



***From a Silent Revolution to Building Communities of Hope:
Harmony, Human Dignity & Sustainable Development***

**Mothers' Union Burundi Literacy and Financial Education Programme
Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022)**

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Contents

MAP ILLUSTRATING CONCENTRATION OF PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES BY DIOCESE	iii
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	iv
PERSONAL TESTIMONY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEFINITION AND CLARIFICATION OF TERMS	vi
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	vii
CELEBRATING MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF STELLAR ACHIEVEMENTS	xii
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Collaborative Partnerships	2
1.3 Burundi Socio-Economic Context	2
1.4 Profile of Women in Burundi	3
1.5 The Literacy and Financial Education Programme	6
1.6 Objectives of the Longitudinal Impact Study	8
1.7 Structure of the Report	8
2 PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND DIRECT RESULTS	9
2.1 Programme Methodology	9
2.2 Programme Management	10
2.3 Functional Literacy and Numeracy Training	10
2.4 Facilitate the Formation of Savings and Loans Associations	13
2.5 Financial Literacy and Business Development Training	14
2.6 Parenting Skills Training	14
2.7 Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning	15
3 METHODOLOGY	16
3.1 Planning for the Longitudinal Impact Study	16
3.2 Document Review	16
3.3 Discussions with Programme Participants	16
3.4 Spiritual Impact Discussions with Anglican Church & Mothers' Union Burundi Leaders	16
3.5 Key Informant Interviews	17
3.6 Surveys	17
3.7 Interviews with Programme Staff	18
3.8 Data Analysis	18
3.9 Validation of the Findings of the Impact Study	18
4 IMPACTS OF THE PROGRAMME	19
4.1 Programme Benchmarks: Prioritised Issues	19
4.2 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	21
4.3 Financial Empowerment	28
4.4 Transformation of Families	34
4.5 Enhanced Capacity of Mothers' Union Burundi to Deliver its Mandate	39
4.6 Contribution to Community Development and Nation Building	42
4.7 Amplified Faith in Action	49
5 SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAMME	55
5.1 Literacy Creates Social Capital and SLAs Catalyse Sustainability of Collective Action	55
5.2 Programme Participants are Still Active Members of their Groups	55
5.3 Sustainability of the Savings and Loans Associations	56
5.4 Best Practices that Enhanced Programme Spread and Sustainability	57
5.5 Sustainability of Results: Documented Cumulative Impact of the Programme over the Years	60
6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	63
6.1 From a Silent Revolution...	63
6.2 A Growing Movement...	63
6.3 An Evolving and Dynamic Programme	63
6.4 Implemented during Periods of Political Instability but with High Impact	63
6.5 Staying True to Mission and Collaborative Partnership	63
6.6 Direct Results of the Programme	64
6.7 Delivered Six Interrelated Impacts at Individual, Family and Community Levels	64
6.8 Replicability of the Programme	65
6.9 Sustainability of the Programme	65
6.10 Recommendations	66
References	67
Annex 1 Theory of Change: Mothers' Union Burundi Literacy and Financial Education Programme	68
Annex 2 Evaluation Participants	69
Annex 3 Self-Reported Individual Level Programme Outcomes	70
Annex 4 Spiritual Impact of the Programme	71
Annex 5 Mothers' Union Burundi Programme Team	72
Annex 6 Impact of the Programme on Community Development & Nation Building	73

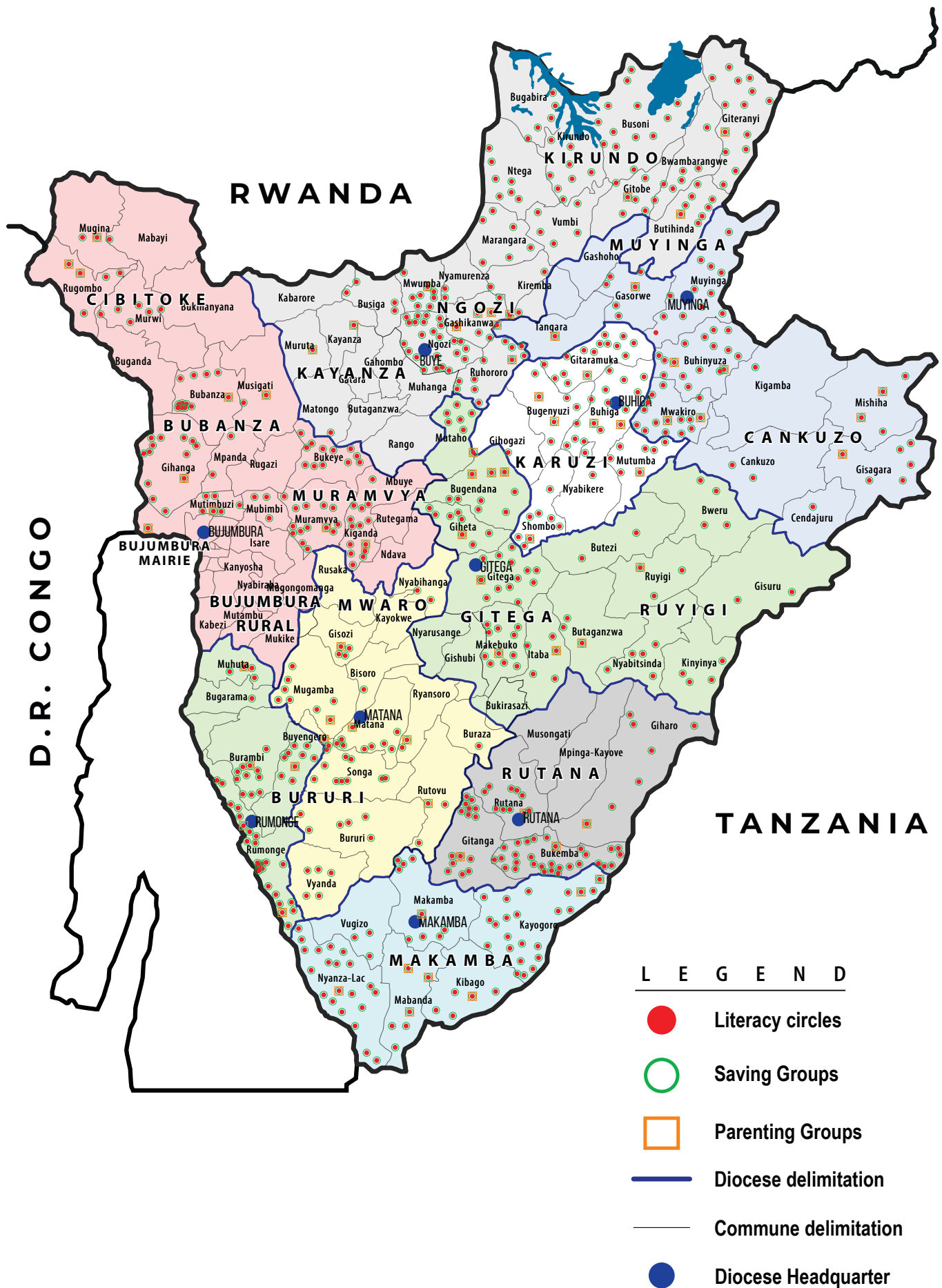
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Key Gender Equality and Women’s Rights Indicators (Ranking Globally)	3
Table 2 Key Gender Equality and Women’s Rights Indicators	5
Table 3 Programme Participants by Gender, Age, Disability, Marital Status and Religion	7
Table 4 Programme Facilitators Trained by Gender and Programme Area	11
Table 5 Literacy and Numeracy Training Participants by Gender and Programme Area	12
Table 6 Accredited Learners to Date by Gender and Programme Area	13
Table 7 SLAs by Programme Area and Average Membership	13
Table 8 Members of Savings and Loans Associations by Gender and Programme Area	14
Table 9 Participants of Parenting Skills Training by Gender and Programme Area	14
Table 10 Evaluations Conducted over the Years	15
Table 11 Summary of Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participant Survey Respondents	17
Table 12 Prioritised Development Issues in the Partner Communities	20
Table 13 Programme Impact on Voice, Participation and Agency by Gender	22
Table 14 Average Annual Savings and Loans in 2021 by Programme Area and Gender	29
Table 15 Perceived Impact of the Programme on Social Inclusion, Cohesion and Peacebuilding	45
Table 16 Key informants Reporting a Significant Impact of the Programme in the Community	48
Table 17 Self-Reported Improved Personal Relationships with God by Gender	50
Table 18 Perceived Indicators of Strong and Weak SLAs	58
Table 19 Sustainability of Programme Impacts over the Years	62

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 The Literacy and Financial Education Programme by Wave, Timeframe and Activities	6
Figure 2 Participants Self-Reporting a Lot of Improvement in Security of Access to Productive Assets	23
Figure 3 Participants Self-Reporting a Lot of Improvement in Security of Access to Selected Productive Assets by Programme Wave	24
Figure 4 Participants Self-Reporting a Lot of Improvement in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	25
Figure 5 Participants Reporting that they Send their Girl Children to School as a Result of the Programme	26
Figure 6 Programme Participants’ Perceptions about Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment	27
Figure 7 Impact of the Programme on Financial Inclusion	29
Figure 8 Impact of the Programme on Participants’ Entrepreneurship	31
Figure 9 Programme Participants’ Priority Enterprises by Gender	31
Figure 10 Contribution of the Programme to Participants’ Financial Inclusion and Entrepreneurship	32
Figure 11 Impact of the Programme on Personal Incomes, Household Welfare and Resilience	33
Figure 12 Illustration of Sustainability of Programme Impacts on Children’s Education	34
Figure 13 Contribution of the Programme to Family Relationships	35
Figure 14 Self-Reported Positive Parenting Outcomes over the Years	36
Figure 15 Self-Reported Impact of Parents’ Commitment to Ensuring that Children Complete their Education	36
Figure 16 Highest Level of Education Achieved by Adult Children of the Programme Participants	37
Figure 17 Professions of Programme Participants’ Adult Children	38
Figure 18 Characteristics of Businesses of Programme Participants’ Adult Children	38
Figure 19 Impact of the Programme on Parenting Stereotypes	39
Figure 20 Contribution to Literacy and Financial Inclusion of Mothers’ Union Burundi Members	40
Figure 21 Programme’s Contribution to the Delivery of the Aims of Mothers’ Union Burundi	40
Figure 22 Programme Implementers by Job Longevity	41
Figure 23 Programme Participants’ Scale of Business	46
Figure 24 Illustrative Summary of Deepening and Sustainability of Selected Aspects of Programme Impact	49
Figure 25 Female Participants Reporting a Significant Impact in their Church Leadership	52
Figure 26 Contribution of the Programme to Church Capacity to Deliver its Mandate	53
Figure 27 Collections to Celebrate International Women’s Day in Makamba Diocese	54
Figure 28 Survey Respondents by Wave they Joined the Programme	55
Figure 29 Proportion of Functional SLAs by Year they were Formed	56
Figure 30 Functional SLAs by Programme Area	57
Figure 31 Number of SLAs Formed by the Facilitators	59

Map Illustrating Concentration of Programme Activities by Diocese



Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABCD	Asset Based Community Development
BIF	Burundi Francs
DSI	Development Services International
E-Care	Episcopal Church Action for Renewal and Empowerment – NGO of Episcopal Church of the Philippines
EDSB-III	Enquête Démographique et de Santé au Burundi (Demographic and Health Survey)
FGD	Focus group discussion
GBV	Gender-based violence
GNI	Gross national income
IPV	Intimate partner violence
ISTEEBU	Institut de Statistiques et d'Études Économiques du Burundi (Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies)
KII	Key informant interview
LFEP	Literacy and Financial Education Programme
LM	Läkarmissionen/ LM International
MPBGP	Ministère à la Présidence chargé de la Bonne Gouvernance et du Plan (Ministry at the Presidency in charge of Good Governance and Planning)
MSPLS	Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Lutte Contre le SIDA (Ministry of Public Health and Fight Against HIV/AIDS)
MULDP	Mothers' Union Literacy and Development Programme
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
PLA	Participatory learning approach/action
PPP	Purchasing power parity
PWD	Person with disability
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SLA	Savings and Loans Association (Savings Group)
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States dollars
WEF	World Economic Forum

Personal Testimony and Acknowledgements

My first interaction with this programme was in 2006 as an independent evaluation consultant. I said it then, and I will say it again...something changes in you forever the moment you interact with the programme team and the participants. The programme provides a space that not only empowers the participants but also provides room for men to support gender equality. It brings joy to all that interact with it and makes you believe that there are no boundaries for personal growth and development as well as spiritual empowerment.

This programme gives multiple testimonies that magnify the Glory of God. It gives participants a chance to stand out. It helps them to secure their rights and to defend them. It gives them a voice...it helps them express themselves freely... make informed decisions, without the fear of being questioned. I hope that this programme is acknowledged for what it is and then some! May this programme inspire others to the justice of gender equality and women's empowerment and to the world we all hope for, underpinned by faith in action.

I would like to acknowledge the support and participation of all those that made this impact study happen, particularly those that experienced personal challenges during the planning and implementation of the exercise. I salute Claudette Kigeme (Mothers' Union Burundi) and her team, Maria Owen, Hannah Wichmann and Megan Henderson (Five Talents), Naomi Herbert (Mothers' Union), Suzanne Middleton (Development Services International - DSI) and Rose Nyakato and Albert Ssimbwa (Läkarmissionen). Thanks are also due to all the Mothers' Union Burundi members, community and religious leaders and programme participants who took off time to participate in this longitudinal study.

Definition and Clarification of Terms

Faith in action	This refers to living out your faith through the actions of loving others and caring for their needs. The work of Mothers' Union Burundi demonstrates its Christian faith in action.
Financial inclusion	Having access to, and utilising affordable financial services that are responsive to the users' needs.
Foundational literacy	This underlies and forms the basis of the programme. It is the building blocks to other components of the programme and is essential for success.
Functional literacy	Functional literacy and numeracy in vernacular is the ability to use reading and writing skills in real-world contexts to accomplish practical tasks.
Gender	A concept that refers to the social differences between women and men, as opposed to the biological ones, which experience has taught are changeable over time and have wide variations within and between cultures.
Gender Equality	Equality between women and men can refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality under the law • Equality of opportunity • Equality in terms of political and economic influence.
PLA	Participatory learning and action (PLA) links the process of learning with the process of social change, in which the learners are the active actors, determining the issues and the developing their own 'texts'.
Multidimensional poverty	Multidimensional poverty recognizes interlinked aspects of poverty. Besides lacking money, people living in poverty may experience poor nutrition, sanitation, health and housing as well as restricted access to work opportunities, clean water, education and work opportunities.
Rolling wave programming	A method of programme development in which the details of the programme are progressively elaborated as the project proceed/unfolds.
Silent revolution	A revolution founded in the programme participants' membership to the literacy sessions, and thus social inclusion. A revolution driving a grass-root movement advocating for, and working towards social inclusion, cohesion and peacebuilding.
Social cohesion	The strength of social relationships and the extent of connectedness and solidarity among groups in society essential for achieving peace, equality and development.
Social inclusion	The World Bank Group ¹ defines social inclusion as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society, and • The process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society.
Spiritual empowerment	At the personal level, this is about connecting with the divine in you and strengthening your relationship with God. It also pertains to the ability to achieve things that are seemingly impossible, by the grace of God. It is about evangelism, shepherding, serving, mercy and giving.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	A global call to action to end poverty and inequality, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy health, justice and prosperity. The blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.
Women's empowerment	Build women's confidence and create possibilities for them to claim their rights and to make their own choices and decisions.

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/social-inclusion>

Executive Summary

Background

1. This report presents the findings and conclusions of a longitudinal impact study (2001-2022) of the Mothers' Union Burundi Literacy and Financial Education programme. The programme was implemented in partnership with Mothers' Union, Five Talents, Development Services International (DSI) and Läkarmissionen (LM). The programme, which is delivered through the Anglican Church of Burundi, was launched in 2000 in three Anglican dioceses. It later became a national programme reaching all the nine dioceses in the country, namely: Buhiga, Bujumbura, Buye, Gitega, Makamba, Matana, Muyinga, Rumonge and Rutana.
2. The programme works with the most disadvantaged communities of people living in extreme poverty and that typically experience restricted access to services such as education, health, markets and microfinance institutions.
3. The overall objective of the programme is to alleviate poverty through, amongst others, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.
4. The programme adopted a rolling wave planning approach. This flexible approach allowed the programme to evolve and adapt to emerging participants' needs, build on lessons learnt and global best practices. This approach allowed for new partners to support each wave. The programme was implemented in three waves as follows:
 - *Programme wave 1 (2001-2009)*: Functional literacy and numeracy education. This wave was implemented in partnership with Mothers' Union.
 - *Programme wave 2 (2010-2017)*: i) Functional literacy and numeracy education; ii) Facilitate formation of savings and loans associations; and iii) Financial literacy and business development education. This wave was implemented with Five Talents and Läkarmissionen as additional partners.
 - *Programme wave 3 (2018- to date)*: i) Functional literacy and numeracy education; ii) Facilitate formation of savings and loans association; iii) Financial literacy and business development education; and iv) Parenting education. This wave includes DSI as an additional partner.

Objectives of the Longitudinal Impact Study

5. The overall objective of the longitudinal impact study was to assess the impact of the programme against the specified theory of change (in Annex 1). The study was outcomes-based and focused on transformational impacts over the extended period of programme implementation. The specific objectives of the study were to:
 - a. Establish the long-term outcomes of the programme, including unexpected results, depth of impact over time and contribution to the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
 - b. Evaluate the impact of the programme on women's empowerment, gender equality, family life, social cohesion and peacebuilding as well as the church and the engagement of its members.
 - c. Examine the uniqueness of the programme interventions in terms of combining tools such as PLA, participatory Bible studies and SLAs.
 - d. Assess the sustainability of the hierarchy of outcomes over time and beyond the programme life.
 - e. Analyse the lessons learnt, including the replicability of the programme.

Approach to the Longitudinal Impact Study

6. The evaluation employed quantitative and qualitative methods and involved a desk review as well as field work conducted in all the nine programme dioceses. The field work was conducted over a nine-month period (March-November, 2022) using a variety of tools including focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), structured surveys and direct observation.
7. A total of 11 FGDs were held with female and male programme participants in the nine programme areas. Eight spiritual impact discussions were conducted with Anglican Church and Mothers' Union Burundi leaders. KIIs were held with political leaders, religious leaders, community leaders, community workers, teachers and students. Four surveys were conducted as follows: i) Sustainability of savings and loans associations' survey; ii) Programme participants' survey; iii) Key informants' survey; and iv) Spiritual impact survey.

Programme implementation

8. The programme activities included:
 - a. Functional literacy and numeracy education involving:
 - ii. Training volunteer facilitators
 - iii. Literacy and numeracy education for direct programme participants using participatory learning approaches (PLAs).
 - b. Facilitation of the formation of savings and loans associations (SLAs)
 - c. Financial literacy and business development training
 - d. Parenting skills training
 - e. Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, learning and reporting

9. **Programme Design Informed by Baseline Surveys...** All waves and stages of the programme were informed by a comprehensive baseline study suggesting that it was responsive to the participants' prioritised interests. The programme adopted a participatory learning approach and this provided a clear framework to identify female participants' prioritised needs, relative to their male counterparts and ways in which they could be addressed. The programme has thus been a learning journey for Mothers' Union Burundi and has been relevant in that it initiated various activities intended to address the needs of the participants.
10. **Implemented during Periods of Political Instability but with High Impact...** The programme was implemented during periods of political instability and wide-ranging sanctions. Road travel was unsafe and fuel was scarce. This is in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic that hindered progress of implementation of development projects globally². Nonetheless, programme implementation never stopped and the programme delivered high impact outcomes over the 20 years. Implementation continued throughout the turmoil and the programme brought people together, gave them hope and thus contributed to peacebuilding.
11. **From a silent revolution...** The programme has evolved from a 'silent revolution' (the term used in the first evaluation in 2006) to building communities of hope with voice, power and resources for women in a safe and supportive social environment. The revolution was founded in the programme participants' membership to the literacy sessions, and thus social inclusion. A revolution driving a grassroots movement advocating for, and working towards social inclusion, cohesion and peacebuilding. The programme's sustained engagement with the communities enabled the participants to continuously grow themselves and lift and build up others.
12. **A growing movement...** The 2017 evaluation referred to it as follows: "It has been more than a programme - a movement, given the very high levels of community ownership and alignment with women's and community priorities. This was clearly a programme designed with the "grain" of the vision for change that people have for themselves. It has taken on a "life of its own" as women and men whose lives have been improved, spread the word to others about the positive changes in their lives."
13. **An evolving and dynamic programme...** The programme adopted a rolling wave planning approach. This flexible approach allowed the programme to evolve and adapt to emerging participants' needs, build on lessons learnt as well as global best practices. Additional components were progressively incorporated largely designed to implement recommendations that motivated transformation, direction and gave hope to families and communities, while promoting women's rights. It continuously incorporated aspects that added value and benefits to the participants.
14. **Collaborative partnership...** Partnerships are central to the evolution and impact of Mothers' Union Burundi's programmes. As a global movement, the Mothers' Union works towards stopping violence, stopping poverty and stopping injustice. This is a mission held by many organisations - each with a different approach to addressing these challenges. When organisations collaborate, sharing their unique knowledge, expertise and capabilities, that mission becomes closer to being realised. Good partnerships amplify a programme's reach and impact by drawing on shared resources that enhance productivity and efficiency and further fosters stewardship of resources (both material and human). This is evident through the key partnerships that Mothers' Union Burundi has, in working towards its vision and goals. The long-term, diverse and harmonised partnership was key to the success of the programme.
15. **Intentional faith in action underpinning the programme...** Over the years, the programme recognised the importance of spiritual engagement. The programme had a transformative impact on the participants' personal relationship with God and women's participation in the church. Further to that, it promoted human dignity and enhanced the capacity of the Anglican Church. Most of the SLAs formed under the programme are still functional and the members have fellowship and commitment to remain together. This whole programme is underpinned by faith in action, as the Mothers' Union Burundi exemplify their motto "I can do everything through Jesus Christ, who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).

Direct results of the programme

16. The programme has thus been a 20-year learning journey for Mothers' Union Burundi during which approaches were piloted and stories of change were documented. This ensured continued learning and relevance in that it initiated various activities intended to address the needs of the participants.
17. Directly benefitted over 165,000 participants, 77 percent of whom are women. Most of the participants (87%) are accredited as literate and numerate, a contribution of 2.9 percent to the estimated 5,030,955 adult population in Burundi who can read and write³.
18. Mobilised over 144,000 self-selected members, 78 percent of whom are women, into over 6,200 savings and loans associations and catalyzed their capacity to save, borrow and invest.

² COVID-19 was not raised as an issue that constrained implementation of the programme.

³ Sources: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?locations=BI>; <https://apiportal.uis.unesco.org/bdds> (extracted data from 2021)

19. More than half of the female (59%) and male (52%) programme participants' businesses employ at least one to two people. Some female (35%) and male (47%) programme participants with slightly bigger businesses employ more than two people.
20. The parenting education component, a relatively recent addition to the programme has so far reached close to 7,500 participants.

Impacts of the programme

21. This longitudinal impact study documents a body of solid qualitative and quantitative evidence of the phenomenal impact of the programme. The programme is unique, innovative and is underpinned by faith in action. The different components of the programme build on and reinforce each other.

