at District, sector and cell level. The leaders’ ownership of RWAMRE’s score card and the GBV clinic initiatives attest to this reality. Perhaps, one of the most significant lesson learned is that for sustainability, ownership and accountability, joint planning with local leaders is paramount.
The activities contained in RWAMREC action plan for various projects for the year 2019 were implemented. This was a result of the implementing stakeholders’ commitment to promote and support MenEngage approach to fight against GBV. Importantly, such commitments have taken root in both the public and private sector and Civil society organizations. RWAMREC has increased its engagement with community structures to promote projects in their respective project implementation areas including the southern province district, Musanze, Karongi and Rulindo. RWAMREC is now working with youth in schools from the districts of Bugesera, Karongi, Kicukiro, as well as Huye where boys have proactively engaged in the fight against GBV at an early stage. During the past 6 months of 2019, RWAMREC reached 88 schools compared to the 58 reached during the year 2018. More than ever, RWAMREC remains committed to empower men to proactively work with women for a just world where GBV will be fully eradicated.