Delivered Six Interrelated Impacts at Individual, Family and Community Levels

22. The six key impacts of the programme are interrelated with none directly attributed to a specific component. Whereas all components are mutually reinforcing, according to discussions with the programme participants, faith in action significantly unlocked many of the documented impacts. This was greatly complemented by the participatory and agency-building approach to literacy as well as financial education.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

23. The programme contributed to multiple dimensions of gender equality and women's empowerment. It improved women's self-esteem, confidence and aspirations. Additionally, it brought women's voices and skills to the forefront, increased their participation in the productive economy and their access to credit, largely through loans from the SLAs. It also contributed to breaking down mindsets and challenging dominant narratives that underlie gender inequalities. Further to that, it demonstrated that deeply ingrained norms can change and it promoted a social environment that is relatively free from the threat of GBV (with 86 percent of women reporting a reduction in GBV), and where women's rights are intrinsically recognised, realised and safeguarded.

Financial empowerment

24. The programme contributed to financial inclusion, expanded entrepreneurship, improved household income and promoted financial stability. The SLAs are a registered entity within communities that also continue to be a catalyst for social cohesion and agency for development.
25. Due to women's financial autonomy, there was a reported reduction in domestic violence that arises out of household economic stress.
26. Most of the enterprises established are small and agro-based. For instance, the most popular enterprise for 92 percent of female and male programme participants is primary crop production followed by livestock farming (81%) and marketing of agricultural products (67%).
27. The programme has evidently contributed to improving the participant's situation from dire levels of poverty. 90 percent of the programme participants reported that they were less poor. In terms of multidimensional poverty, the participants indicated they were sending their children to school, had accumulated assets and that their nutrition and housing had improved. Additionally, there was a reduction in intimate partner violence. This great progress notwithstanding, many of the programme participants continue being involved in small enterprises. Some of the key informants and programme participants indicated that insufficient resources, in terms of loan volumes, was the major reason for low profits and the restricted growth and development of their businesses from micro to small and even medium enterprises.

Transformation of families

28. The programme fostered reconnections in family relationships and encouraged positive parenting. In addition, it nurtured intergenerational impacts of the programme that not only benefitted the participants but their families and communities as well.
29. The literacy component enhanced the participants' appreciation of their children's education, their membership to SLAs improved their financial capacity to cater for their children and the parenting skills sharpened their reflective practices, including listening.

Enhanced capacity of Mothers' Union Burundi to sustainably deliver its mandate

30. The programme contributed to literacy and numeracy of Mothers' Union Burundi members and improved their financial inclusion. Additionally, it strengthened the capacity of the programme frontline workers and contributed to the achievement of the aims of Mothers' Union Burundi.

Contribution to community development and nation building

31. The programme supported implementation of government policy. Furthermore, it built communities of hope that espouse values of social inclusion and cohesion, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It also contributed to the achievement of eight of the SDGs. The programme participants lifted and built up others through community outreaches, support to those in need, advocacy, role modelling, and disseminating empowerment messages.

Faith in action/Spiritual Empowerment

32. The programme had a transformative impact on the participants' personal relationship with God and women's participation in the church, whilst ensuring that it was open to people of all faiths and none, and recognising that some partners do not support proselytisation. The programme promoted human dignity and enhanced the capacity of the Anglican Church. Most of the SLAs formed under the programme are still functional and the members have fellowship and the commitment to remain together. This whole programme is underpinned by faith in action, as the Mothers' Union Burundi exemplify their motto "I can do everything through Jesus Christ, who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).

Recommendations

- The programme was evidentially relevant and beneficial. All the programme participants, government, community and religious leaders and peer nonprofit organisations expressed a need for its continuation. It is thus recommended that Mothers' Union Burundi continues investing in the menu of activities that contribute to adult literacy, formation of SLAs, financial education, business development and parenting skills in other communities.
- Informed by a detailed analysis, consider promoting SLA coalitions as an option for expanding the participants' access to loans, both in terms of volume and frequency.
- Continued partnership for SLAs to expand to other areas.
- Explore viable low risk and cost-effective options for improving the programme participants' access to more substantial financing.
- Promote gender-sensitive climate-smart agriculture feeding into their agro-businesses including: i) Value addition and engagement in strategic nodes of the value chain and; ii) Bulking of participants' agricultural commodities⁴.
- Deepen the impact of the programme through extending this beneficial component of parenting education component to all participants.
- As with spiritual empowerment, the programme should include an explicit focus on strengthening the capacity of Mothers' Union Burundi.
- Mothers' Union Burundi should document its tested and proven PLA methodology in a more systematic manner to ensure a harmonised approach to implementation of the programme.
- Engage the Mothers' Union Burundi members in the programme in a more challenging and systematic manner to foster a social environment that upholds women's empowerment and promotes positive transformation in the families.
- Considering the scale of the programme and the importance of capturing results, the programme should strengthen internal monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning capacity. This is besides the need to invest in digital data platforms and designing appropriate monitoring data collection tools.
- Replicate the programme in other communities to maximise its potential contribution to community development, nation building and the achievement of SDGs.
- The programme design should include a strategy to leverage SLAs to mentor, lift and build up others in a more strategic and systematic way.
- Faith in action underpins most of the positive and great impacts of the programme. The programme should thus boldly and explicitly incorporate spiritual empowerment strategies as integral aspects of its design, implementation and monitoring.

Replicability and Sustainability of the Programme

33. Nearly all the participants (99%) of the spiritual impact survey indicated that Mothers' Union Burundi/Anglican Church has the capacity to expand and implement the programme. Moreover, findings of this study show that the programme is scalable and has already been replicated with great success.
34. The evaluation uncovered the statistic that approximately half of the new 6,200 SLAs formed during waves 2 and 3 were formed independently, without any support from the programme. The level of 'spontaneous replication' of the programme shows that the reach of the programme and the extent of its impact goes far beyond the immediate participants.

⁴ See UN Women 'Buy from women' digital platform and E-CARE ABCD approach

35. The programme was implemented for over 20 years. It was piloted in, and successfully implemented in three programme areas and duplicated in all the dioceses. Successive evaluations, including this longitudinal impact study, have demonstrated that the programme achieved consistent participant outcomes over the years most of which deepened over time.
36. The impact of the programme is not limited to the participants but is diffused to other community members. This is through: i) spontaneous replication of groups; ii) community members being employed in participants' businesses; iii) challenging dominant narratives that underlie gender inequalities – leading to longer term changes such as more women in leadership positions and reduced GBV; and iv) nurturing intergenerational impacts of the programme – leading to, for example, more girls attending school and stronger parenting skills benefitting families
37. The attrition rate of the SLAs is relatively low. An average of 84 percent of the SLAs formed under the programme are still actively saving and loaning together with no ongoing financial support or programme oversight.
38. Mothers' Union Burundi put in place multiple measures, many of them inbuilt in the design, to enhance programme spread and to ensure sustainability. The success factors include:
 - a. Programme implemented by the Mothers' Union Burundi under the Anglican Church, and welcoming all faiths and none.
 - b. Programme underpinned by faith in action.
 - c. Literacy creates social capital and SLAs catalyse sustainability of collective action.
 - d. Effective leadership and consistency.
 - e. Programme implementers are in close proximity to the participant communities.
 - f. Sustained capacity building for trainers and facilitators.
 - g. Spirit of volunteerism.
 - h. Standardisation of the PLA programme methodology.
 - i. Intentional spiritual engagement.
 - j. Adoption of gender transformative approaches.
 - k. Systematic monitoring, evaluation, accountability, learning and documentation.

Celebrating More Than 20 Years of Stellar Achievements

Highlights of key impacts attributed to the programme

- Over 144,000 people accredited as literate (78% of whom are women) according to the national standards of adult literacy. This is an estimated 2.9% of the adult literate population in Burundi.
- Over 6,200 savings groups formed, about half of which were established with direct support from the programme.
- 99% of the programme participants reported improved self-esteem. They pointed out that they loved and valued themselves more and perceived themselves as being worthy human beings who are valuable to their spouses, their families and to society.
- All female programme participants testified that they had learnt new things and unlearnt information from years of internalising dominant narratives that undermine women's potential.
- Over half of the surveyed female programme participants have been elected for leadership positions and two thirds joined other community networks.
- 97% of the married male programme participants pointed out that they share domestic work with their spouses. By easing women's domestic work burden, the programme contributed to freeing up their time for self-development and labour for participation in productive work such as income generating activities.
- 86% of female and 90% of male programme participants reported reduced domestic/intimate partner violence.
- 98% of female and male programme participants advocate against sexual and gender-based violence.
- 81% of the female programme participants diversified their businesses and are financially independent of their husbands.
- In 2006, only 15% of the female programme participants owned productive assets including land and cattle. Seventeen years later:
 - ▶ 91% were able to buy goats or pigs.
 - ▶ 81% were able to diversify their livelihoods and/or businesses.
 - ▶ 71% were able to buy a mobile phone.
 - ▶ 52% were able to buy land.
 - ▶ 33% were able to buy cattle.
- 62% of the participants in the 2000-2009 wave, compared to 34% in the 2018-current wave, reported that, as a result of the programme, they were able to buy land. This is a significant difference of 28%.
- Ownership and effective mobilisation of productive assets improved household outcomes without any injection of outside capital.
- Most female (98%) and male (95%) programme participants became more resilient and are able to cope with adverse shocks and stresses and to adapt to uncertainties.
- 98% of female and male programme participants report improved relationships with neighbours / community
- The programme participants serve as role models and disseminate empowering messages to other members of the community as a way of transforming mind-sets for gender equality, women's empowerment and transformation of families.
- 84% of saving and loans associations (SLAs) formed more than a decade ago are still functional without input from the programme.
- 93% of the SLAs have a repayment rate of above 90%.
- 90% of the female programme participants started a business, and 83% have two or three businesses.
- 94% of female and 99% of male programme participants employ at least one other person in their businesses.
- Nearly all female programme participants reported that they had ever accessed a loan (97%), had business training (100%) or were engaged in an income generating activity (90%) up from one in 10 participants in 2013.
- 45% of the participants in the first programme wave (2000-2009) indicated that they had opened an individual account at a bank or cooperative compared to 19% in the current wave (2018-present), a difference of 26%.
- 95% of female programme participants can now manage resources / assets better.
- Average monthly savings per member rose from BIF 2,162 (USD 1.7⁵) to the current BIF 4,965 (USD 2.4), an increase of 39% over a ten-year period (2011-2021). The current average loan per member is BIF 66,212 (USD 31.9) up from 25,428 (20.3) in the first year the respective SLAs were formed. This is an improvement of 57%.
- 88% of the female programme participants have increased personal income:
 - ▶ 96% can afford health insurance.
 - ▶ 79% have better quality housing.
 - ▶ 78% can afford higher education for their children.
- Programme implementation never stopped...it continued throughout all the turmoil arising out of civil war and political instability in the country and it brought people together.
- The dedicated, collaborative and sustained partnerships have greatly contributed to the amazing impacts of the programme.

⁵ As per exchange rate in 2010/2011

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Mothers' Union Burundi is a non-profit women's rights organisation. It is a chapter of Mothers' Union, a global Christian charity that aims to demonstrate the Christian faith in action through the transformation of families and communities. Mothers' Union was founded by Mary Sumner in 1876 in the Church of England where her husband was rector. She was inspired to start the movement after the birth of her first grandchild. She recognised the need for mothers to support one another and to be trained in motherhood, something which she saw as a vocation.

The objectives of Mothers' Union are to:

- a. Uphold Christ's teaching on the nature of marriage and promote its wider understanding.
- b. Encourage parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the Church.
- c. Maintain a fellowship of Christians united in prayer and worship and service.
- d. Foster an environment that promotes stable family life and the protection of children.
- e. Help those whose family life has met with adversity.

Mothers' Union Burundi was established in 1948 by women missionaries. At the time, Burundi was a diocese of the Anglican province of Burundi, Rwanda and Boga Zaire. In 1965, Buye diocese was created and subsequently, the dioceses of Bujumbura (1975), Gitega (1985) and Matana (1990). Burundi became an autonomous Anglican Province in 1992. Later, additional dioceses were created, namely: Makamba (1997), Muyinga (2005), Rumonge (2016) and Rutana and Buhiga (2017).

Mothers' Union Burundi operates within the Anglican Church. It uses church structures from sub-parish to parish levels, with coordinating Mothers' Union offices in each diocese. In 1998, a provincial office was established to spearhead all Mothers' Union work countrywide. With a membership of over 24,000, Mothers' Union Burundi aims at empowering women and transforming families through ongoing training, mentoring and counselling underpinned by prayer and Bible study.

Its programme of work is broad and diverse and it includes: evangelism, spiritual mentoring, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), humanitarian assistance, activism against gender-based violence (GBV), vocational training, child protection as well as nutrition and food security. The organisation also provides social assistance to disadvantaged groups including orphans, child-headed households, the sick and prisoners. It also offers age-appropriate, culturally and religious sensitive sexuality education as well as counselling before and during marriage. It supports Christian marriage and empowers its members to improve the wellbeing of their families. Furthermore, it celebrates March 08, the International Women's Day, as a family day involving parents and children.

In 2016, Mothers' Union Burundi registered as a non-profit organisation. Independent legal status notwithstanding, it continues to operate as a women's ministry of the Anglican Church that serves communities. As this longitudinal impact study demonstrates, the impact of the programme has been very significant. Indeed, in 2022 the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby presented a Langton Award for Community Service to Claudette Kigeme, the Mothers' Union Burundi Provincial Coordinator for outstanding community development work in Burundi. This is awarded for outstanding contribution to the community in accordance with the Church's teaching.



MEET CLAUDETTE

Mothers' Union is proud to share that Claudette Kigeme, is the recipient of The Langton Award for Community Service.

The Archbishop of Canterbury announced the recipients of the 2022 Lambeth Awards on 08/03/2022.

Claudette Kigeme, MU Burundi's Provincial Coordinator, has won The Langton Award for Community Service for outstanding work in one of the poorest countries of the world, Burundi, enabling over 78,000 people to transform their lives.

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

1.2 Collaborative Partnerships

In 2000, the Mothers' Union Literacy and Development Programme (MULDP) was launched in Burundi in partnership with Mothers' Union. In 2010, Mothers' Union Burundi partnered with Five Talents, a Christian charity aimed at transforming lives through microenterprise development.

Five Talents was founded in 1998 at the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops where churches (in lower-income countries) expressed the need to find community-led solutions to addressing economic disadvantage. In response, Five Talents was established with the mission to 'transform lives through economic empowerment.' A key component of this mission is Five Talents' belief and practice of partnerships through which in-country partners not only deliver programmes, but their capacity to own and manage them is also enhanced. Five Talents' core partnership programmes enable communities (experiencing socio-economic exclusion) to achieve their own change through the development of savings and loans associations (SLAs), together with financial stewardship and business skills training.

This innovative approach to reducing poverty and strengthening partner programme teams complements the work of Mothers' Union Burundi and provided an effective 'next step' to MULDP. In 2010, Mothers' Union Burundi, Mothers' Union and Five Talents designed a Literacy and Financial Education Programme (LFEP) incorporating SLA and business skills training.

Five Talents and Mothers' Union jointly applied to Läkarmissionen (LM), another key partner, for support to the LFEP pilot phase. LM is a non-profit global faith-based foundation that has been operating since 1958 in response to the direct needs of impoverished communities in more than 80 countries. Besides programme support, LM offered operations and financial management training to Mothers' Union Burundi. Initially, LM sent funds through Five Talents but with the enhanced Mothers' Union Burundi capacity, it started funding the programme directly.

Promotion of stable family life and protection of children is one of Mothers' Union Burundi's key objectives. Accordingly, it identified parenting education as an important component with the potential to benefit families. In response to Mothers' Union Burundi's request, LM supported the incorporation of parenting education into the programme in 2016.

At this stage, Mothers' Union Burundi created a collaborative partnership arrangement in which all three funding and technical support partners (Mothers' Union, Five Talents and LM) received one set of budgets, reports, updates and evaluations for the programme. This efficient and rare example of collaborative partnership is much to the credit of Mothers' Union Burundi and its three partners who all endeavoured to work well together.

Development Services International Ltd (DSI), which is directed by a former Five Talents staff who supported the programme since 2010, is the most recent partner. DSI brought its special interest by providing spiritual retreat for Mothers' Union Burundi team as well as evaluating the spiritual impacts of the programme. This is another strength of Mothers' Union Burundi in developing and maintaining key relationships and forging strong partnerships.

DSI is a consulting and project management firm based in New Zealand that is in service to the development sectors within international corporate and nonprofit NGO communities. Areas of operation include South and South-East Asia and Africa and it specialises in: i) the establishment of development foundations and NGOs; ii) business development; iii) community savings and lending programmes; iv) cooperative banking; and v) governance development.

The partners have contributed dedicated and long-term support to the programme. They complement each other, work together and have adopted harmonised approaches to planning, resource mobilisation and reporting. While the different partners funded different components of the programme, the support collectively contributed to the vision of Mothers' Union Burundi and to the impacts elaborated in this report. In collaboration with the existing structures and complementing the resources of the Anglican Church and Mothers' Union Burundi, the partners have greatly contributed to the success and sustainability of the programme.

1.3 Burundi Socio-Economic Context

With a human development index (HDI) of 0.426, Burundi is categorised amongst the least developed nations ranking 187 out of the 191 countries assessed (UNDP, 2022). Women comprise 50.6 percent of the estimated total population of 12.7 million people.⁶ Burundi is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with a density ratio of 463 people per km². According to the 2016/2017 Burundi Demographic and Health Survey (EDSB-III), the average household size is 4.8 persons. Additionally, three out of ten households (29%) are headed by women and almost half (49%) of the household population is made up of children under the age of 15. The majority of the population (80%) is employed in the agricultural sector.

⁶ <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/burundi-population/>

The country is still suffering the effects of a civil war that lasted 12 years: 1993-2005. This devastated communities, disrupted family relationships, interrupted access to education and exacerbated gender disparities. It also affected social relations leading to decreased social cohesion, a weakening of social capital as well as reduced resilience and plunged a significant proportion of the population into abject poverty. The country is one of the poorest in the world. Three out of four people (75.1%) live in multidimensional poverty (UNDP and OPHI, 2021). Additionally, 64.9 percent of the population live below the national income poverty line and 72.8 percent live on less than USD 1.90 a day (UNDP, 2022).

Whereas the national adult literacy rates of women (61%) and men are relatively high (76%), the mean years of schooling are low (World Bank, 2022). The average number of completed years of education of the country's population aged 25 years and older, is 2.5 years and 3.9 years for women and men, respectively (UNDP, 2022). This suggests that a notable proportion of the population is unlikely to attend school and according to UNESCO⁷, these are likely to be girls, children living in rural areas and children from the poorest households. According to the 2013-201 Burundi Household Survey (ISTEEBU, 2014), poverty and education are inextricably linked. The survey reports that the poverty rate of households whose head had no education was 74.8 percent, which was higher than the then national average of 44.1 percent. In contrast, the poverty rate of those whose head had achieved a higher level of education was lower than the national average.

UNDP and OPHI (2021) report that people who experience multidimensional poverty typically: i) Live with an out-of-school child; ii) Live in households in which no member has completed at least six years of schooling; iii) Lack assets; iv) Lack improved drinking water within a 30-minute roundtrip walk; v) Are at a higher risk of intimate partner violence (IPV) against women and girls; vi) Live in a household with at least one undernourished person; and vii) Are exposed to solid cooking fuels, inadequate sanitation and substandard housing.

1.4 Profile of Women in Burundi

According to the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), women in Burundi experience medium levels of general discrimination (OECD, 2014). With a Gender Development Index of 0.935⁸, Burundi is categorised under those countries with relatively high equality in Human Development Index (HDI) achievements between women and men (UNDP, 2022). The country's performance is also excellent as regards the Global Gender Gap Index that seeks to measure the relative gaps between women and men across four key areas, namely: health, education, economy and politics (WEF, 2021). This is largely attributed to the relatively small gaps between women's and men's labour force participation rates as well as earned incomes. Burundi ranks 3rd out of 156 countries in regard to women's economic participation and opportunity albeit in an economy where employment opportunities are scarce and income levels are low. Further to that, it ranks 127 out of 191 countries in the 2021 Gender Inequality Index that benchmarks national gender gaps based on economic, political, education and health criteria (UNDP, 2022).

Table 1 highlights Burundi's ranking, globally, with regards to key gender indices. As the table shows the country ranks well with regards to women's economic participation (3rd), health and survival (33rd) as well as political empowerment (36th). With a ranking of 132, the country's performance in relation to women's educational attainment is quite poor.

Table 1: Key Gender Equality and Women's Rights Indicators (Ranking Globally)

Key Indicator	Source	Year	Value	Rank	Total Countries Ranked
Human Development Index	UNDP	2022	0.426	187	191
Gender Development Index	UNDP	2022	0.935	-	-
Gender Inequality Index	UNDP	2022	0.505	127	191
Global Gender Gap Index 2021	WEF	2021	0.769	26	156
Economic participation and opportunity	WEF	2021	0.855	3	156
Educational attainment	WEF	2021	0.896	132	156
Health and survival	WEF	2021	0.979	33	156
Political empowerment	WEF	2021	0.345	36	156

Sources: UNDP, 2022. *The 2021/2022 Human Development Report*, WEF, 2021. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2021*

⁷ <https://dakar.iiep.unesco.org/en/news/education-and-training-burundi-priorities-constrained-environment>

⁸ The closer the ratio is to 1, the smaller the gap between women and men.

Burundi has a relatively progressive gender policy environment with the potential to protect and promote women's rights. The national Constitution (2005) prohibits gender discrimination and guarantees at least 30 percent women's representation in the executive, national assembly and the senate and as a result, women's share of seats in parliament in the country is one of the highest in Africa. Furthermore, the revised Electoral Law (2009) provides that at least 30 percent of the 15-member Communal Councils must be women. A relatively high proportion of women (60%) also participate in decisions pertaining to own health care and major household purchases (World Bank, 2022).

Nonetheless, social culture continues underlying prevailing norms and values that often create and then dictate differential rights, responsibilities, entitlements and participation between women and men. These are reflected in deep-rooted inequalities between women and men within the household and in society. On average, women spend 5.5 more hours per day on household tasks and care work than men (USAID, 2017). Whereas both women and men are involved in agricultural production, women are traditionally involved in production for home consumption and men for the market.

With regards to parental practices, girls are typically assigned responsibilities such as household work and taking care of children in preparation of women's socially ascribed role of stay-at-home wives and mothers. In contrast, boys are socialised to be more outward looking in preparation of their future role as providers and leaders. Accordingly, it is socially acceptable for girls to leave school to support unpaid domestic work. According to the 2016/2017 EDSB-III, one out of five (19%) girls in Burundi is married by age 18. This is despite the Persons and Family Law (1993) that prohibits child marriage.

The lack of an inheritance law limits women's secure access to land with only 16.5 percent owning land jointly or alone (World Bank, 2022). This restricts their decision-making power over the crops they grow and any income that accrues from the sale of that produce. Besides, it limits their access to credit that requires collateral in the form of fixed assets such as land.

Decades of armed conflict have fostered a culture of normalisation of violence in Burundi. The prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is relatively high, with rape and IPV being the most widespread. According to UNICEF, women and girls are nearly four times more likely, than men, to experience sexual violence in the country.⁹ Nearly one out of two women (47%) have experienced IPV and one out of five (23%) sexual violence (World Bank, 2022). This is despite the Law on the Protection of Victims and the Prevention and Punishment of Sexual and GBV of 2016 that outlaws, amongst others, domestic violence, rape (including spousal rape), and sexual harassment. The incidence of SGBV in the country is apparently on the increase and other gender inequalities are perpetuated due to gaps in the laws, the inadequacies in their implementation and/or impunity of the perpetrators.¹⁰

Table 2 over leaf summarises key¹¹ gender equality and women's rights indicators in Burundi.

⁹ <https://www.unicef.org/stories/abuse-impunity-and-sexual-violence-burundi>

¹⁰ Representative of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender at the validation meeting of the findings of this study.

¹¹ Some of the data is not collected and thus not available

Table 2: Key Gender Equality and Women's Rights Indicators

Key Indicator	Source	Year	F	M	National
Education					
Expected years of schooling	UNDP	2022	10.9	10.5	10.7
Mean years of schooling	UNDP	2022	2.5	3.9	3.1
Population with at least some secondary education (% ages 25 and older)	UNDP	2022	7.8	13.0	
Adult literacy rates (%)	World Bank	2022	61.2	76.3	
Health					
Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)	UNDP	2022	548		
Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15–19)	UNDP	2022	536		
Infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	UNDP	2022	37.9		
Women who make at least 4 antenatal care visits (%)	World Bank	2022	49.3		
Births which occur in a health facility (%)	WEF	2021	85.1		
Unmet need for contraception	World Bank	2022	29.7		
Sexual and Gender Based Violence					
Proportion aged 15-49 who have ever experienced sexual violence (%)	UNICEF ¹²	2018	23.1		
Proportion aged 15-49 ever experienced spousal physical or sexual violence – intimate partner violence (%)	World Bank	2022	46.7		
Participation in Decision-Making					
Share of seats in parliament	UNDP	2022	38.9	61.1	
Participation in household decision-making (2017) - %	World Bank	2022	60.3		
Employment and Land Ownership					
Labour force participation rate (% ages 15 and older)	UNDP	2022	79.0	77.4	
Wage and salaried workers (% of employment)	World Bank	2022	9.6	19.2	
Vulnerable employment, by sex (% of total employment)	World Bank	2022	83.4	79.1	
Women who own land both alone and jointly (%)	World Bank	2022	14.5		
Men who own land alone	World Bank	2022		21.9	
Income Distribution					
Gross national income (GNI) per capita (US\$, PPP)	UNDP	2022	668	797	732

Sources: UNDP, 2022. The 2021/2022 Human Development Report, World Bank, 2022. Gender Data Portal. Burundi Gender Landscape.

¹² <https://www.unicef.org/stories/abuse-impunity-and-sexual-violence-burundi>

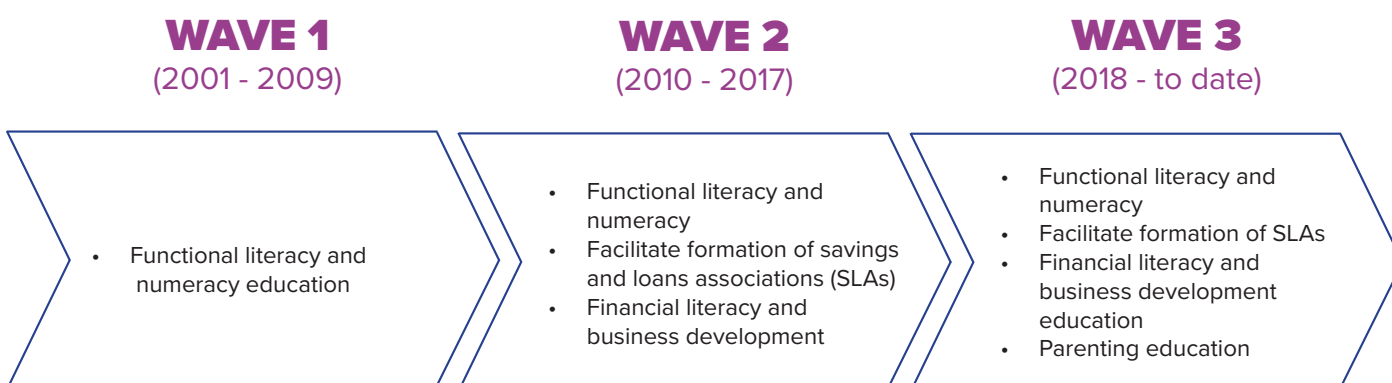
1.5 The Literacy and Financial Education Programme

1.5.1 Overview of the programme

The programme is implemented by Mothers' Union Burundi in partnership with Mothers' Union, Five Talents, Development Services International (DSI) and Lakarmissionen. The programme, which is delivered through the Anglican Church of Burundi, was launched in 2000 as a three-year pilot adult literacy and numeracy programme and scaled up in 2004. The overall objective of the programme is to reduce poverty and to empower disadvantaged groups, and in particular women.

The programme adopted a rolling wave planning approach. This flexible approach allowed the programme to evolve and adapt to emerging participants' needs, build on lessons learnt and global best practices. Additional components were progressively incorporated largely, designed to implement recommendations arising out of the periodic programme evaluations. The programme was implemented in three waves. (Figure 1)

Figure 1: The Literacy and Financial Education Programme by Wave, Timeframe and Activities



1.5.2 Programme area

The programme is delivered through Mothers' Union of the Anglican Church of Burundi and is implemented across the whole country in nine programme areas (Anglican dioceses) namely Buhiga, Bujumbura, Buye, Gitega, Makamba, Matana, Muyinga, Rumonge and Rutana. Within these areas (dioceses), the programme works with communities that typically experience high levels of poverty, marginalisation and disadvantage, where access to services such as education, health, markets and financial institutions are restricted. The programme was piloted in 2000 in three dioceses, namely: Bujumbura, Buye and Makamba, was extended to Gitega and Matana in 2004 and was progressively expanded to other dioceses as they were created: Muyinga (2005), Rumonge (2013) and Rutana and Buhiga (2017).

“ Our groups include everybody...we (facilitators) do not belong to any one denomination...we belong to everybody...those who pray...those who do not pray...those who believe and those that do not believe, are all welcome.”

- Male facilitator, Mukungu community Makamba diocese

1.5.3 Programme participants

The programme targets communities and groups that self-identify as 'poor' and are marginalised by their socio-economic circumstances. The target population are illiterate, a key indicator of marginalisation in Burundi. The programme was implemented in a total of 1,289 communities and reached 165,416 participants

a. Participants

- Adult women and men who missed an opportunity of formal education.
- Accredited learners mobilised into community savings and loans associations.

b. Frontline workers

- Mothers' Union Burundi provincial steering committee:** Provides overall guidance and direction to the programme.
- Mothers' Union Burundi provincial staff members:** Provide technical oversight to programme implementation.

- **Trainers:** Play a catalytic and promotional function in advancing programme coverage and impact. They work with, and through volunteer facilitators to deliver the programme activities. They train and offer supervisory support to the facilitators and are involved in benchmarking, performance monitoring and report writing.
- **Volunteer facilitators:** Facilitate literacy and numeracy, financial and parental education and initiate and sustain participants' engagement in SLAs.
- **Diocesan steering committees:** Identify participant communities in collaboration with the trainers, mobilise programme participants and offer advisory and supervisory support to the trainers.
- **Local steering committees:** Facilitate the community entry process, mobilise programme participants and provide advisory support to facilitators.

While the target is 70 percent female participants, the programme is inclusive of all adults irrespective of gender, age, disability, marital status, religion and ethnic group. As **Table 3** shows, most programme participants are female (77%) and nearly one out of five (49%) are young people aged below 29 years. A few participants (0.5%) are aged 16-17 years. These are all recognised as (legal) adults by their respective communities (âge révolu) and have already been issued national identification cards.

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) comprise only 0.1 percent of the participants. Majority of the participants (88%) are married and are Christian (98%). The programme has a no proselytising policy and participants are not compelled to convert their religion. The programme deliberately does not collect data on participants' ethnicity because of the country's history of ethnic conflict.

Table 3: Programme Participants by Gender, Age, Disability, Marital Status and Religion

Programme Participants	No.	%
By Gender		
Female	126,501	76.5
Male	38,915	23.5
By Age (years)		
<18	869	0.5
18-29	80,625	48.7
30-49	71,355	43.1
>50	12,567	7.6
By Disability		
Persons without disability	165,235	99.9
Persons with disability	181	0.1
By Marital Status		
Married	146,152	88.4
Single	6,588	4.0
Divorced	1,416	0.9
Widowed	5,946	3.6
Cohabiting	5,314	3.2
By Religion		
Anglican	84,627	51.2
Catholic	56,054	33.9
Other Christian denominations	21,172	12.8
Muslim	1,476	0.9
Others	2,087	1.3

Source: Raw data from the Programme Team.

1.6 Objectives of the Longitudinal Impact Study

The overall objective of the longitudinal impact study was to assess the impact of the programme against the specified theory of change (Annex 1). The study was outcomes-based and focused on transformational impacts over the extended period of programme implementation. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- a. Establish the long-term outcomes of the programme, including unexpected results, depth of impact over time and contribution to the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- b. Evaluate the impact of the programme on women's empowerment, gender equality, family life, social cohesion and peacebuilding as well as the church and the engagement of its members.
- c. Examine the uniqueness of the programme interventions in terms of combining tools such as PLA tools, participatory Bible studies and SLAs.
- d. Assess the sustainability of the hierarchy of outcomes over time and beyond the programme life.
- e. Analyse the lessons learnt, including the replicability of the programme.

1.7 Structure of the Report

The report is organised in six sections.

- **SECTION 1** provides this introduction.
- **SECTION 2** describes the programme activities and documented results.
- **SECTION 3** details the methodology used to conduct the longitudinal impact study.
- **SECTION 4** presents the impact of the programme, including unintended ones, against the specified theory of change.
- **SECTION 5** analyses the sustainability of the programme including the proximate causes of beneficial impacts.
- **SECTION 6** presents the conclusions and recommendations including the replicability of the programme.

A spiritual impact report and nine verbatim diocesan-specific reports are presented under different covers.

2. Programme Implementation and Direct Results

2.1 Programme Methodology

The programme is implemented using diverse techniques including participatory learning and action (PLA) as well as asset based community development that are both culturally sensitive and respect different forms of social organisation. As with all Mothers' Union Burundi work, prayer underpins all the programmes activities. An underlying principle of the programme methodology is that learning should relate directly to the lifestyles and the needs of the participants. The facilitators use diverse PLA tools to ensure that the training is relevant to the participants' priority. The programme provides a safe space for discussion of issues such as women's empowerment, poverty, gender-based violence, human rights, unpaid care work, family life, nutrition, sanitation, children's rights, conflict, faith, climate change, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. This methodology is applied to all components of the programme.

2.1.1 Community envisioning

This is a key aspect of the programme undertaken at the start to help the community to prepare for their literacy circles. It helps them to think about the type of community they want to live in and how, through the programme, they can achieve this vision. Mothers' Union Burundi shares the aims of the programme and the intended target population: self-selecting illiterate people who are living in multidimensional poverty and do not participate in community life. Thereafter, the community selects a respected and literate member to become their volunteer literacy facilitator. Each community elects its local steering committee, an average 6-7 members including a priest, a Mothers' Union Burundi leader, a community leader, the facilitator and two programme participants.

2.1.2 Role of the facilitator and the steering committees

Volunteerism is at the heart of delivering the programme. The facilitators are literate volunteers chosen by their communities to run the literacy circles and savings and loans associations (SLAs). Each facilitator, on average, receives training on three separate occasions over a two-year period - adult literacy education, parenting skills and savings/business skills. The Literacy and Financial Education Programme (LFEP) trainers provide regular mentoring and the steering committee provide a direct role in supporting the facilitator and their literacy circles. Facilitators give several hours a week to working with their circles. On average literacy circles meet once a week for approximately two hours each time. Throughout the two years that each facilitator works with a literacy circle/SLA they only receive a small one-time incentive - a bicycle and mobile phone - to help with local travel and communication. The dedication and volunteerism of the facilitator is integral to the success and sustainability of each literacy circle and SLA as well as the wider programme. This longitudinal study has shown that after the two years, most facilitators start the process off again with a new literacy circle which transforms into an SLA after about one year.

2.1.3 Participatory Learning Approach (PLA) tools

PLA tools are part of the REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) approach to adult literacy which was developed by Action Aid and builds on the work of both Paulo Freire and Robert Chambers creating an empowering process whilst becoming alphabetical and numeric literate.

PLA tools link the process of literacy with the process of social change, in which learners are the active actors, determining the issues and the learning and developing their own 'texts'. There are no pre-printed textbooks or primers, instead, visual and oral PLA tools are used to enable non-literate people to 'articulate their knowledge'. Each literacy circle develops its own learning materials through discussion, drama, stories, dance or the joint construction of maps, charts, calendars and diagrams that represent their local situation. This enables learners to conduct an analysis of their situation and to plan appropriate action to address their prioritised needs. By linking oral and visual literacy tools, with alphabetical and numeric literacy, the learners build their self-confidence, acquire new skills as well as the ability to make decisions and organise themselves. The learners' analysis of their situation is not separate from, but part of the experience of their respective communities. Therefore, this approach reaches out beyond the literacy circles and has the potential to benefit the wider community in which the circles operate.

2.1.4 Participatory Bible Studies

Participatory Bible Studies are a didactic tool that enables programme participants to examine and discuss key themes from the Bible in relation to their own context, cultural background and life experience. The aim is 'application' to enable personal and societal change - members identify key challenges faced within Biblical passages, delving deeper into understanding the root causes and practical strategies to address these challenges in their own lives. The tool is member-centred, 'facilitated' rather than 'taught' and thus encourages active and equal participation. This empowers the programme participants to be agents of change, reducing barriers to social inclusion.

Examples of participatory Bible Studies include: Mark 10:46-52: Blind Bartimaeus - recognising and responding to the 'voiceless' in society. 2 Kings 4:1-7: Elisha and the widow's oil - understanding resource mobilisation. These are used both in the Literacy groups and SLAs.

2.1.5 Economic Empowerment Tool

The Economic Empowerment Tool provided by Five Talents is the development of Savings and Loan Associations (SLAs), also known as 'Savings Groups', that are designed to be self-sustaining. The Bible-based curriculum Promoting Church-Centered Savings and Credit Associations (new edition named Restore Savings) was created by Chalmers Center for Economic Development to support the promotion of savings and credit groups as an outreach of the local church. Members are trained to manage their SLA operations: electing leaders among themselves (chair, treasurer and secretary); developing a SLA constitution (that includes bylaws for savings and loaning); and keeping each other accountable (effective book-keeping). The SLA raise their own loan capital through their collective savings and are not dependent on any external loan funds.

Members further participate in business skills training, enabling them to develop a microenterprise with the aim to increase household income, investment, welfare and wellbeing. The Business skills curriculum was designed by the Chalmers Center in collaboration with Freedom from Hunger to be used in the context of savings groups and to improve financial education and business development through a biblical worldview. Short and simple learning conversations are designed to meet the learning needs of vulnerable women and men and the lessons communicate a biblical world and life view perspective in the context of issues related to small business principles and household financial management.

2.1.6 Parenting education

The objective of parenting education is to promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children. The training equips participants with knowledge to adapt their parenting styles to use alternate methods of communication, setting healthy boundaries and discipline alongside recognition of abuse to create flourishing families.

2.1.7 Sustained methodology

The different methodologies build upon each other to enable the programme to be versatile, relevant and contextual. The methodology is a key strength of the programme and the foundation for its huge impact, success and sustainability in the recipient communities. The combination of PLA tools and Bible studies help the literacy circle participants (learners) to discuss agriculture, parenting, S/GBV and business skills as well as other relevant issues in their communities. The learners are able to identify solutions to their problems whilst becoming literate. They continue to use the methodology within their SLAs from year to year as self-managing groups without outside intervention. PLAs are a long-term tool for community empowerment.

2.2 Programme Management

The programme operates within the Mothers' Union Burundi structure, is overseen by a provincial steering committee, managed by diocesan steering committees and implemented through local community committees. Community steering committees are made up of 6-7 members including the local priest, community and Mothers' Union Burundi leaders, a group facilitator and a group member on a revolving membership. The committees support the facilitator in community mobilisation and awareness creation. The committees are supported by the programme trainers. While the programme participants self-select, the steering committees can invite or encourage community members to join the programme.

2.3 Functional Literacy and Numeracy Training

2.3.1 Training volunteer facilitators

The facilitators are selected by the programme communities based on specific criteria such as residence in the community, morality, integrity as well as their ability to read and write. This is in addition to their interest and their capacity to help participants to become literate and numerate and to participate in SLAs. As **Table 4** shows, the programme has trained a total of 1,291 facilitators, 69 percent of whom are women. In 2000, the National Literacy Services participated in the training of the facilitators for quality assurance.

Whereas the facilitators work as volunteers, after their initial training, they receive a one-off incentive in the form of a bicycle and telephone to support transport and communications. In future years, if they choose to attend refresher training and start new SLAs that they monitor for the programme, they may receive an Igitenge (African print fabric) or Bible.

Table 4: Programme Facilitators Trained by Gender and Programme Area

Programme Area/Diocese	Female		Male		Total ¹³
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Buhiga	74	68.5	34	31.5	108
Bujumbura	91	62.3	55	37.7	146
Buye	219	75.8	70	24.2	289
Gitega	81	71.7	32	28.3	113
Makamba	136	76.4	42	23.6	178
Matana	52	69.3	23	30.7	75
Muyinga	75	59.5	51	40.5	126
Rumonge	92	63.0	54	37.0	146
Rutana	71	64.5	39	35.5	110
TOTAL	891	69.0	400	31.0	1,291

Source: Raw data from the Programme Team.

All the facilitators met are proud to be associated with the programme and are happy to work as volunteers. The box below presents some of the factors that motivate them to become facilitators.

Self-reported reasons for becoming volunteer facilitators

- Request from community/church/Mothers' Union Burundi leadership.
- The programme is special.
- Give back (former programme participants)
- Network with others.
- Enhance social status.
- Motivated by love.
- A desire to help other women.
- High levels of illiteracy in the community.
- Inspired by the contribution of the programme participants to their families, communities and the church.
- Persistent and unacceptable gender inequalities: high incidences of GBV, girls not being sent to school.
- Husbands experiencing financial challenges and thus unable to support their families.
- Support neighbours to become literate.
- Great need for literate lay persons in the Church.
- A calling to serve others.
- A calling to share knowledge.
- A calling to serve God.

Sources: Multiple interviews and discussions with programme facilitators

¹³ The disparities in number of facilitators across the dioceses is on account of the year the programme was introduced in, and the number of parishes in the respective diocese.

2.3.2 Functional literacy and numeracy education

Functional literacy and numeracy education, in vernacular, is the foundational component that underlies and forms the basis of the programme. It is the building blocks to other components of the programme and is essential for its success. The learning is led by a facilitator using the REFLECT approach that involves discussion and analysis of issues relevant to the learners. The approach uses the adult learners' life experiences as the basis for learning. Using PLA tools such as maps, calendars and matrices, the learners analyse different aspects of their own lives. The programme focuses on learning words based on a discussion of the priority issues facing women and affecting family life and solutions to these. With this transformative approach, learners, female and male alike, gain increased awareness of gender equality, women's rights, the role of the family and the importance of promoting positive masculinity. Additionally, they acknowledge their ability to become agents of change within their own lives, their families and communities.

Working together with the facilitators, the learners take action in different ways depending on the prioritised issues. They typically engage their respective local administrations and where there is a need for advocacy at a higher level, the trainers and provincial staff get involved. Amongst other platforms, the participants use the International Women's Day (March 8th) and the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence to create awareness about, and advocate for gender equality and women's rights. They also influence the leadership through once-off or sustained campaigns for gender justice.

The learners meet once a week over a period of up to one year. A cumulative total of 165,392 people have participated in the literacy and numeracy training, 77 percent of whom are women. (Table 5)

Table 5: Literacy and Numeracy Training Participants by Gender and Programme Area

Programme Area/Diocese	Female		Male		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Buhiga	11,383	71.2	4,606	28.8	15,989
Bujumbura	10,412	76.4	3,221	23.6	13,633
Buye	31,380	78.1	8,821	21.9	40,201
Gitega	12,181	81.9	2,701	18.1	14,882
Makamba	13,282	72.8	4,958	27.2	18,240
Matana	10,193	76.7	3,099	23.3	13,292
Muyinga	13,837	82.7	2,889	17.3	16,726
Rumonge	14,379	73.1	5,282	26.9	19,661
Rutana	9,430	73.9	3,338	26.1	12,768
TOTAL	126,477	76.5	38,915	23.5	165,392

Source: Raw data from the Programme Team.

2.3.3 Accreditation of learners

Learners who attain basic literacy and numeracy, to a nationally recognised standard, are issued a programme certificate of accreditation¹⁴. As with the training of the facilitators, the National Literacy Services was initially involved in the evaluation of the learners' literacy and numeracy skills as a basis for awarding them their certificate. 144,103 learners have been accredited to date, which comprises an impressive average of 87 percent of the participants of the literacy and numeracy education component. This is a contribution of 2.9 percent to the estimated 5,030,955 adult population in Burundi who can read and write¹⁵. The accreditation rate for female learners (89%) is relatively higher than that of their male counterparts (80%). (Table 6) According to the programme team, many of the unaccredited learners continue participating in different aspects of the programme with some eventually being certified as literate.

Post-literacy activities consist of encouraging accredited learners to continue reading, to use the skills acquired and to engage in development activities including income generation. Prior to the SLAs component, most learners formed groups, some of which were involved in collective production and rotating savings and credit.

¹⁴ This accreditation is recognised by the Government.

¹⁵ Sources: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?locations=BI>; <https://apiportal.uis.unesco.org/bdds> (extracted data from 2021)

Table 6: Accredited Learners to Date by Gender and Programme Area

Programme Area/Diocese	Female		Male		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Buhiga	11,137	71.2	4,514	28.8	15,651
Bujumbura	8,801	79.9	2,218	20.1	11,019
Buye	27,479	79.1	7,273	20.9	34,752
Gitega	9,273	88.0	1,264	12.0	10,537
Makamba	11,568	75.1	3,827	24.9	15,395
Matana	8,725	82.8	1,818	17.2	10,543
Muyinga	12,453	84.2	2,334	15.8	14,787
Rumonge	14,058	75.0	4,689	25.0	18,747
Rutana	9,362	73.9	3,310	26.1	12,672
TOTAL	112,856	78.3	31,247	21.7	144,103
Accreditation rate (%)	89.2		80.3		87.1

Source: Raw data from the Programme Team.

2.4 Facilitate the Formation of Savings and Loans Associations

After the literacy and numeracy training, the facilitators assist in the formation of savings and loans associations (SLAs) comprised of accredited learners. Since 2010, a cumulative total of 6,271 SLAs have been formed under the programme (**Table 7**) comprising of more than 144,000 members, 78 percent of whom are women. Nearly all the accredited literacy learners are members of the SLAs. (**Table 8**) The SLAs are made up of self-selected members with an average of 23 people.

The SLAs are trained in financial literacy and business development (see **Section 2.5**), prepare a constitution to guide their operations and elect their leadership. Members meet weekly, bi-weekly or monthly to save and loan money as a group using their regulations, following a participatory savings and loans methodology. Depending on the SLA, all members may save the same or different amounts. After accumulating enough money (4-6 months), the members start to loan amongst themselves. Members borrow money from the pool of savings for family needs or income generating activities. Loans are repaid to the group with a small interest rate.

After a period of 12 months, the savings and interest on loans are shared out. After each share-out, the SLAs immediately begin another cycle of saving and borrowing. Mature SLAs may decide to pay dividends to their members instead of sharing-out. All the SLAs under the programme have a separate emergency fund where each member contributes an agreed amount. The funds are used in emergencies largely for the SLA membership but also for assistance to the wider community. All the activities of the SLAs are governed by their respective constitutions. These are underpinned by spiritual principles of trust, loyalty, humility, transparency and discipline.

Table 7: SLAs by Programme Area and Average Membership

Programme Area/Diocese	No.	Average Membership
Buhiga	652	21
Bujumbura	501	24
Buye	1,455	22
Gitega	438	24
Makamba	689	24
Matana	487	22
Muyinga	654	22
Rumonge	806	23
Rutana	589	23
TOTAL	6,271	23

Source: Raw data from the Programme Team.

Table 8: Members of Savings and Loans Associations by Gender and Programme Area

Programme Area/Diocese	Female		Male		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Buhiga	11,132	71.2	4,512	28.8	15,644
Bujumbura	8,799	79.9	2,214	20.1	11,013
Buye	27,474	79.1	7,269	20.9	34,743
Gitega	9,264	88.0	1,258	12.0	10,522
Makamba	11,561	75.2	3,820	24.8	15,381
Matana	8,719	82.8	1,814	17.2	10,533
Muyinga	12,448	84.2	2,331	15.8	14,779
Rumonge	14,055	75.0	4,682	25.0	18,737
Rutana	9,356	73.9	3,307	26.1	12,663
TOTAL	112,808	78.3	31,207	21.7	144,015
% of accredited learners	100		99.9		99.9

Source: Raw data from the Programme Team.

2.5 Financial Literacy and Business Development Training

This involves providing basic financial management and planning skills to enable programme participants to start or improve their businesses. Over the years, the programme became more intentional with regards to spirituality. Accordingly, the training is based on the Chalmers spirit-driven business curriculum designed to inform the programme participants' faith and values and to enable them to:

- Improve their businesses using biblical principles.
- Better manage household and business income.
- Strengthen their biblical worldview related to issues in their everyday lives.

All the 144,015 members of the SLAs have participated in the training.

2.6 Parenting Skills Training

Parenting education equips participants with skills to create a safe space for mutual support to stabilize families to ensure that children feel understood, supported and respected. It is designed to ensure healthy lives and quality lifelong opportunities for children. This is offered as a detailed topic under literacy and numeracy education. It is the latest component of the programme and has, therefore, reached only 9 percent of the accredited learners (7,468) so far. (Table 9)

Table 9: Participants of Parenting Skills Training by Gender and Programme Area

Programme Area/Diocese	Female		Male		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Buhiga	404	67.3	196	32.7	600
Bujumbura	973	81.4	223	18.6	1,196
Buye	862	80.0	216	20.0	1,078
Gitega	560	85.4	96	14.6	656
Makamba	614	78.1	172	21.9	786
Matana	453	82.7	95	17.3	548
Muyinga	446	83.5	88	16.5	534
Rumonge	713	83.9	137	16.1	850
Rutana	964	79.0	256	21.0	1,220
TOTAL	5,989	80.2	1,479	19.8	7,468

Source: Raw data from the Programme Team.

2.7 Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

All the programme waves were informed by baseline and evaluation studies to ensure that they were not only current but relevant to participant interests as well. Baseline studies are also conducted prior to starting implementation of programme activities in the respective participant communities. Furthermore, the facilitators monitor and provide supervisory support to the SLAs for a period of one year after their formation. The monitoring reports from the facilitators are used to track progress and learning.

A total of two mid-point and four end-of-project evaluations have been conducted. (Table 10)

Table 10: Evaluations Conducted over the Years

Year	Evaluation type	Programme
2006	Mid-point evaluation	Literacy and Development Programme (2000-2010)
2009	End-of-project evaluation	Literacy and Development Programme (2000-2010)
2011	Mid-point evaluation	Literacy and Financial Education Programme (2010-2013)
2013	End-of-project evaluation	Literacy and Financial Education Programme (2010-2013)
2016	End-of-project evaluation	Literacy and Financial Education Programme (2013-2016)
2020	End-of-project evaluation	Literacy and Financial Education Programme (2017-2020)

3. Methodology

The longitudinal impact study employed quantitative and qualitative methods and involved a desk review as well as field work conducted in the nine programme areas: Buhiga, Bujumbura, Buye, Gitega, Makamba, Matana, Muyinga, Rumonge and Rutana dioceses. The study was conducted over a nine-month period: March-November, 2022.

Qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), photographs and independent observation. Quantitative data were collected through structured surveys. The tools were designed to allow open-ended discussion, enabling new ideas or issues to emerge that may not have been previously considered. The evaluation participants were strategically selected to facilitate eliciting diverse perspectives. The quantitative surveys were conducted with participants selected using a quasi-experimental sampling. The mix of methods and participants to collect data on the same topic assured validity of the findings. The triangulation also enabled harvesting impacts that were challenging to measure or susceptible to reporting bias.

The participants in the impact study did not receive an honorarium or other benefit.

3.1 Planning for the Longitudinal Impact Study

The longitudinal impact study was led by a team composed of Claudette Kigeme (Mothers' Union Burundi), Maria Owen (Five Talents), Naomi Herbert (Mothers' Union), Suzanne Middleton (DSI), Rose Nyakato and Albert Ssimbwa (Läkarmissionen) and Nite Tanzarn (Independent Consultant) as an external collaborator. Hannah Wichmann provided technical support for digital data processing. The team was supported by the programme implementation staff. The role of the impact study team was to provide technical oversight to ensure the highest standards of quality.

The impact study team initiated the planning process six months prior to the field work. This involved a series of remote meetings intended to:

- a. Clarify the purpose of the impact study.
- b. Agree on appropriate data collection methods, including the study design.
- c. Develop a clear plan and timeline for data collection, analysis and report writing.
- d. Finalise the terms of reference for the impact study.

Prior to the field work, the impact study team organised a two-day in-country planning retreat with participation of all the programme implementers. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- a. Create a shared understanding of the objectives and scope of the impact study.
- b. Develop a retrospective theory of change of the programme. (**Annex 1**) This informed the design of the interview guides for the FGDs and KIIs.
- c. Enhance clarity of individual and collective roles and responsibilities and how these would be coordinated.
- d. Increase awareness of the known unknowns.
- e. Elaborate an improved approach to the impact study.

3.2 Document Review

A document review was conducted to generate information for a contextual analysis as well as the background to the programme. The programme documents reviewed included proposals, baseline studies, annual narrative reports and evaluation reports. Additional relevant literature, including global reports and national surveys, was reviewed to supplement the information elicited from the evaluation participants.

3.3 Discussions with Programme Participants

Qualitative data were gathered through focus groups with people who participated in the programme over the years. A total of 11 focus groups were held in the nine programme areas. The participants were selected by the facilitators in consultation with the trainers and were drawn from across the three waves of the programme. The facilitators further selected a representative sample of an average of eight female and four male participants to provide personal testimonies of the impact of the programme with additional input from other members, where applicable.

3.4 Spiritual Impact Discussions with Anglican Church and Mothers' Union Burundi Leaders

Discussions were held with the Anglican Church and Mothers' Union Burundi leadership to explore the spiritual impact of the programme. The participants included the diocesan Bishops and staff, parish priests, Mothers' Union Burundi parish leaders, presidents and coordinators. A total of eight discussions were held.

Annex 2 presents the details of the diocesan Bishops and staff as well as the Mothers' Union Burundi presidents that participated in the discussions.

3.5 Key Informant Interviews

Key informants were selected purposively from members of the community (non-programme participants) who the trainers thought would provide the best information about the impact of the programme. These included political leaders, religious leaders, community leaders, community workers, teachers and students.

The number of key informants involved in the impact study is too long to be included in this report. Their details are provided in the diocesan level reports.

3.6 Surveys¹⁶

The impact study comprised of four surveys as follows:

- a. Sustainability of savings and loans associations survey
- b. Programme participants' survey
- c. Key informants' survey
- d. Spiritual impact survey

3.6.1 Sustainability of savings and loans associations survey

This survey was conducted by the trainers prior to the impact study field work. The design of the survey was informed by global best practices on sustainability of savings groups. The survey was conducted by the trainers through telephone interviews with the facilitators. An impressive total of 593 facilitators (46% of the total number of volunteer programme facilitators) representing over 2000 SLAs were involved in the survey, 69 percent of whom were female.

3.6.2 Design of the participants', key informants' and the spiritual impact surveys

The findings of the field work, namely the FGDs, KIs and observations, informed the design of the surveys. A seminar was conducted to orient the trainers, who were responsible for the data collection and entry into CommCare. The aim was to have a shared understanding of the goal and specific objectives of the quantitative data to be collected. In particular, the seminar was intended to clarify the why, what and from whom the quantitative data was to be collected. The seminar also emphasised the importance of the ethics of data collection.

3.6.3 Programme participants' survey

This involved self-reporting from 573 direct programme participants, 81 percent of whom were female. Each participant represented a separate SLA and half (52%) were drawn from the second wave (2010-2017) of the programme. (Table 11)

Table 11: Summary of Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participant Survey Respondents

Gender		Age Group (Years)		Marital Status			Programme Wave	
					F	M		
Female	80.8%	18-25	6.3%	Single/never married	5.0%	3.6%	Wave 1: 2000 - 2009	32.6%
Male	19.2%	26-35	21.6%	Married	75.8%	88.2%	Wave 2: 2010 - 2017	51.8%
		36-55	55.8%	Divorced	1.9%	0.0%	Wave 3: 2018 - 2021	15.5%
		56+	16.4%	Widow/widower	13.8%	0.9%		

3.6.4 Key informants' survey

This involved 271 respondents of whom 51 percent were female and 4.4 percent were persons with disabilities. The respondents were intentionally drawn from different leadership positions: Mothers' Union Burundi (9.6%), political, community and youth leadership (30.3%), community-based organisations and other non-profits (20.6%), school teachers (9.6%) as well as religious leaders from the Anglican Church, other denominations and religions (29.9%).

3.6.5 Spiritual impact survey

This involved 272 respondents, 50 percent of whom were female. The respondents included Bishops (3.3%), Diocesan secretaries (2.6%), archdeacons (7%), pastors (16.2%), catechists (18.8%), Mothers' Union Burundi leaders (36.4%) and youth leaders (16.8%).

¹⁶ The survey tools are available under separate cover here.

3.7 Interviews with Programme Staff

Semi-structured interviews were held with the programme staff to establish the extent to which the programme contributed to strengthening their capacity to effectively manage implementation, monitoring and reporting processes.

3.8 Data Analysis

Responses to the focus group and key informant questions were analysed and grouped according to emergent themes. Information from the surveys was entered into CommCare, a digital platform and software that allows data to be collated, analysed and summarised.

3.9 Validation of the Findings of the Impact Study

The findings of the impact study were validated in multiple ways. The study applied a mixed method approach, which strengthened data validity through triangulation. Data were drawn from a range of sources and similar questions were explored through a range of methods including document review, key informant interviews, discussions and surveys.

Debrief meetings were conducted with the diocesan Bishops and staff at the end of each field visit to the respective dioceses. The purpose of the meetings was to share and validate the preliminary findings, to resolicit information and to explore additional issues. A total of eight debrief meetings were held.

A validation meeting was held with the church leadership, government, Mothers' Union Burundi presidents, partners and the core programme team. The government was represented by the Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender. The aim of the meeting was to get feedback on the findings and conclusions drawn to ensure that they accurately reflected the impact of the programme. The meeting also provided an opportunity to reflect on the processes adopted to implement the programme, draw more meaning of the outcomes, learn successes and mistakes, and provide further evidence of promising practices.

4. Impacts of the Programme

4.1 Programme Benchmarks: Prioritised Issues

In 1998, Mothers' Union Burundi conducted a study that identified the following challenges in the communities, namely: i) poverty; ii) personal safety and security, including GBV; iii) high population growth; iv) illiteracy; v) deterioration of moral values; and vi) high numbers of orphans and widows. Mothers' Union Burundi selected high levels of women's illiteracy as the priority challenge that hinders development. Informed by this, the Mothers' Union Literacy and Development Programme (MULDP) was designed.

During evaluations of the MULDP conducted in 2006 and 2008, the programme participants identified and prioritised several issues of concern in their respective communities. **Table 12** (over leaf) shows that all the issues benchmarked as priority in 1998 continued being identified as challenges. Many of the issues prioritised in 2006 and 2008 are relational, are caused by gender inequality and revolve around women and men's socially ascribed work, as well as the power relations between them. In 2008, women's lack of education was not prioritised as a challenge, a fact attributed to the literacy and numeracy education. However, in the same year the participants identified issues such as inadequate schools, poor healthcare, lack of clean water and climate change as additional priorities. This could be attributed to their enhanced awareness and appreciation of the significance of education, good health and sanitation as well as their improved relationship with creation/environment over the years.

The participants also prioritised personal safety and security largely because the programme was piloted and partly implemented during the 12-year (1993-2005) civil war in the country. This was identified by the men as a priority issue based on the argument that they suffered the most. Abuse of alcohol by the men was identified as one of the underlying causes of financial vulnerability of families. The participants also pointed out that excessive drinking was closely related to family conflict, including domestic violence.

The overall objective of the programme is to reduce poverty and to empower disadvantaged groups, and in particular women. The programme objective is consistent to the prioritised participants' needs. Sections 4.2-4.7 assess the depth of impact of the programme, against the baselines. The sections demonstrate that the programme delivered beneficial and sustained impacts that addressed most of the participants' prioritised concerns.

Table 12: Prioritised Development Issues in the Partner Communities

1998	2006		2008	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
High levels of female illiteracy	High levels of female illiteracy and lack of education for the girl child			
High levels of poverty	Poverty	Poverty due to lack of productive assets such as livestock	Poverty	Poverty, high cost of living, unemployment and inadequate access to productive resources
Gender-based violence	Domestic violence (wife beating)	Disrespectful/ disobedient wives	Domestic violence (wife beating)	
	Sexual violence/rape		Sexual violence/rape	
High population growth	Inadequate family planning: Too early, too frequent and too many children	Non-adoption of family planning by women	Too frequent pregnancies	
Deteriorating moral values	Polygamous and/or adulterous men	Adulterous women and illegal marriages	Polygamy	Polygamy/adultery
	Divorce	Family conflict		Lack of communication between spouses and high levels of divorce
	Excessive drinking by men	Excessive drinking by men		Excessive drinking by men
	Financially irresponsible husbands mismanaging household income	Over-demanding wives (in terms of money for upkeep of the family)		
Growing number of orphans and widows		Conflict in the community	Conflict in the community	
	Women's lack of inheritance rights, particularly land	Inadequate land	Land scarcity /women not inheriting land	Inadequate land
	Women's overburden with domestic work	Disproportionate financial burden (family care and raising children)	Lack of women's rights/ discrimination against women	Injustice
	Discriminatory cultural practices e.g. girl child not valued	Disproportionate impact of insecurity and political instability		
	Women's lack of voice - limited participation in household and public decision-making		Lack of voice in meetings	
	HIV/AIDS	High incidences of malaria	High disease burden: malaria, diarrhea, etc.	HIV/AIDS scourge
	Famine		Infertile soils and food scarcity/ famine	Infertile soils and food scarcity/ insecurity
	Poor housing	Poor housing	Poor housing	
			Lack of schools	Lack of schools
			Poor healthcare	Poor healthcare
			Lack of clean water	Lack of clean water
			Climate change/ unpredictable weather	

Sources: Mothers' Union Burundi, Annual Report, 1998; MULDP Mid-Point Evaluation 2006/07, August 2007 and MULDP. Final Evaluation, April 2009

4.2 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

The programme contributed to multiple dimensions of gender equality and women's empowerment. It brought women's voices and skills to the forefront, increased their participation in the productive economy and their access to credit, largely through loans from the SLAs. It also improved the participants' understanding of harmful traditional and cultural norms that underlie GBV and inequitable gender dynamics such as girl child marriage.

4.2.1 Improved self-esteem, confidence and aspirations

One of the immediate outcomes of the programme was building women's self-esteem as an ongoing process that resulted in their empowerment. During the FGDs, all female programme participants testified that they had learnt new things and unlearnt information from years of internalising dominant narratives that undermine women's potential. Many pointed out that they loved and valued themselves more and saw themselves as being worthy human beings who are valuable to their spouses, families and society.

Many were poised and self-assured and assertively demonstrated their capabilities and strengths, including their abilities to participate, on an equal footing with men, in ensuring the welfare of their families, in business and in public leadership. It was evident from the FGDs, that the women were informed, independent and with voice for not only self-advocacy but also to speak out against social inequalities, including gender injustices.

The participants testified that the programme had not only improved their competence but it had also deepened their connections with their most authentic self. Moreover, they learnt that they can be strong, can drive change and are able to sustain themselves without being financially and emotionally dependent on men. Additionally, they learnt how to navigate peer and intimate partner relationships, so that these are positive influences on their lives. Not only are they more aware of their rights but they also appreciate that securing their rights is key to their social, political and economic advancement. Besides being more confident and courageous, nearly all the female (99%) and male (97%) participants pointed out that they could see gifts/abilities in themselves that they did not see before.

A longitudinal analysis of the data indicates that more participants (55%) from the first wave of the programme (2000-2009) than the current wave (37%) aspired for and became community leaders. As the quote from the male governor in Ngozi attests, change in some areas including women's leadership takes time to build and to manifest. This confirms that the programme has progressively built the confidence and self-esteem of the participants.

“This programme...this is the development that we (Government) are interested in, at the moment. There is a need for further literacy education in my province...I cannot specify the exact number but this is specifically for the adults. Children are going to school...adults have been left behind. I am in charge of administration so I will follow up on the gap and the need. As we collect the figures, we need to make a distinction between adult literacy and school enrolment rates.

The savings activities have had a great impact on the women who used to wait for their husbands to provide. They have started saving...can contribute to household provisions...they are now valued...they have self-esteem...they are more confident.”

- Female Administrator, Rutana province

“Change takes a long time to occur but once it happens, particularly amongst women...things start getting better...women no longer stay in the background...they engage in advocacy...they get involved in community activities. Traditionally, women would not stand for leadership positions but now they do. Government has a policy of reserving a minimum quota of 30 percent for women in elective positions. The programme has contributed to women's leadership...women are no longer voiceless. There is also a government policy of universal primary education...the programme has contributed to this. In summary, women have been empowered politically...through the cooperation movement...a movement that has brought people to work together.”

- Male Governor, Ngozi province

4.2.2 Improved women's voice, participation and agency

As aforementioned, the programme greatly improved women's self-esteem. The FGDs consistently showed that the female participants had improved their ability to make decisions, gained power and voice, and were able to demand for their rights. By increasing their confidence, the programme helped the women to claim their space, speak up, stand up for themselves, believe that they can excel, aspire to be financially independent, accept themselves as enough and re-focus on achievements and values. As a result, 57 percent of the female participants reported that they had stood for an elective leadership position and 53 percent had become elected leaders. Additionally, one out of two female participants indicated that they had become church or community leaders, including being in charge of 10 houses, head of a community (chef de colline) and a representative of a commune council. Section 4.5.3 provides details of some of the positions the participants have taken up in the church leadership that are attributable to the programme.

Whereas all programme participants, by default, belong to SLAs, 68 percent reported that they had joined and/or formed other community-based organisations and networks. For instance, some female participants in Rumonge diocese reported that they were members of a builders' association, which provided them with an opportunity to not only engage in construction work (a traditional male domain) but also to earn an income. Another example of the programme expanding women's opportunities is a testimony by a female participant in Buye diocese who reported that she was able to successfully apply for a cow from another nonprofit. She attributed this to the capacity built as a participant of the programme, including her ability to fulfil the minimum requirements, which include: an adequate shed for the cattle as well as secure access to pasture and water for production.

While there are not enough platforms for all the female participants to take up leadership roles, the FGDs showed that many have become women of purpose in their respective communities. At the household level, there is evidence that there is a shift in the norms that restrict women's agency and decision-making power. It is increasingly common for wives and husbands to share household expenses and to have discussions about how to spend family income. Nearly all the married female participants (96%) reported a great improvement in their participation in family decision-making. See **Table 13**.

Table 13: Programme Impact on Voice, Participation and Agency by Gender¹⁷

Self-reported programme outcomes at the individual level	A lot		A little		Not at all	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
Improved self-esteem	98.7	99.1	0.9	0.9	0.4	0.0
Became church leaders	48.6	60.9	3.9	2.7	44.5	36.4
Stood for an elective leadership position	56.8	68.3	2.6	0.0	39.7	31.7
Became elected leaders	53.4	64.4	3.2	1.0	42.7	34.7
Became community leaders	48.2	59.1	3.2	3.6	46.7	37.3
Take part in family decision-making (married participants)	95.5	98.0	2.6	1.8	0.9	0.0
Joined a savings and loans association	99.6	99.1	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.9
Joined other community-based organisations and networks	68.3	67.3	3.0	2.7	28.5	30.0

Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants' survey, 2022

Furthermore, the majority of married female participants (99%) indicated that their husbands were more involved in household work such as taking care of the children and maintenance of the home. The FGDs revealed that men appreciate and have taken on increased household responsibilities and 97 percent of the married male survey participants pointed out that they share domestic work with their spouses. The programme has progressively contributed to changing gender roles. For instance, a programme evaluation conducted in 2006 showed that men were hardly involved in tasks such as cooking food, cleaning the home and fetching water. Women are also taking on roles such as construction that are traditional male domains. Men are more supportive because they are more aware of women's rights and value/appreciate their wives' contribution.

Some of the reported impacts of women participating in family decision-making and spouses sharing routine housework include: reduced family conflict, higher levels of relationship satisfaction and healthier and happier households. By easing women's domestic work burden, the programme contributed to freeing up their time for self-development and labour for participation in productive work such as income generating activities. See **Section 4.4** for details of how the programme has transformed families.

¹⁷ The percentages do not all equal 100% because the option of 'Not applicable' is not included in the table.

“Women used not to be involved in family decision-making. Typically, men would manage all or most of the household assets and would satisfy only their needs. Children used to be malnourished...women used to wear dirty and torn clothes. The man would spend money to make himself attractive for other women. Also, if a woman gave birth to girls only, she would be rejected and the husband would get married to another woman who could bear him sons. The programme has helped a lot...women participate in household decision-making...there is a reduction in divorce...girls are more valued by their families and society.”

- Male Diocesan Secretary, Buye diocese

“We started a group of women builders...it is because of this programme that I could become a member of this association. I can take measurements of a house...I can also build a roof. When we were building this church, I was on the roof measuring and helping with the building. I was also part of the team that built the commune office. I have also built a house for a widower with 3 children.”

- Female programme participant, Gatete community. Rumonge diocese

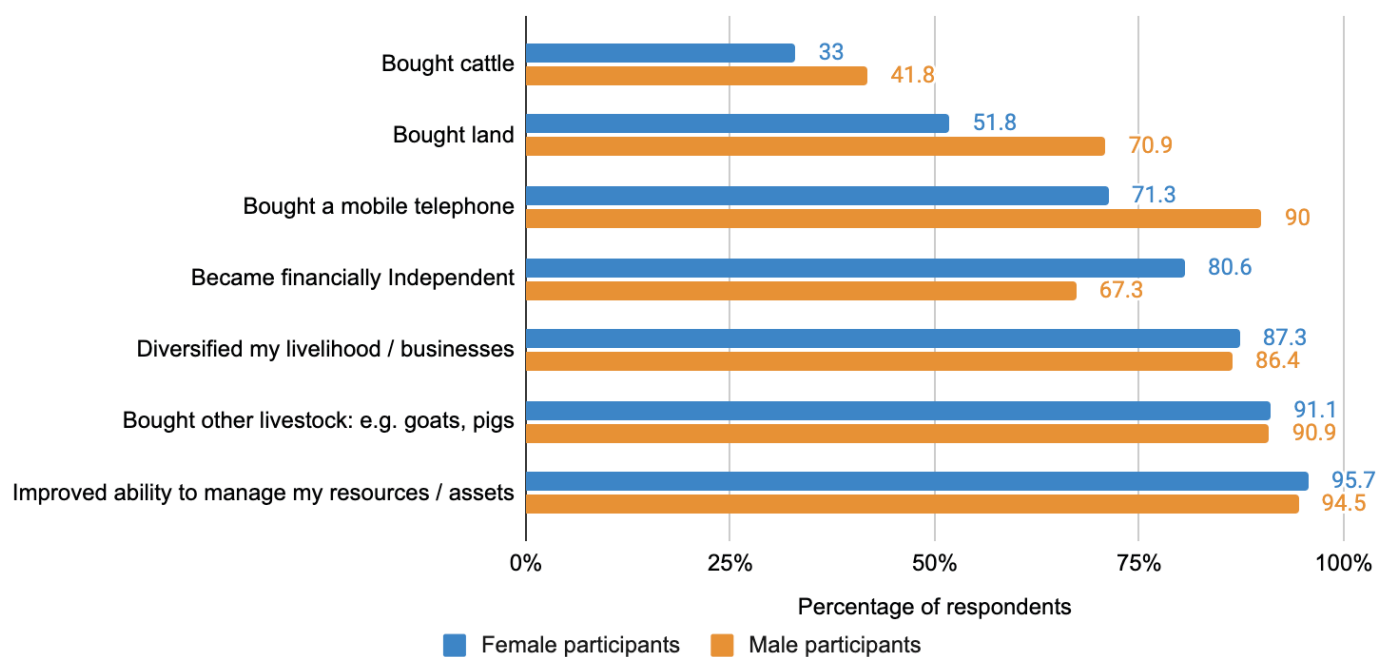
4.2.3 Improved access to opportunities and control over resources

The programme has contributed to women’s economic empowerment through expanding their opportunities to access and have control over productive resources. Nearly all the female programme participants reported improved ability to manage their own assets (96%) and most (91%) indicated that they were able to buy goats and pigs. Indeed most FGDs revealed that one of the preferred investments for both female and male participants, on securing their first loan from their respective SLA, is small livestock (goats, pigs and chicken). The major reasons for investment in livestock are that the returns are high, they provide fertilisers to improve soil quality, and are easy to scale.

In 2006, only 15 percent of the female programme participants (cf. 28% male) owned productive assets including land and cattle. Seventeen years later, many participants reported that they were able to expand and grow their assets. For instance, 87 percent female participants pointed out that they were able to diversify their livelihoods and/or businesses. Others indicated that they had bought mobile phones (71%), land (52%) and cattle (33%). This could, in part, explain why four out of five women (81%) indicated that they were no longer financially dependent on their husbands.

Male participants reported higher levels of impacts with regards to buying mobile phones (90% vs 71%), land (71% vs 52%) and cattle (42% vs 33%). This could partly be explained by the fact that their asset base on joining the SLAs was relatively higher than that of the female participants. See **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: Participants Self-Reporting a Lot of Improvement in Security of Access to Productive Assets



Source: Mothers’ Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants’ survey, 2022

“When I joined the programme in 2011, I was a very poor person and so was my husband. We used to quarrel all the time. I learnt to read and write and joined a group. In 2012, I used to save BIF 500 (≈ USD 0.35) weekly...nowadays (2022), I save BIF 2000 (≈ USD 0.97). I got a loan of BIF 20,000 (≈ USD 14) and started trading vegetables. After trading for some time, I made a profit of BIF 60,000 (≈ USD 52) and I bought a goat BIF 50,000 (≈ USD 35)...I currently have six goats, which I keep with my friend (as a form of savings).

In 2019, my husband and I jointly bought a calf...he contributed BIF 200,000 (≈ USD 109) and I contributed BIF 180,000 (≈ USD 98). I have also bought a pig and a plot of land. My husband used to underestimate me...he thought I was worthless. The programme brought joy in our family...my husband and I work together...he helps me.”

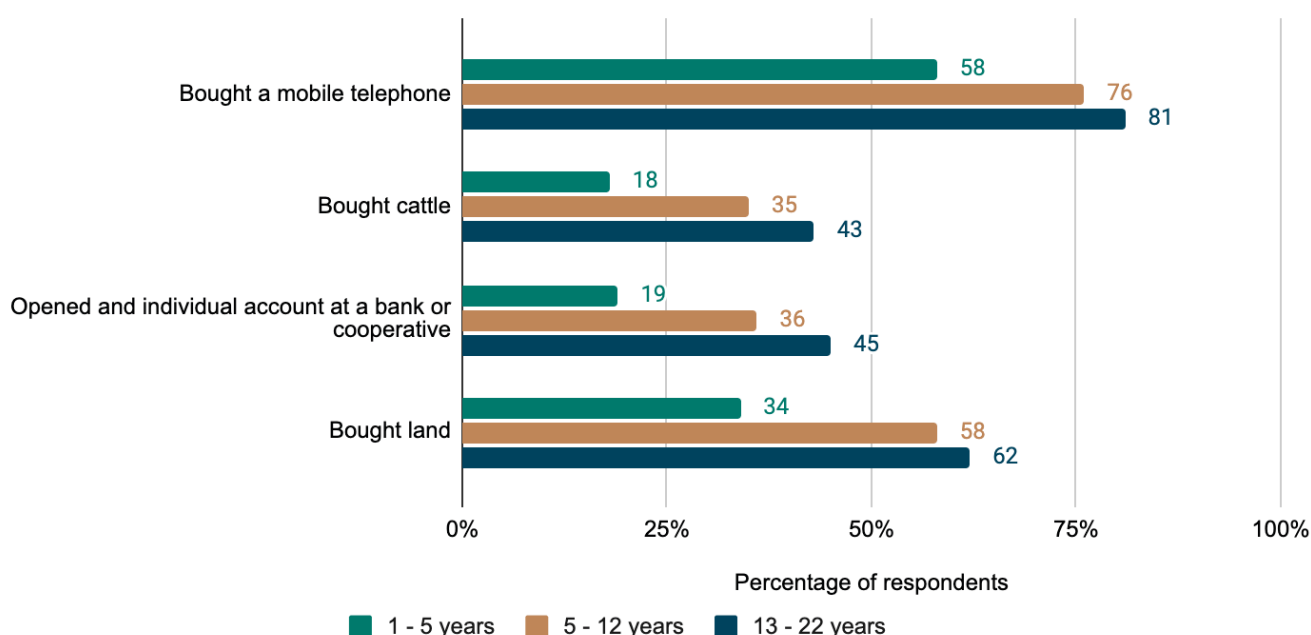
- Female programme participant, Busoro community. Buye diocese

“I am among the older persons in the groups. I was 55 years old when I joined the programme. I am now 62. I live with a disability so I cannot do my own farming. I can now get money from the group and hire labour.”

- Female programme participant, Makebukoko community. Gitega diocese

Figure 3 illustrates that the impact of the programme has deepened and been sustained over the years. Participants who joined in the first wave of the programme (2000-2009) reported more significant impacts than their counterparts who joined later in the second (2010-2017) and third (2018-current) waves, as they have had less time for deepening impact. For instance, 62 percent of the participants who joined in the 2000-2009 wave, compared to 34 percent in the 2018-current wave, reported that, as a result of the programme, they were able to buy land. This is a significant difference of 28 percent. Additionally, 45 percent of the participants from the first wave indicated that they had opened an individual account at a bank or cooperative compared to only 19 percent in the current wave, a difference of 26 percent. The significant difference of 28 percent may be due to the fact that the savings groups allow members to make smaller investments in businesses at first, which over time, increase to larger investments. This is supported by the quote from a female participant.

Figure 3: Participants Self-Reporting a Lot of Improvement in Security of Access to Selected Productive Assets by Programme Wave



Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants' survey, 2022

Section 4.3 presents further details of women's economic empowerment.

4.2.4 Improved sexual and reproductive health and rights

“I became a community health worker after becoming literate. One of our roles is to monitor all pregnant women to ensure that they deliver at a health facility. This has reduced the deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth. Women’s and children’s health has improved, because of the literacy programme. We used to be embarrassed asking our husbands for sanitary towels...it was also difficult for them to provide these. With the savings groups, women can easily request for a small loan to buy towels on their own.”

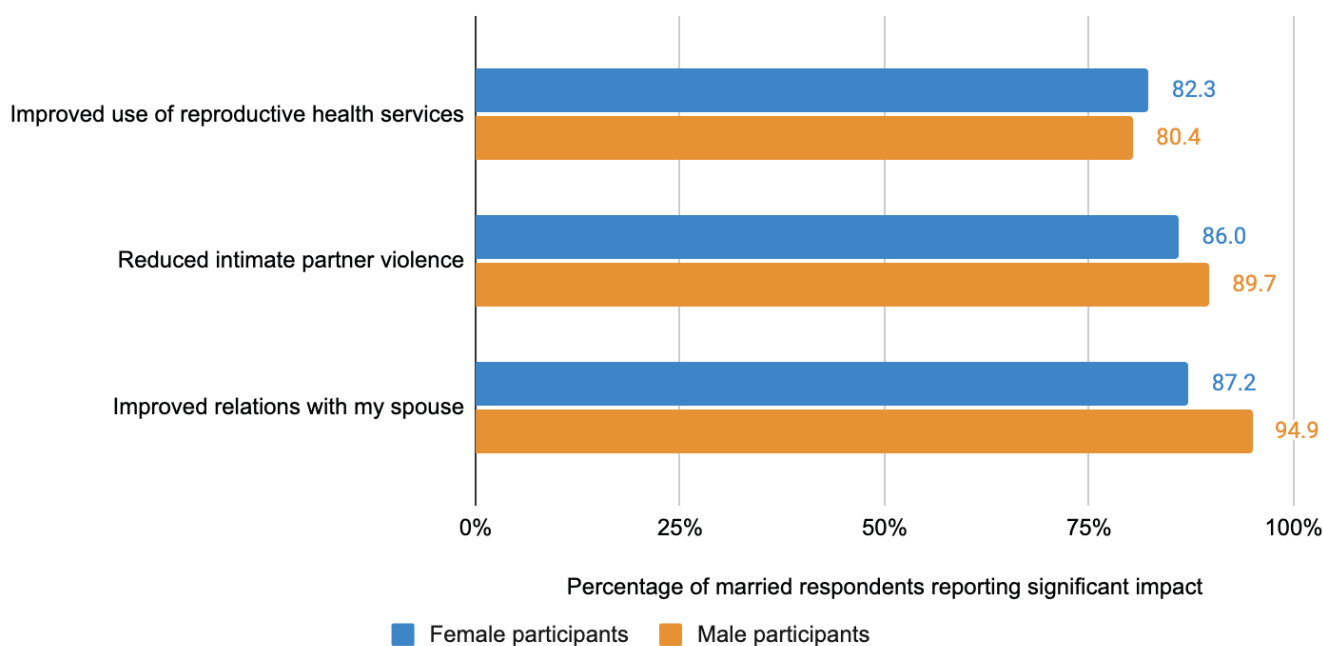
- Female programme participant, Mukungu community, Makamba diocese

“Some topics were taboo but we have learnt to discuss sensitive issues in our groups and to communicate with our children. We can discuss sexuality without any problem. This is one of the issues that our group identified as a priority. We can talk to our children openly.”

- Female programme participant. Gisuru community. Gitega diocese

Most married programme participants, and in particular the men (95%) reported improved relations with their spouses. A significant proportion of the married female participants (82%) reported improved use of reproductive health services, including family planning, antenatal and maternity. More than four out of five female (86%) and male (90%) married participants also indicated a reduction in spousal conflict that manifests through domestic/intimate partner violence. An even higher proportion of both female and male (98%) participants pointed out that they advocate against sexual and GBV. This could be attributed to the fact that the literacy education component incorporates discussions of issues such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, GBV as well as advocacy in relation to human rights in general, and women’s rights, in particular.

Figure 4: Participants Self-Reporting a Lot of Improvement in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights



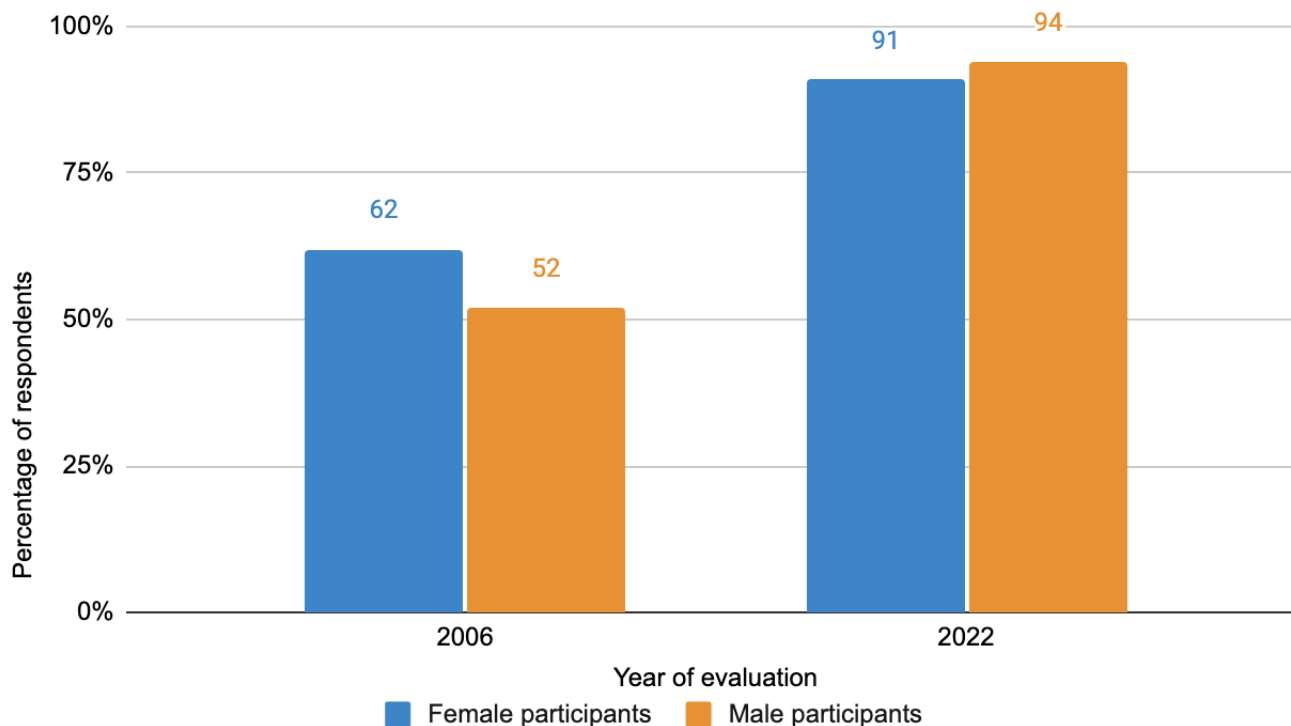
Source: Mothers’ Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants’ survey, 2022

4.2.5 Fostered a supportive social environment and shifted gender norms

The programme contributed to challenging retrogressive social norms and values that underlie gender inequalities. It broke down mindsets and fostered a supportive social environment. There is near total acceptance of girls’ right to education. Indeed the programme debunked the stereotype “Nta mashure y’umukobwa” (There is no point in educating a girl). One of the initial outcomes of the programme that was reported by female (62%) and male (52%) learners in 2006 was sending their children, notably girls, to school. This indicates appreciation of the importance of girl child education. At the time of this evaluation (2022), an even higher proportion of female (91%) and male (94%) survey participants

indicated that they now send their daughters and girl dependents to school (Figure 5). The increase is partly attributed to the participants' appreciation of the significance of girl child's education as well as their membership to SLAs and the relative ease of access of loans to purchase scholastic material and uniforms where required.

Figure 5: Participants Reporting that they Send their Girl Children to School as a Result of the Programme



Sources: Programme Evaluation 2006 and Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022); Programme participants' survey, 2022

“It opened the eyes of the participants...they started to question some cultural values that hinder girls' education...women are no longer powerless, they can contribute to the upkeep of their families. They are now valued by their husbands and children...they are valued by their communities...they have dignity.”

- MU Coordinator, Makamba diocese

“Traditionally, women were considered to be of a lower status than men...with the programme, they are valued, honoured...they have increased their status in society. They are teaching their children, both boys and girls...when they are still young...that both are of the same value. The hand is no longer facing down (begging)...they are able to send their children to school and to buy clothes and this has contributed to the reduction of incidences of GBV. It is no longer only one hand that is providing....both hands...women's and men's, are contributing to the wellbeing of their families.”

- Diocesan Secretary, Rutana diocese

A longitudinal analysis of the impact of the programme shows that 98 percent of the participants in the first wave of the programme (2000-2009) compared to 74 percent in the current wave (2018-2021) report that they send their daughters and girl dependents to school. This significant difference of 24 percent is another indicator of the sustainability of the impacts of the programme.

Figure 6 shows that nearly all programme participants believe that women make good leaders and should participate in family decision-making. Further to that, the majority of participants (92%) disagree with the stereotype that “men are the primary breadwinners and women, the primary homemakers”. Accordingly, most (98%) believe that women should own productive assets and make great business owners (99%). With regards to some of the social expectations of being a man, only 6 percent of the participants consider boys' and men's use of violence and aggression as proof of their manliness. The 2006 evaluation of the programme reported that 41 percent of the male participants indicated that they had stopped beating their wives and 50 percent pointed out that they were in monogamous relationships.

The 2008 evaluation reported an even further reduction in intimate partner violence, with three out of four men reporting that they no longer physically abused their wives. In 2022, four out of five male programme participants reported a reduction in domestic violence and an even higher proportion (98%) pointed out that they advocate against GBV.

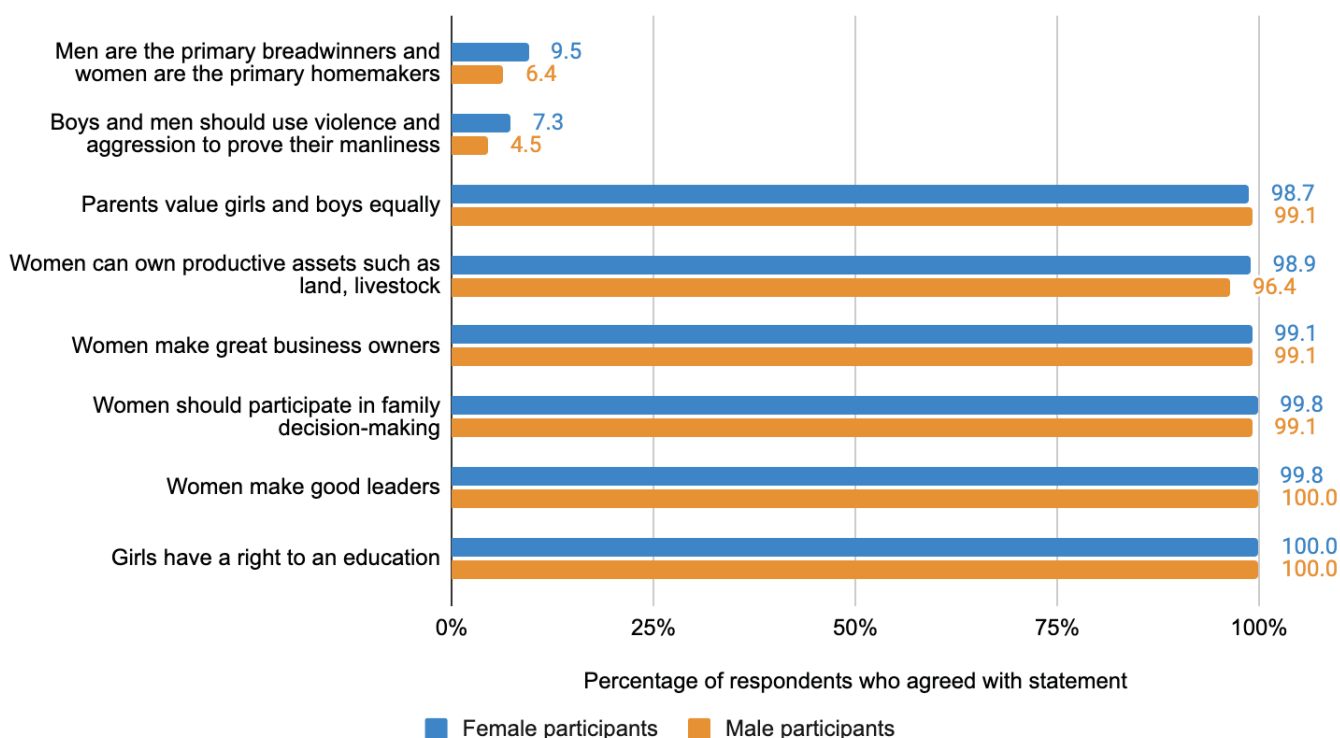
Whereas most programmes focusing on women’s empowerment are criticised as being discriminatory against men, this sentiment was not expressed during this longitudinal impact study. This is possibly because while the programme evidently empowered women, it did not devalue men and it adopted male engagement as one of the strategies. As indicated earlier, men who never had a chance to go to school were free to participate in the programme but not in excess of 30 percent of the participants.

As pointed out elsewhere in this report, the programme positively impacted the male participants and many pointed out, during the FGDs, that they had started deconstructing their own masculinity. Many gave personal testimonies of sharing domestic work with their wives and some were observed carrying babies during the FGDs. Others indicated that they participated in activities dedicated to promote gender equality such as the 16 days of GBV activism as well as the women’s day. As a result, there were reported changing perceptions in gender relations at the household level and within the community structures. For instance, the participants pointed out that they, women and men alike, used to believe that women were incompetent. The programme contributed to changing this mindset. FGDs revealed that the programme participants actively promote positive gender stereotypes and relations.

The reported transformations, which have been sustained over more than 20 years include:

- a. Breaking barriers to women’s leadership and voice in the community and in the Church. (Section 4.2.2)
- b. Women with increased household decision-making power. (Section 4.2.2)
- c. Disrupting the deeply ingrained norm that care work (household chores) is the responsibility of women and girls. (Section 4.2.2)
- d. Women with improved security of access to productive resources. (Section 4.2.3)

Figure 6: Programme Participants’ Perceptions about Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment



Source: Mothers’ Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants’ survey, 2022

4.3 Financial Empowerment

4.3.1 Financial inclusion

In Burundi, rural populations have extremely limited access to financial services. To start any kind of business, they often have no choice but to borrow from traders and “loan sharks” who charge excessive interest rates – as high as 1,000 per cent.¹⁸ According to IFAD statistics¹⁹, whereas the financial inclusion rate in Burundi at the end of 2017 was an average of 20.9 percent, it was only 7.9 and 8.5 percent for women and rural populations, respectively. Further to that, women are the least likely to hold a deposit account as individuals (30.5%) and as members of associations (22.7%). Additionally, women save less than men in both associations (37.3% of outstanding deposits) and individually (28.9%). These disparities are also reflected in the distribution of loans, with men’s share being 78 and 86.4 percent as individuals and as members of associations, respectively.

The programme has evidently contributed to financial inclusion. For instance, over a ten year period (2011-2020), the SLAs have improved the average monthly savings per member from Burundi Francs (BIF) 2,162 (USD 1.7²⁰) to the current 4,965 (USD 2.4), an increase of 39 percent per month. The current average loan size per member is BIF 66,212 (USD 31.9) up from 25,428 (20.3) in the first year the respective SLAs were formed. This is an improvement of 57 percent.

“The savings and loans component of the programme was introduced in 2010...there were elections in Burundi and thereafter political instability...2015 was also an election year...there was conflict and many people fled...these are some of the factors that affected the growth of savings and loan value of the groups.”

- His Grace, Bishop, Makamba diocese and former Archbishop

“The programme was implemented during a period of (crippling) sanctions...post 2015 elections.”

- His Grace, Former Archbishop and former Bishop, Matana diocese

“They started small...they shared out and realised that they needed to increase their savings in order to have access to larger loans. The next share-out, they left larger amounts in the pot for the next cycle. They used to save BIF 500 weekly...they now save BIF 5,000, which is BIF 20,000 per month. So when they share out, the least one can get is BIF 200,000 (≈USD 96.4). All the groups are registered and they follow all of the regulations. If people work safely...if they work together...if they do not share-out a lot...if no one takes out more than others, they can increase their savings...they can grow in about two years. Prayer is also a key factor...we always pray before and after our group activities.”

- Female facilitator, Kigande commune. Bujumbura diocese

The participants pointed out that one needs to be more intentional in order to increase personal savings. Many gave testimonies of the multiple ways they save (besides the SLAs), the most popular being investing in tangible assets such as goats, pigs and land. This is significant in a country such as Burundi which is not a cash economy and suggests that the volume of savings is much higher, than the savings figures indicate. According to key informants, the growth in savings and loan volumes was affected by years of civil war and political instability in the country.

Most programme participants (88%) see the SLAs as a vehicle to increase their income and get out of poverty. Less than one in 10 state the reason for joining being either to primarily save money or access loans or access emergency funds or even just build relationships. This suggests that the programme, as per its specified goal of poverty reduction is relevant and responds to the prioritised needs of the participants.

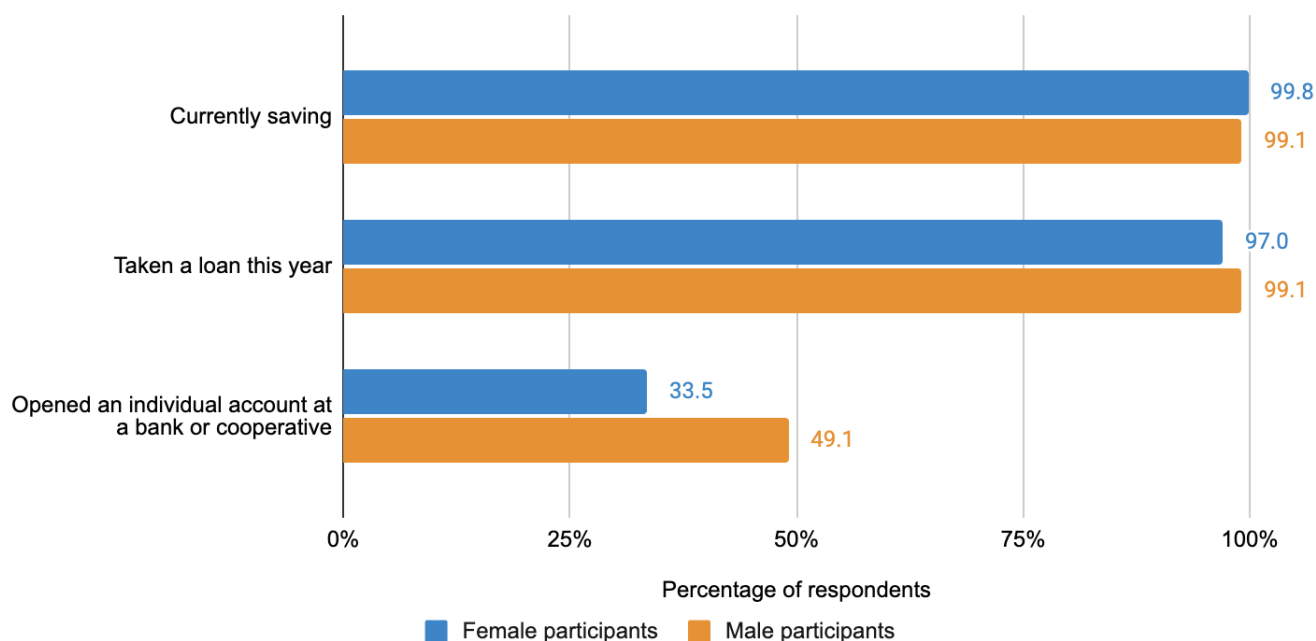
The programme evidently addressed some of the barriers to financial inclusion of the participant communities, including: low levels of education and income, lack of access to banks, lack of income generating activities. Nearly all female and male participants indicated that they had joined an SLA, had started saving and had taken out loans from their groups. Furthermore, the programme fostered participants’ accessibility to, and utilisation of formal financial services. For instance, one out of three female (34%) and one out five male (49%) participants stated that they had opened an individual account at a bank or cooperative, a fact that they attribute to their membership to SLAs. **(Figure 7)**

¹⁸ <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/-/project/2000001145>

¹⁹ https://www.womenconnect.org/web/burundi/financial-literacy/-/asset_publisher/4eOAIcXQJWB/content/education-financiere-au-burun-1

²⁰ As per exchange rate in 2010/2011

Figure 7: Impact of the Programme on Financial Inclusion



Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants' survey, 2022

In 2021, female SLA members saved an annual total average of BIF 79,125 (≈USD 40) compared to BIF 81,183 (≈USD 41) for the male members. These annual savings show that there are some members who are saving larger amounts than the average savings per member indicated earlier. With regards to annual amounts borrowed from the SLAs, the average figures for the female and male participants were BIF 93,815 (≈USD 47) and BIF 123,239 (≈USD 62), respectively. Going by these statistics, the ratio of women's to men's access to the SLA loans is 0.8:1. Following the validation meeting of this longitudinal impact study, where this concern was raised, programme management put in place measures to ensure that the programme purposively promotes women's empowerment and does not disproportionately benefit men.

Table 14 further illustrates the programme's contribution to financial inclusion.

Table 14: Average Annual Savings and Loans in 2021 by Programme Area and Gender

Programme Area/Diocese	Average annual savings (BIF)		Average annual loans (BIF)	
	F (n=118)	M (n=70)	F (n=115)	M (n=70)
Buhiga	34,560	36,000	77,000	120,400
Bujumbura	196,000	196,000	126,364	100,000
Buye	70,792	72,000	110,417	111,000
Gitega	148,960	156,960	121,700	136,000
Makamba	48,000	60,000	75,867	101,300
Matana	60,000	60,000	62,500	148,000
Muyinga	55,467	66,200	76,133	106,500
Rumonge	48,000	60,000	75,867	98,600
Rutana	88,267	91,600	127,917	174,575
AVERAGE	79,125	81,183	93,815	123,239

Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants' survey, 2022

4.3.2 Expanded entrepreneurship

By facilitating the formation of SLAs and providing financial literacy and business development education, the programme contributed to increasing entrepreneurship with the aim of making a profit. During the FGDs, the participants continuously shared how the programme had catalysed their entrepreneurial spirit and interest. They testified how they had applied the biblical parable of the talents to multiply their resources and to become self-sustaining. Adding that their membership to SLAs provided space for them to learn and grow. Many gave testimonies of multiple ways in which they had constantly thought of new ideas to expand their businesses and make them more effective. Nearly all the participants shared that their starting point of their journey of growth was becoming literate and numerate. This in combination with their membership to SLAs, the financial education and the improved self-confidence inspired them to start or expand their businesses.

“ When I joined the savings group, I took out a loan of BIF 10,000 and bought 3 rabbits for BIF 6,000. I used the rest to buy mice. I used the manure from my rabbits and mice as fertiliser and improved my harvest...I was able to sell more beans and earn more profit. One of my neighbours had to sell a cow to pay for healthcare. I got a loan from the group to pay for co-ownership of the cow. I started getting more manure and I was able to further increase my crop production...and income. I was eventually able to pay for and fully own the cow. The cow is with calf and I expect to earn income from the sale of milk.”

- Female participant, Gitaramuka community, Buhiga diocese

“ From a pig...to a cow...to a motorbike and a successful taxi business in under two years. I got a loan of BIF 20,000 from the savings group and bought peas and beans for sale. Then I bought a pig that multiplied. I sold the piglets and bought a plot of land. The pig multiplied again...I sold the pig and the piglets and bought a cow. I sold the cow and bought a motorcycle that I use as a taxi. From the profit, I bought another cow.”

- Female programme participant, Busoro community, Buye diocese

“ It takes 3-4 years of saving and doing business to buy a cow. Seven (7) of the 11 FGD participants reported that they had bought a cow.

- It takes about five (5) years of doing business to afford a plot of land.
- It takes about 10 years of doing business to buy a plot to build a house.

- FGD, Bibuye community, Matana diocese

Q: Why do you say that your businesses are not growing?

A: Because of low capital.

Q: You have all indicated that you are earning more, why don't you save more to grow your loan capital?

A: Our first priority is taking care of our family. We spend the income on: improving family nutrition, paying for school and other provisions for our children, buying soap, improving housing.

A: But we also save more. We started saving BIF 500 weekly in 2014. We currently save BIF 2,000 per week. So yes, we have increased our savings but our needs are more...we need to get a solution to increase our capital...to grow our businesses.

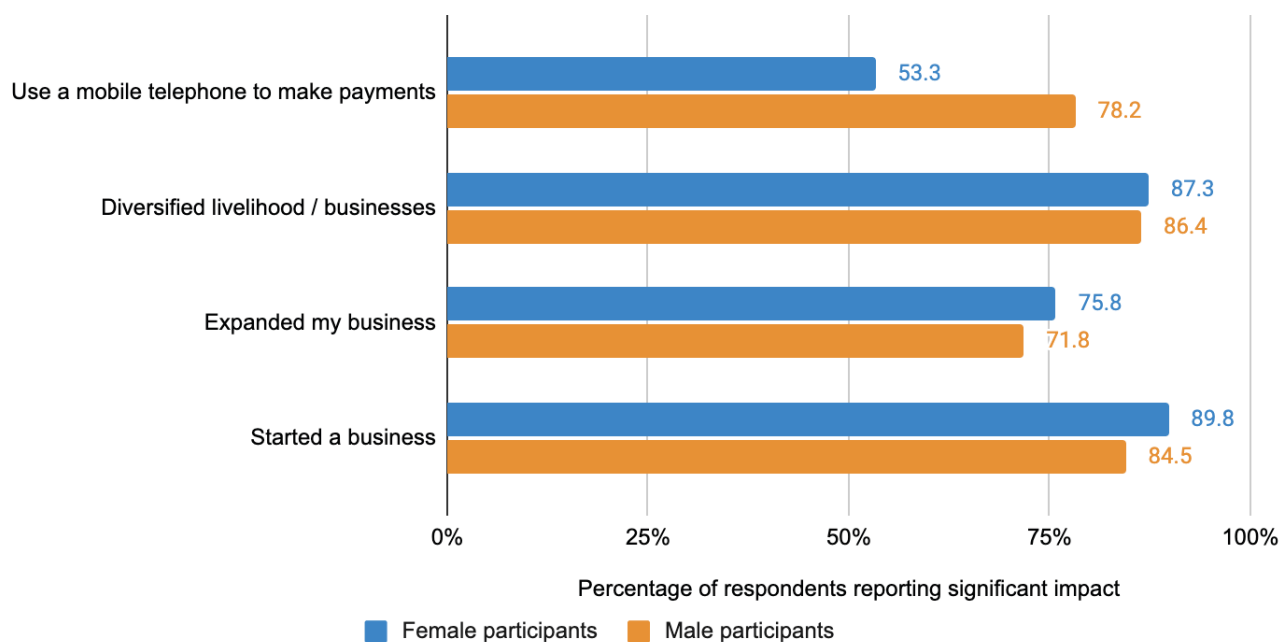
- FGD Gisuru community, Gitega diocese

As **Figure 8** shows, the programme greatly contributed to both female (90%) and male (85%) participants starting their businesses. A significant proportion of female (76%) and male (72%) participants also attributed the ability to improve/expand their existing small businesses to the programme.

Whereas 71 percent of the female participants (cf. to 90% male) attributed their ability to buy a mobile phone to the programme, only 53 percent (cf. to 78% male) reported use of a mobile telephone to make payments. This is particularly significant because use of mobile money in the country is nascent. Just 1.1 percent of the population has used mobile money²¹. Mobile money services were introduced in 2012, a couple of years after the incorporation of the financial education component into the programme.

²¹ https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/M4H_Burundi_User_Journeys.pdf

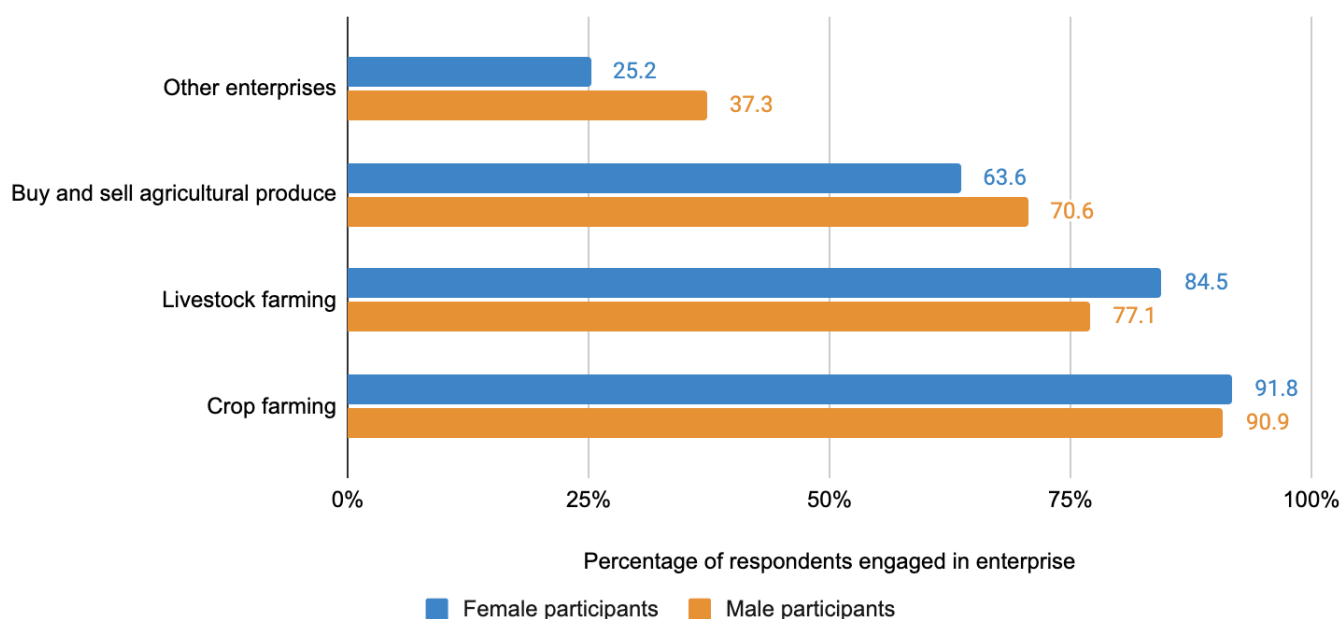
Figure 8: Impact of the Programme on Participants' Entrepreneurship



Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants' survey, 2022

Prior to the programme, the participants were predominantly subsistence farmers producing on small holdings and largely for domestic consumption and with minimal volumes for sale. Those involved in businesses typically invested in seasonal income-generating activities. As a result of the programme, many participants are not only engaged in income generating activities but the majority of the women (83%) and the men (75%) operate two to three businesses. The most popular enterprise for both female (91%) and male participants (92%) is primary crop production followed by livestock farming (77% F vs 85% M). A significant proportion of both female (71%) and male participants (63.6%) are involved in the marketing of agricultural products. Some female (25%) and male (37%) participants indicated that they were involved in other businesses including bee keeping, grocery stores, boutiques, taxi business and fishing. (Figure 9)

Figure 9: Programme Participants' Priority Enterprises by Gender



Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants' survey, 2022

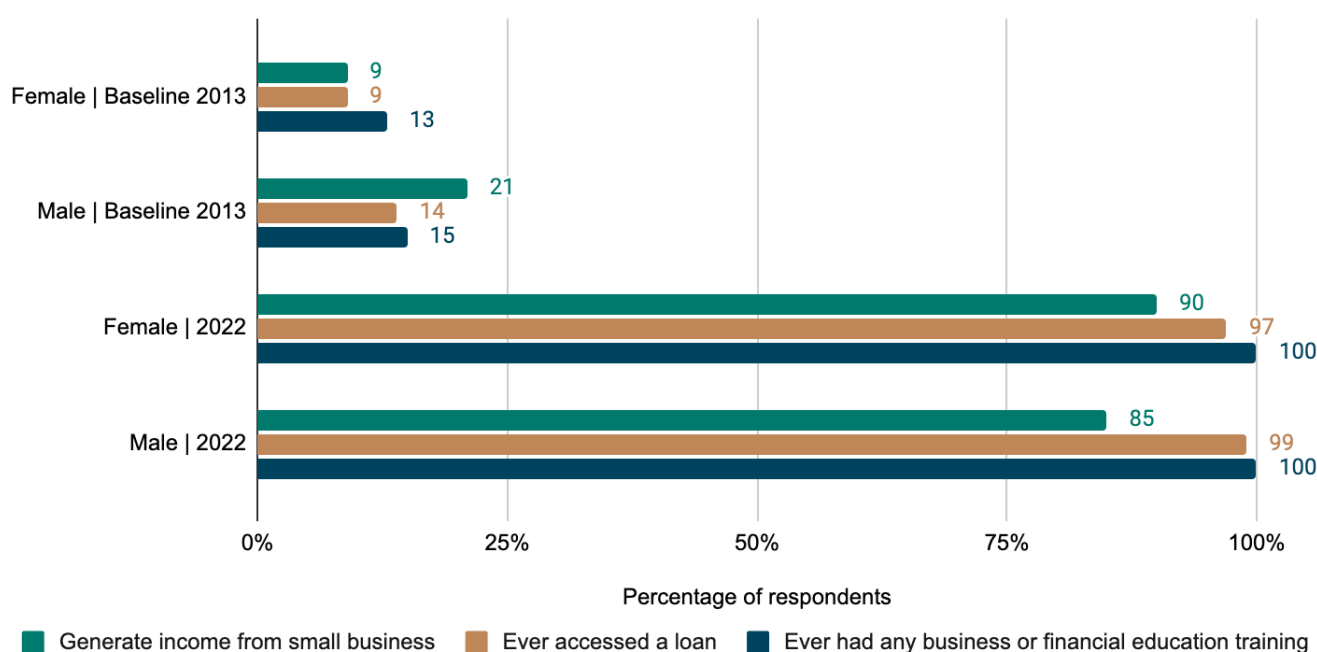
As indicated above, most programme participants are involved in agribusiness because it is perceived to be the most profitable trade value chain, with high domestic and regional market potential. Further to that, the start-up capital for enterprises such as maize, beans, horticulture and small livestock (goats, pigs etc.), is relatively low. Additionally, most of the selected agricultural products are staple and are, therefore, more suitable to the prevailing agro-ecological conditions. Livestock such as pigs and goats are also easily scalable. During the FGDs, most participants reported the profitability, ease of expansion and exceptional growth rates of their small livestock (goats and pigs) businesses over the years. On account of their relatively short gestation periods, the participants reported quick return periods on their investments.

The participants also pointed out that whereas enterprises such as horticulture require small land sizes, high perishability is a challenge, particularly where markets are not easily accessible. While there were not many testimonies of collective marketing, some FGDs alluded to the benefits of bulking agricultural produce for sale. The programme is currently piloting an agribusiness component. This should explicitly incorporate actions that promote climate smart actions.

The programme significantly contributed to the participants’ financial inclusion and entrepreneurship. For instance, nearly all female survey participants indicated that they had accessed a loan, had business training or were engaged in an income generating activity, up from one in 10 participants in 2013. There are also notable improvements in the male participants’ entrepreneurship that are attributed to the programme.

Figure 10 summarises the programme’s contribution to the participants’ financial inclusion and entrepreneurship.

Figure 10: Contribution of the Programme to Participants’ Financial Inclusion and Entrepreneurship



Sources: Mothers’ Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants’ survey, 2022 and Mothers’ Union Literacy and Financial Education Programme. Evaluation February 2013

4.3.3 Improved household income and financial stability

The SLAs are perceived to be a visible embodiment of women’s (and men’s) economic empowerment. During the FGDs, the programme participants narrated how they had accumulated assets such as land and livestock over time through saving, loans from their respective SLAs, and investments. Many testified as to how they had established a base of resources, particularly goats and pigs, which they mobilise to produce additional assets or even sell in times of need to generate income. The participants attributed the asset accumulation to their participation in their respective SLAs.

“ I used to miss school a lot due to lack of school fees. My mother used to say that I should stay at home until she got the money. Whenever the schools demands for fees, my mother borrows from her group.”
 - Young female, Gatete community, Rumonge diocese

“The programme is beneficial...there is a massive transformation...incidences of GBV have reduced, there is improved health, programme participants have become leaders and there is improved agriculture. They adopted improved farming methods and thus increased productivity. They manage their (agricultural) produce better...they know how much to save, what to consume and what to sell. Many never thought that they could ever afford to send their children to school.

As a development worker, it is easier for me to work with a literate person...with someone who can express themselves in public...someone who is confident and can voice their views.”

- Development Coordinator, Rutana diocese

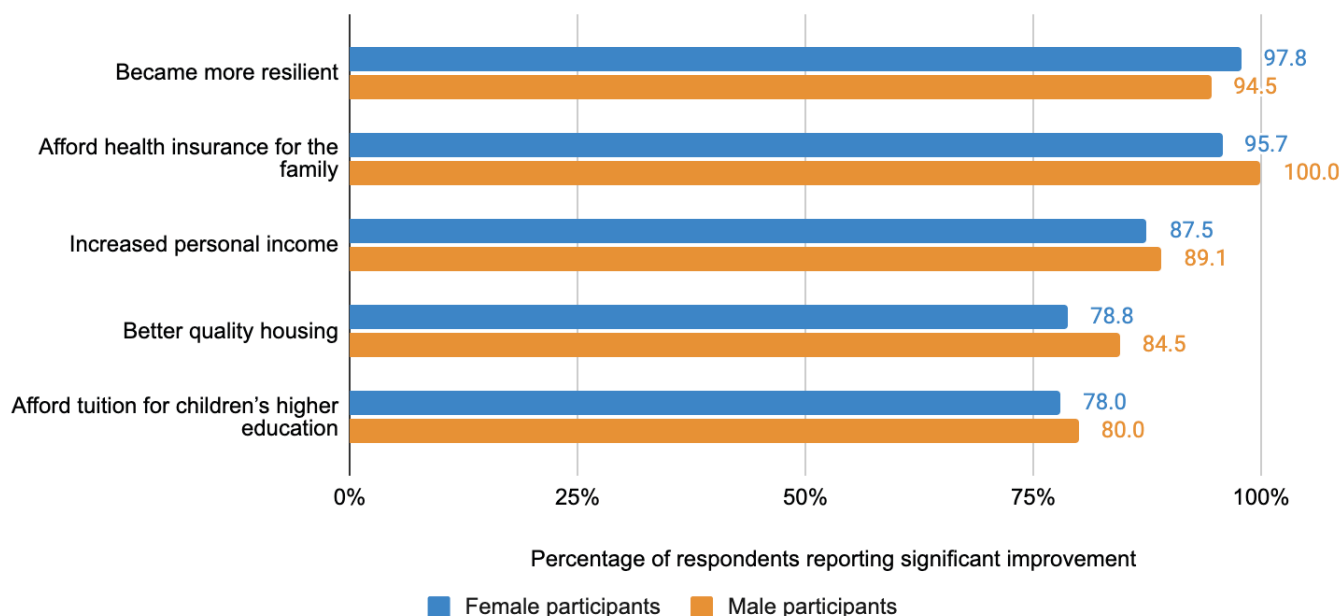
“The savings and loans component added real value to the programme...it enabled many to engage in income generation. Women are building houses...some have installed solar lighting in their homes to enable their children to study at night. The women have been empowered...they have been lifted from the lowest to the highest. MU is stronger...its status in the community has been elevated.”

- MU President, Rutana diocese

The impact study established that ownership and effective mobilization of productive assets improved household outcomes without any injection of outside capital. For instance, 88 percent of the female programme participants and 89 percent of their male counterparts indicated that their membership to their respective SLAs had greatly contributed to increased personal income. This resulted into improved family well-being and security. **Figure 11** shows that more than three quarters of the participants reported that they can afford health insurance for their families, have better quality housing and can pay tuition for their children’s higher education.

Additionally, most female (98%) and male (95%) participants indicated that they had become more resilient and are able to cope with adverse shocks and stresses and to adapt to uncertainties. According to the FGDs, the financial education offered by the programme equipped them with the knowledge and skills to make smart decisions, to manage their resources more effectively and to achieve financial stability. By becoming more financially independent and self-reliant, women’s status in their families and in the communities became elevated. Many reported that have more say in their households.

Figure 11: Impact of the Programme on Personal Incomes, Household Welfare and Resilience

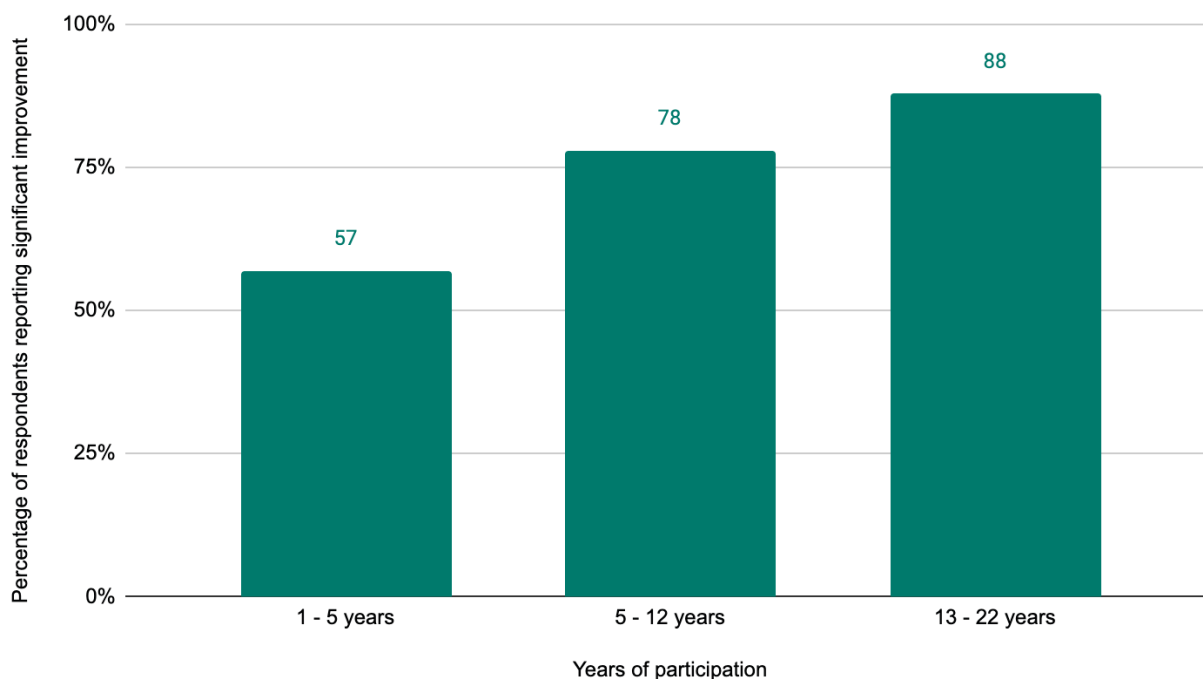


Source: Mothers’ Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants’ survey, 2022

With regards to sustainability of impact, 88 percent of the participants from the first programme wave reported great improvement in their ability to afford tuition for their children’s higher education. (**Figure 12**) This is a significant difference of 10 and 31 percent across the second (2010-2017) and third (2018-current) waves, respectively. This further confirms that the impact of the programme has deepened over the years with the different components complementing each other.

For instance, during the first wave of the programme, the participants’ awareness of the significance of sending their children to school improved. During the second wave, their ability to afford their children’s education improved. As **section 4.4** shows, these impacts were further reinforced in the current wave of the programme.

Figure 12: Illustration of Sustainability of Programme Impacts on Children’s Education



Source: Mothers’ Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants’ survey, 2022

4.4 Transformation of Families

4.4.1 Fostered reconnection in family relationships

The programme evidently contributed to reconnection in family relationships. **Section 4.2** shows that many married participants reported improved relations with their spouses and reduced domestic violence. Many also indicated that they share tasks and responsibilities in the home and take part in household decision-making, which has contributed to stronger marriages and more stable families. Nearly all participants (99%) attribute these changes to knowledge acquired about gender equality as well as Christian values on the nature of marriage in the church. According to **Figure 13** the programme significantly improved registration of marriages (86%) and births (89%) as well as relationships between children and their parents (80%).

“Poverty is the cause of many misunderstandings in the family and violence at home. When a woman is involved in business and gets profit that provides for the family...her contribution is valued...she is valued by her family and her status in society improves and so does her confidence.”

- President, MU Rumonge diocese

“My husband and I used to fight all the time...to such an extent that even the neighbours could not sleep well. We now live in peace. We were in an illegal marriage...my husband finally accepted to register with the commune and to have our marriage blessed in church. My personal hygiene was very poor...I even had jiggers. I used to be sick...I am now healthy. I used to be bitter...I am now sweet.”

- Female participant, Gitaramuka community. Buhiga diocese

“My wife used to ask for permission to go and participate in the SLA and I would refuse. I used to think she was going to meet other men. Whenever she asked for money for food and I did not have it, I would beat her. She decided to join without letting me know. Then I started seeing changes...she became cleaner...she started dressing better. Then she bought a goat and then a bicycle. I also decided to join. Our house was comparable to a chicken coop...we have built a brick house with a tin roof. I was almost nothing...I was in the dark...my mind was closed.”

- Male participant, Mukungu community. Makamba diocese

“ I used to behave badly...I had an attitude. I never communicated with my parents. I used to listen to my friends...I made many wrong decisions...I took wrong turns...I had dropped out of school. Since she joined the group, my mother gives us time. She is interested in our problems. She convinced me to go back to school...she said that she would be able to pay my school fees. Because of the love, interest and improved communication, we have become closer.”

- Young male, Gatete community, Rumonge diocese

“ I learnt how to be a great parent...I used to be very tough with my children. I used to beat them because my mother used to beat me all the time. She also never used to have time for me...to talk to me. I have improved communication with my children. I make time to listen. I give them space...they have the freedom to talk. The programme empowered me to live happily and peacefully with my children, my neighbours and my husband. I will ensure that my children go to and complete school. I would like one to be a doctor, another a Bishop, another a minister, another an ambassador & another working justice but without corruption.”

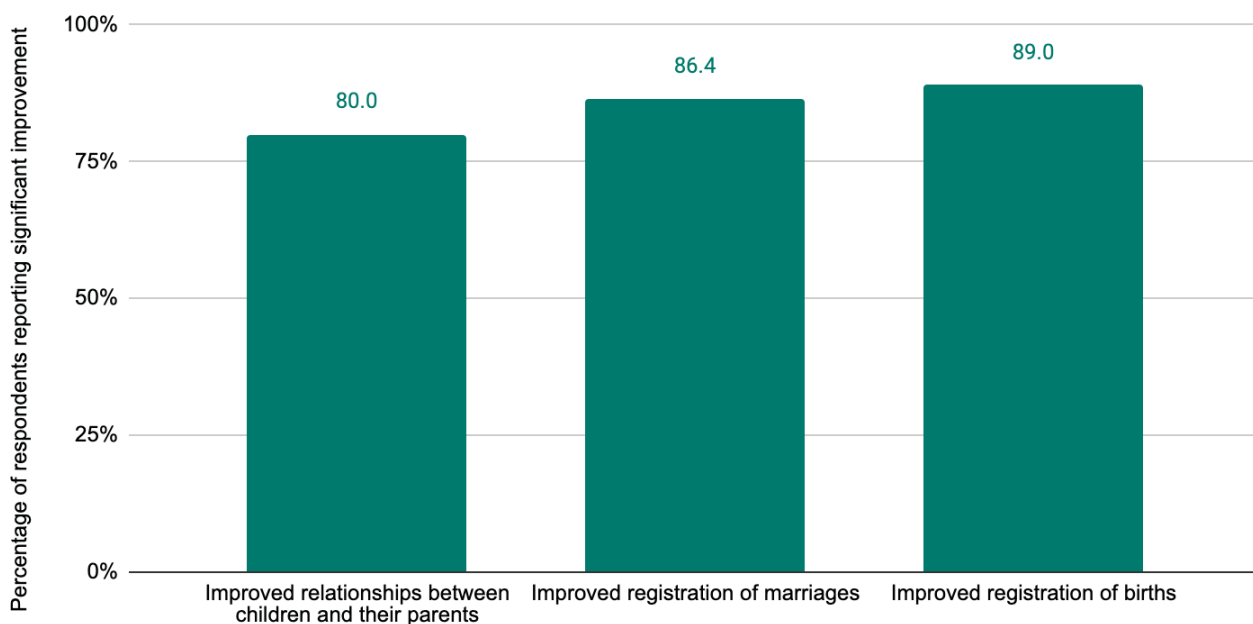
- Female participant, Busoro community, Buye diocese

“

My mother used to be closed-minded...she never listened to our ideas and problems. She would wake up one morning and say...we are going to do farm work...no school for you today or this week...and that would be that...no amount of begging would change her mind. She is the one who now encourages us to go to school. We also have food, good clothes and scholastic materials.”

- Young female, Gatete community, Rumonge diocese

Figure 13: Contribution of the Programme to Family Relationships



Source: MU Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Participants survey, 2022

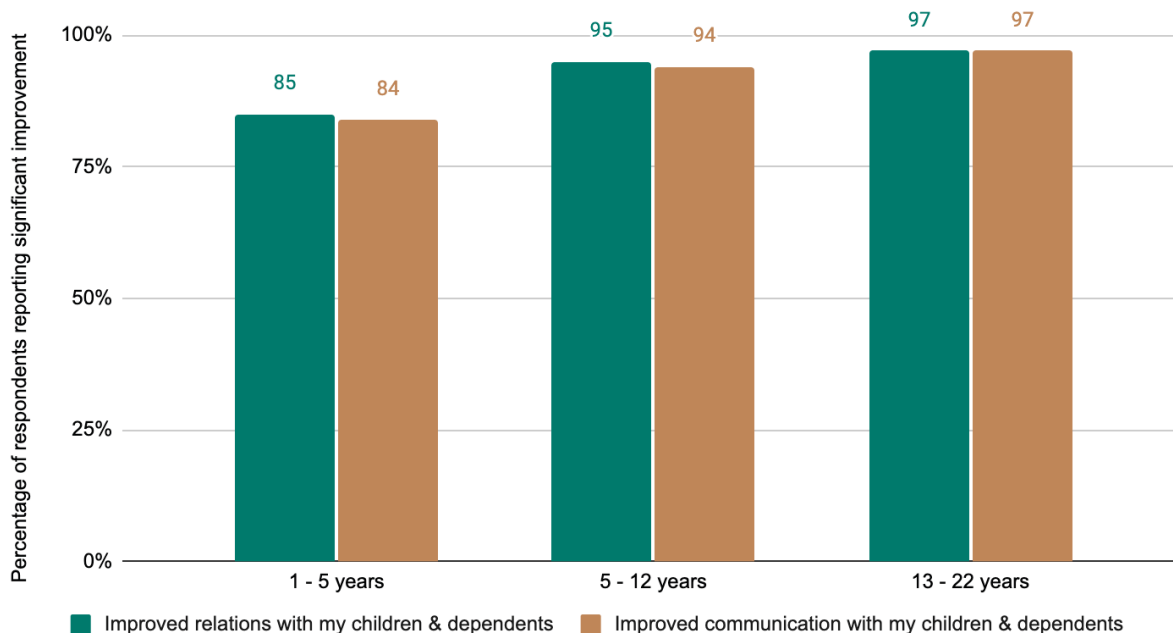
4.4.2 Promoted positive parenting

The programme promoted positive parenting in various ways. The FGDs revealed that there was a shift in attitudes from authoritarian to authoritative parenting. The parents testified that they had adopted a mutually respectful parent-child relationship that was loving, nurturing, empowering, nonviolent but not permissive. They acknowledged that parenting is not all about feeding the children, but that it also involves providing the space and tools to ensure positive development of the children that assures self-confidence, happiness and resilience. FGDs with young people showed that children of the programme participants are more respectful and loving, God-fearing, responsible, attract good friends, make good choices and stay in school.

Nearly all the participants reported that the programme had promoted parenting of children in the faith and life of the church (99.7%) and promoted their protection (98.5%). Furthermore, they pointed out that they had improved relations and communications with their children and other dependents and were more patient with them (95.7%).

As **Figure 14** shows, participants who joined the programme during the first wave (2000-2008) report more significant impacts with regards to improved relations and communication with their children and dependents, as they have had longevity of opportunities for learning over the years. Again, this demonstrates that a combination of the different components of the programme collectively contribute to the impact. The different components of the programme build on and reinforce each other.

Figure 14: Self-Reported Positive Parenting Outcomes over the Years



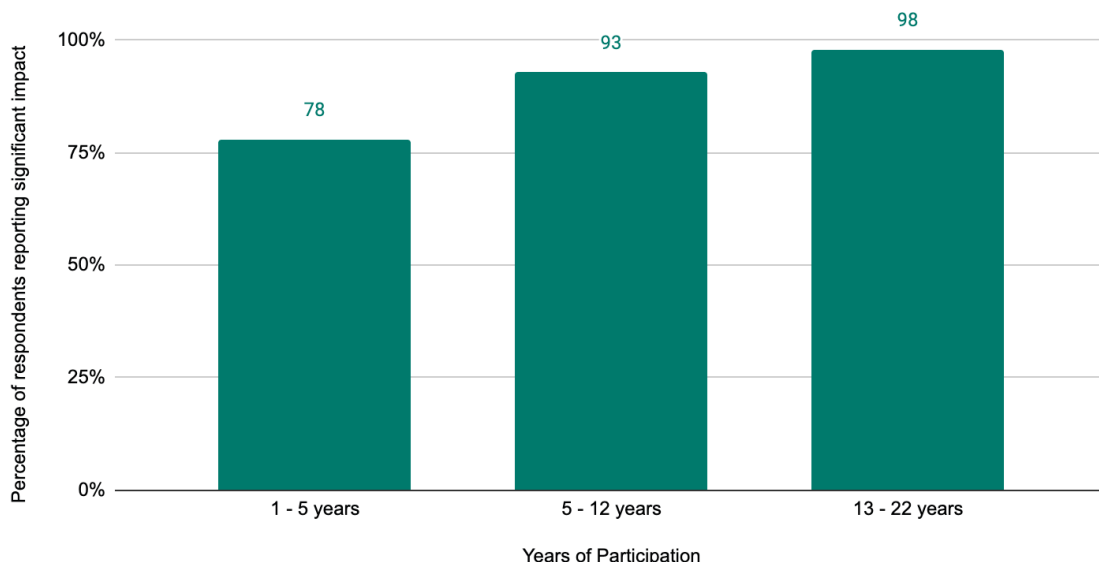
Source: MU Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Participants survey, 2022

4.4.3 Intergenerational impacts of the programme

The programme clearly had intergenerational effects. As with other impacts, this is attributed to a combination of the different components of the programme. The literacy component enhanced their appreciation of their children’s education, their membership to SLAs improved their financial capacity to cater for their children and the parenting skills sharpened their reflective practices, including listening.

Figure 15 illustrates that some of the intergenerational impacts, including parents’ commitment to ensuring that their children complete school have been sustained over the years. During the FGDs, the programme participants reported that one of the immediate outcomes of their membership to SLAs was the ability to access lump sums to pay school fees for their children or for family health care. Discussions with children of the programme participants showed that they view their parents as role models and that they aspired to attain the highest educational level they could. This is besides the aspiration for financial independence.

Figure 15: Self-Reported Impact of Parents’ Commitment to Ensuring that Children Complete their Education



Source: Mothers’ Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants’ survey, 2022

“I am very familiar with the programme because it has positive impacts on this school. Parents used not to send their children to school...nowadays, they assist them with their homework and buy for them books and pens. Girls have particularly benefitted, not only do they attend school but also their performance has improved. Girls usually take the first and second positions in the exams. Children, in general, focus on their studies, they are more disciplined and cleaner. This is because of their parents’ counselling. This has made teaching much easier.”

- Female Head Teacher/Directrice, Ecofo Busoro Primary School, Buye diocese

“My parents never sent me to school...it was believed that education was only for the boys...and for the girls’, their role was to do household chores. People laughed at us older persons who decided to learn to read and write...they wondered of what use it would be for us. After becoming literate, I decided to send my then 10-year old daughter to school so she could escape the ignorance that I used to live with (she has a diploma). I was able to support her in school through the savings group. I was also able to send her younger brothers to school...I am very happy. I have become a leader in the church. I can buy my husband a shirt...I am now an intelligent and skilled wife.”

- Female programme participant, Gatete community. Rumonge diocese

The highest level of education achieved by the majority of the adult children of the programme participants is secondary school closely followed by primary school. A significant proportion of both female (27%) and male (34%) participants reported that their adult children had attained tertiary education, 63 percent of whom were graduates. Given that in the whole of the Burundian population, only around 6 percent of people enrol in tertiary education and that this programme reaches the most marginalised, this is even more significant²². See **Figure 16**.

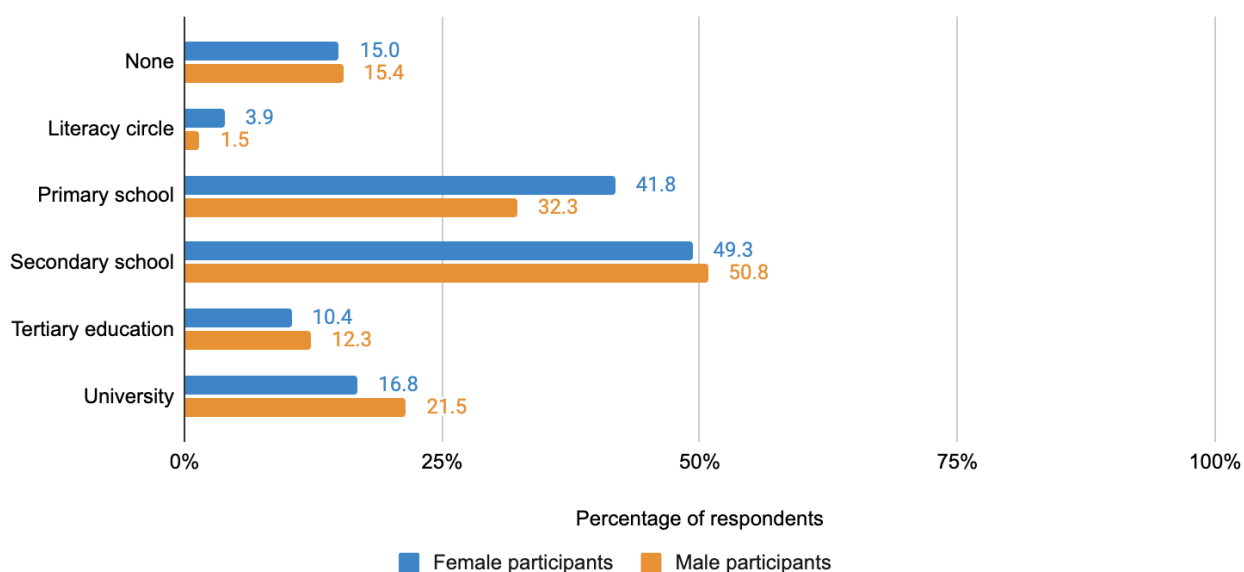
“Cultural barriers are being broken...communities have been sensitised to value the girl child...parents have been mobilised to send their girls to school. As a result, in Makamba diocese, 52.4 percent of the girls of school going age are in school...compared to 48 percent of the boys. This is a great improvement...when the programme started in 2000, less than 18 percent of the girls were in school. As a result, there is a reduction in girl child marriages.”

- Spiritual impact discussion, Makamba diocese

“All my children finished university. My first-born son is in the police and another son is a doctor. My daughter became pregnant during her final year of secondary school. She ran away but eventually returned. I convinced her to go back to school...I take care of her child.”

- Female programme participant, Bibuye community. Matana diocese

Figure 16: Highest Level of Education Achieved by Adult Children of the Programme Participants

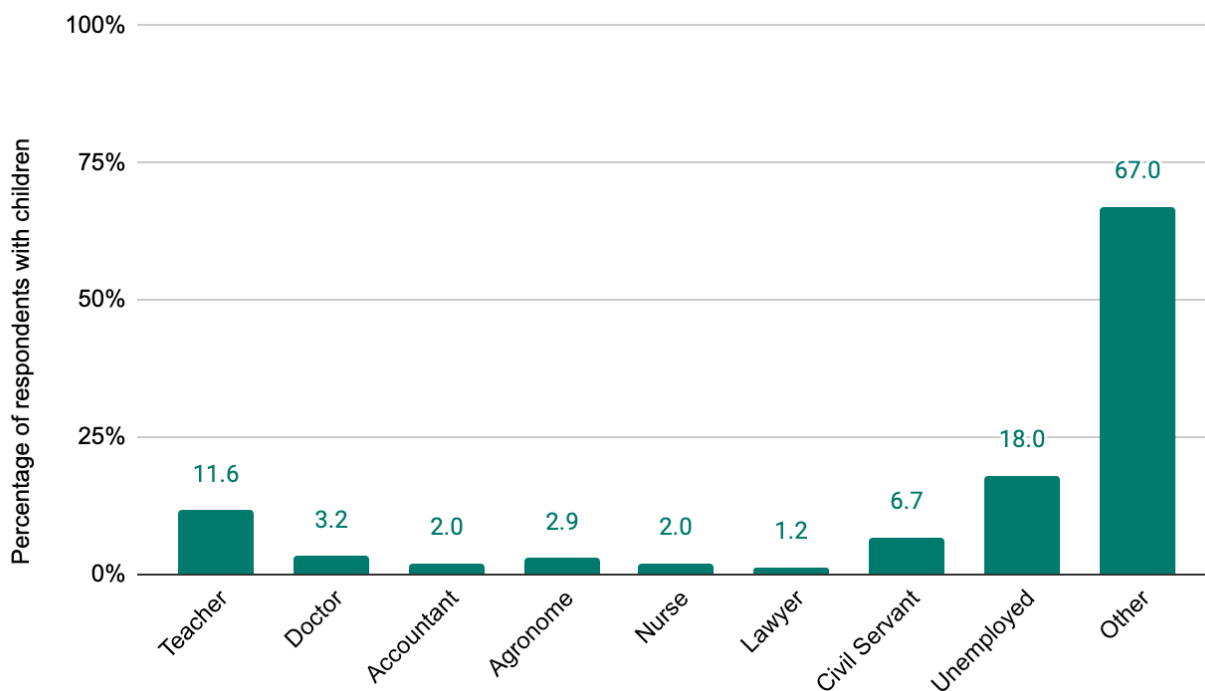


Source: Mothers’ Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants’ survey, 2022

²² <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.ENRR?locations=BI>

During the FGDs, some participants proudly shared that their children were professionals, a fact that they attributed to their being literate and their membership to their respective SLAs. **Figure 17** shows that one out of 10 participants (11%) reported that their adult children were teachers. Others are civil servants (6%), agronomes (4%), doctors (3%), accountants (2%), nurses (2%), and lawyers (1%).

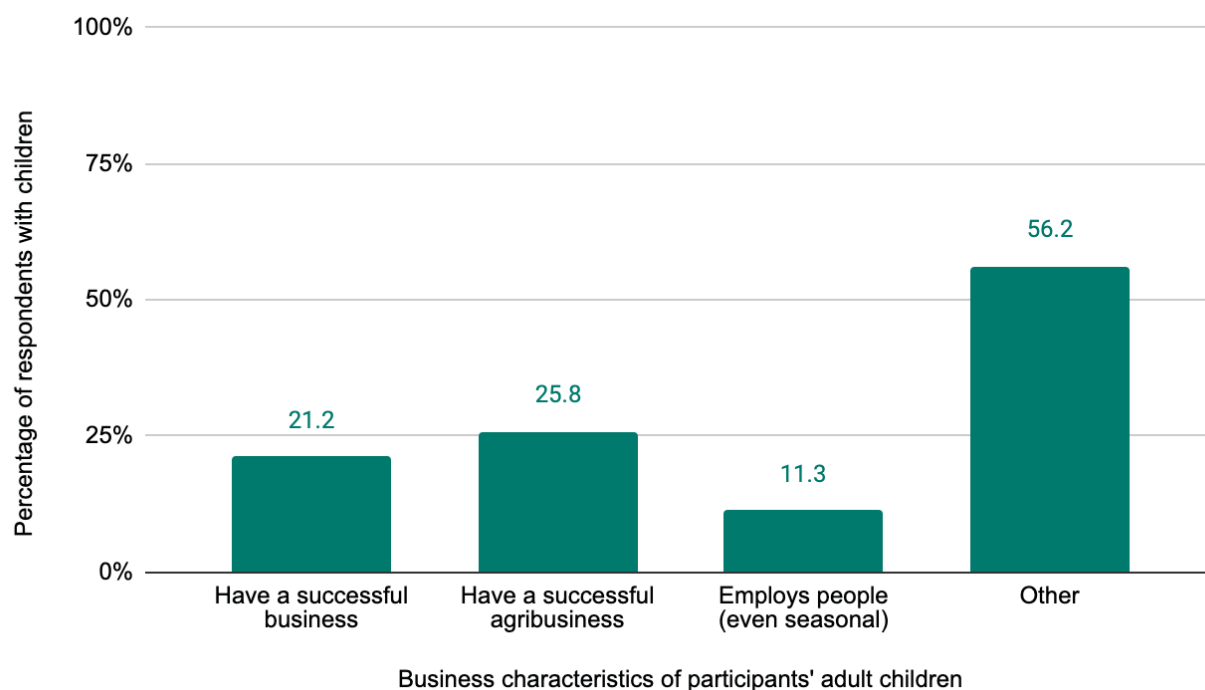
Figure 17: Professions of Programme Participants' Adult Children



Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants' survey, 2022

Figure 18 shows that the adult children of the programme participants who are engaged in business are doing well. One out of five (23%) have a successful agribusiness, 16 percent, a profitable general income generating enterprise and nine percent employ other people. Some of the adult children who we interviewed are participants of the programme while others indicated that they would like to follow in the footsteps of their parents.

Figure 18: Characteristics of Businesses of Programme Participants' Adult Children

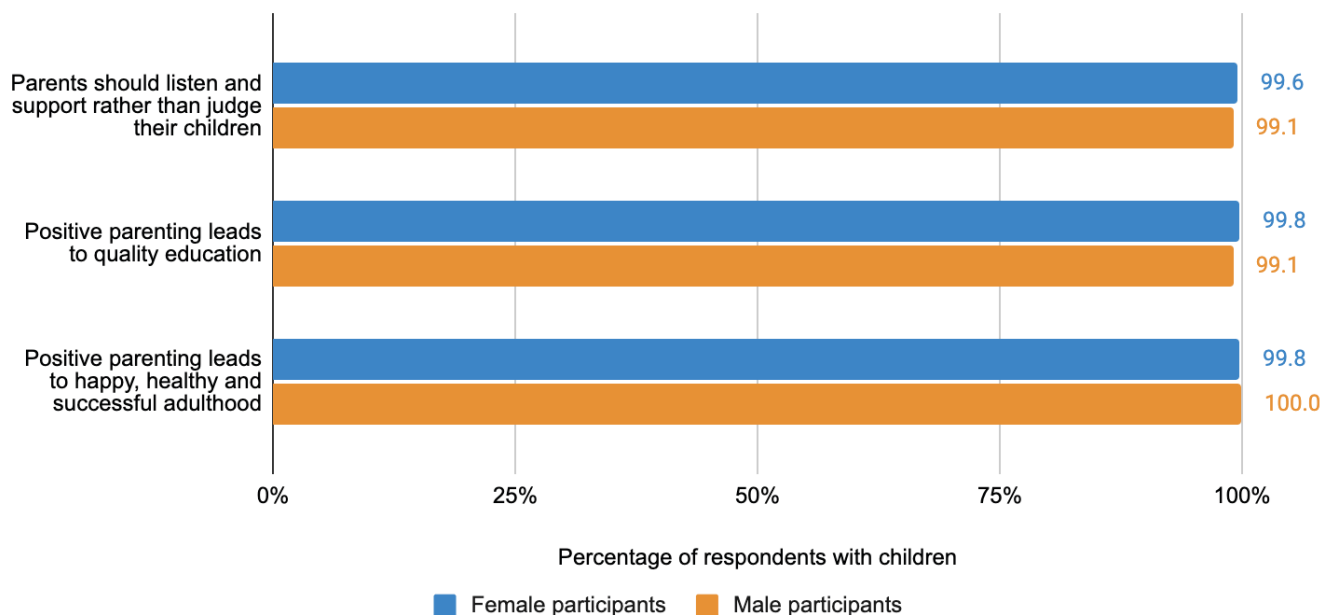


Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants' survey, 2022

4.4.4 Promoting positive parenting stereotypes

Figure 19 shows that as with gender equality, the programme has debunked some of the stereotypes about parenting. Amongst others, nearly all the participants acknowledge that positive parenting leads to quality education and a happy, healthy and successful adulthood. Additionally, that children’s voices should be taken into account in family decisions.

Figure 19: Impact of the Programme on Parenting Stereotypes



Source: Mothers’ Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants’ survey, 2022

4.5 Enhanced Capacity of Mothers’ Union Burundi to Deliver its Mandate

4.5.1 Contributing to the literacy and financial inclusion of members of Mothers’ Union Burundi

“Faith without action is dead...we are now putting our faith into action. They support their families...they support the church...they are more compassionate and help sick people and others in need...they contribute food and buy for them clothes. They made contributions and bought a wheelchair for a woman who lost her leg.”

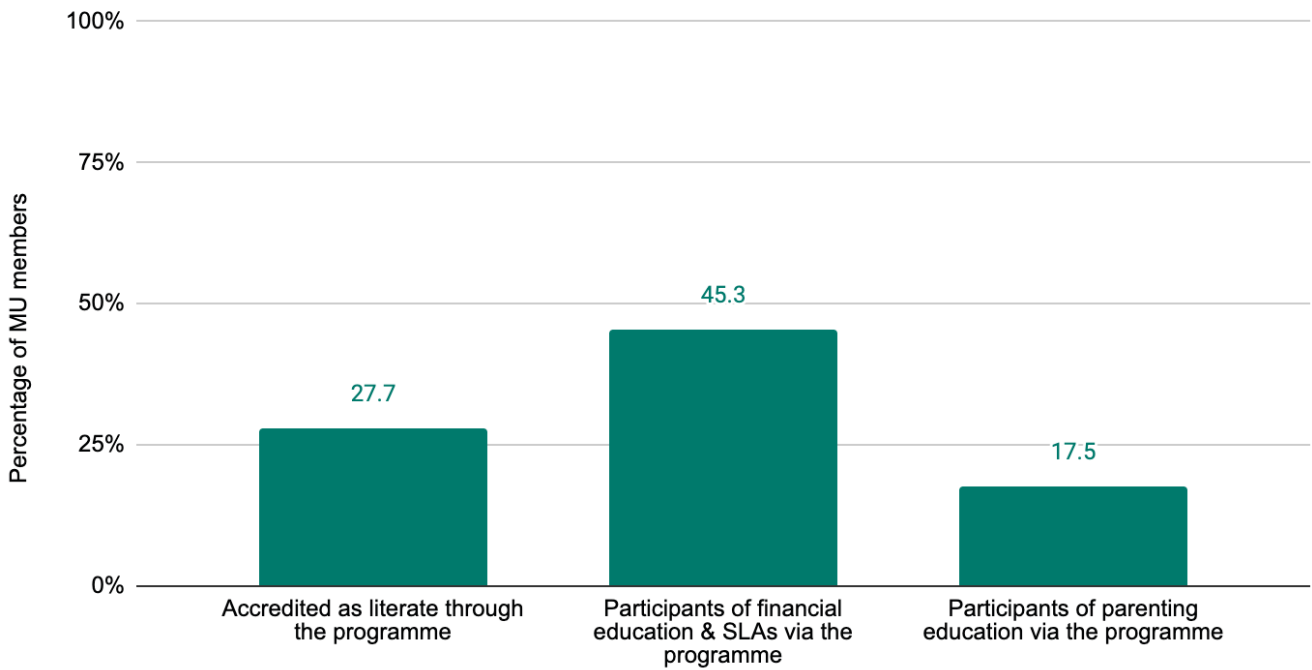
- MU President, Rutana diocese

“This programme is truly transformational. When you become literate, it is like starting a new life. Literate people volunteer to serve God. When they have money, they help others. The participants support each other, they love each other...because of spiritual solidarity.”

- MU Leader, Matana diocese

The programme contributed to the literacy of the Mothers’ Union Burundi membership. A total of 6,650 Mothers’ Union Burundi members became accredited learners under the programme, which is 27.7 percent of its membership of 24,000. Nearly half (45%) of the members have undergone financial literacy training and belong to SLAs. This constitutes 9.6 percent of the female accredited learners and 7.2 percent of all the learners. (See Figure 20 over leaf)

Figure 20: Contribution to Literacy and Financial Inclusion of Mothers' Union Burundi Members

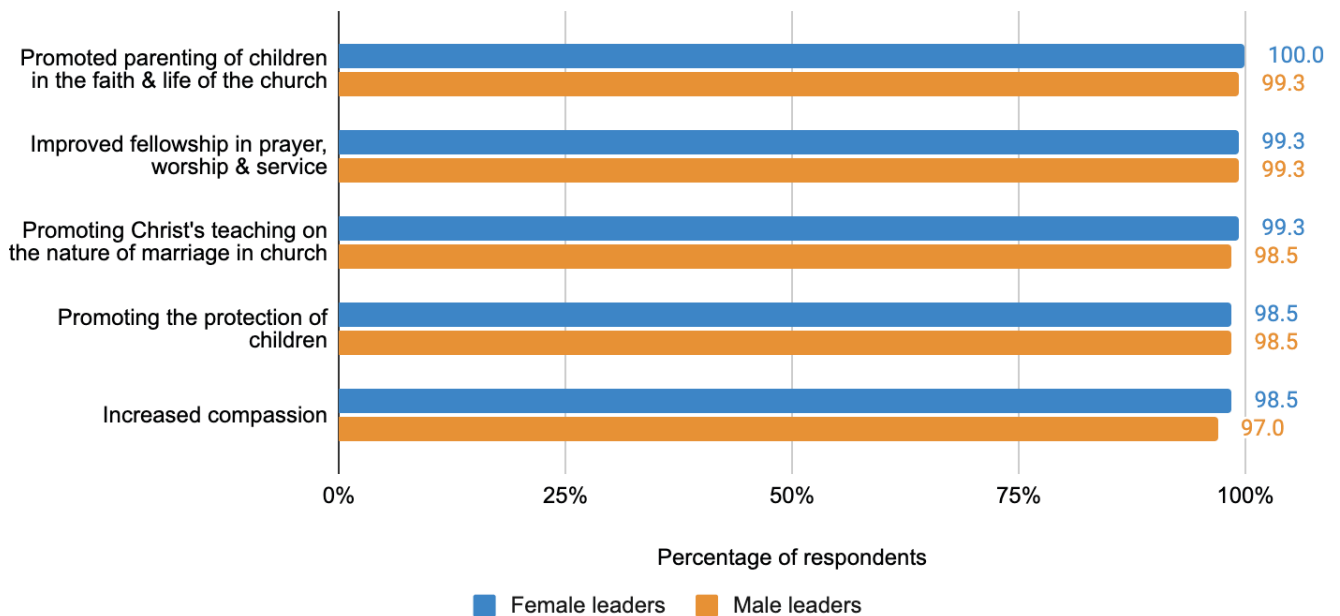


Source: Programme Team

4.5.2 Contributing to the aims of Mothers' Union Burundi

Besides contributing to the literacy levels of its members, the programme has greatly advanced the aims of Mothers' Union. As indicated earlier, the programme promoted legal and Christian marriages, positive parenting and increased compassion for those whose family life has met with adversity, which has helped communities to become more resilient. Additionally, the programme has supported fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service. (Figure 21)

Figure 21: Programme's Contribution to the Delivery of the Aims of Mothers' Union Burundi

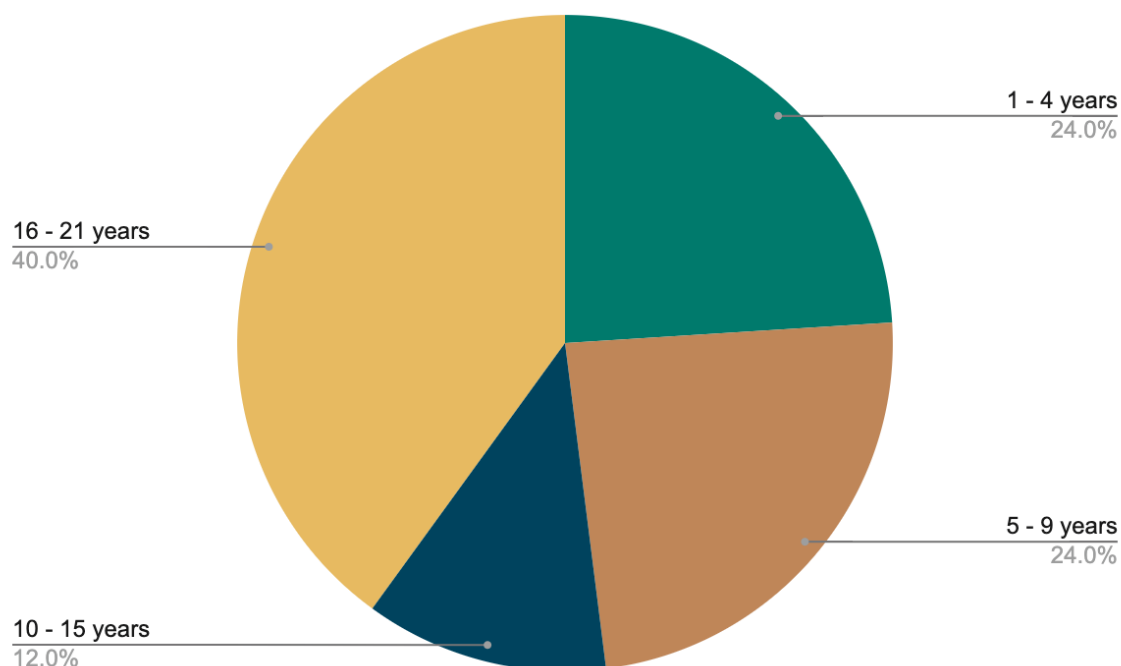


Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants' survey, 2022

4.5.3 Strengthening the capacity of the programme implementers

The programme contributed to improving the capacity of Mothers' Union Burundi to execute its mandate. The number of programme staff expanded from 12 in 2000 to 25 in 2022, most of whom (52%) have been with the programme for more than 10 years. Partnerships are central to the evolution and impact of the programme. The partners, including Mothers' Union, Five Talents, Läkarmissionen and DSI contributed to building the capacity of the programme implementation team. (Figure 22) Annex 5 presents details of the programme team.

Figure 22: Programme Implementers by Job Longevity



Source: Interviews with Programme Management and Implementation Team

- 66 • *I learnt how to be a good facilitator, using an appropriate methodology (PLA)...for adult learning.*
- *I became an expert trainer of trainers for business skills and SLA formation and parenting skills.*
 - *I became aware of global, regional and national instruments and policies such as: SDGs and UN Resolution 1325.*
 - *I acquired knowledge of concepts such as gender, women's rights, masculinity, reproductive health, GBV, family planning, nutrition, and environmental protection.*
 - *I acquired: listening skills, trauma healing skills, business management skills, CommCare, Conflict resolution and peacebuilding skills, advocacy skills and skills to protect.*
 - *I acquired project planning skills and have the capacity to deliver the programme: conduct baseline survey, monitor programme activities, provide backstopping to the facilitators, support community GBV and other advocacy prepare monitoring and learning reports and take basic corrective action during implementation.*
 - *We are community resource persons...we mobilize...we nurture...we build...we counsel...we aid...we support...we catalyse social cohesion, mobilization, networking.*
 - *We received...we have something to give. We improved our capacities...we can transform their (communities) lives...one step at a time.*
 - *We are PLA experts...we work IN, WITH and FOR the communities.*
- MU Burundi Programme team

Over the past 20 years, there has been sustained investment in building institutional capacity. The programme staff have undergone training in multiple areas including: participatory learning approaches, adult literacy training, business skills and SLA formation, parenting skills, spiritual feeding of children, advocacy, peace building, trauma healing, effective communication, masculinity transformation, sexual and reproductive health and rights including SGBV, project management, monitoring, evaluation and learning, conflict resolution including UN Resolution 1325, English language, driving and computer skills, including CommCare.

Programme staff members are also provided with opportunities to experience new contexts to continuously improve themselves. Accordingly, they have acquired an empowered world view and are perceived as literacy and PLA experts, trail blazers as well as community resource persons. The programme has proven to be a pacesetter in designing and implementing activities that deliver. On that account, some programme staff have been invited to facilitate workshops outside Mothers' Union Burundi (in and outside the country) in areas such as PLA, adult literacy, SLA formation and business development.

The capacities built have resulted in great institutional improvement in programming, planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting. Mothers' Union Burundi shares its learning from programme implementation with partners and participants through dissemination meetings of results, video documentation and reports. It also convenes coalitions such as the 16 days of activism against GBV to engage duty bearers. It also shares methodologies, experiences and successes.

4.6 Contribution to Community Development and Nation Building

4.6.1 Support implementation of Government policy

The programme evidently facilitated the implementation of the following Government policies and strategies:

1. The National Constitution (2005) that provides for affirmative action for women in national decision-making. See **Section 4.2.2**
2. The National Development Plan (NDP), 2018-2027, the overarching policy framework. See **Section 4.2-4.7**
3. The 2020 National Peacebuilding Programme that operationalises the NDP and serves as a reference for all interventions aimed at promoting economic growth, community recovery, reintegration as well as sustainable and inclusive resettlement. See **Section 4.6.2**
4. The electoral law (2009) that provides for women's representation in Communal Councils. See **Section 4.2.2**
5. The Financial Education Policy and the National Financial Inclusion Strategy. (2015-2020) See **Section 4.3.1**
6. The Education Policy that provides for free education to cover nine years of basic education (from age 7 to 16). See **Section 4.4.3**
7. The National Gender Policy (2011-2025) that promotes equality between women and men in the economy, works towards reducing women's domestic work burden and associated time poverty, and supports women's economic empowerment through promoting their equal participation in productive work. **See Section 4.2**
8. Persons and Family Law (1993) that promotes civil marriage and prohibits child marriage. See **Section 4.2.5**
9. The Law on the Protection of Victims and the Prevention and Punishment of Sexual and Gender-based violence (2016). **See Section 4.2.5**
10. The National Child Protection Policy (2019–2023) See **Section 4.4**
11. La Carte d'Assurance Maladie (CAM) is a national health card insurance scheme implemented by the government of Burundi since 1984. The CAM gives its purchaser, spouse and minor family members the right to care services corresponding to the package of care available at the level of public or approved Health Centers and at the level of District Hospitals. The co-payment is at 20 percent and is the equivalent of an annual BIF 3,000 for low-income people (indigent/ vulnerable, middle-income earners and high income earners pay BIF 0, BIF 25,000 and BIF 25,000, respectively). See **Section 4.3.3**

“ In the Ministry of Solidarity (Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender), we promote inclusiveness and that is why we support women and MU. The participants have started benefitting from the programme. The Ministry also has a savings and loans programme. Ensuring adult literacy...we are aware that many women did not get a chance to go to school...is also one of the functions of the Ministry...the programme is contributing towards this national policy, thank you. There is a recently established national bank for women located in Gitega...it is cheaper to access a loan as a group rather than as individuals. The interest rate for women's groups is between 7-10 percent...for individual women and men's group, the rate is 14 percent.”

- In charge of the gender department, commune level, Muyinga diocese

“ I am a member of the consultative council of this commune and I am also in charge of monitoring cooperative and social relations. I am familiar with the programme and have noted a difference. We had been sensitising people to join savings groups without much success...then this programme came and started using the word of God. When the people saw that the group (under the programme) was successful and members were benefitting, they also decided to join. We used to have only 5 registered groups but now we have 19. This shows that people are now aware of working together for development.”

- Male adviser, Gisulu commune, Gitega diocese

“ Before the programme started, the facilitator asked us for permission to mobilise the community members for training. As leaders, we appreciate this programme and have directly benefitted from it. It has empowered the people... they are literate, have open minds and are skilled There is a reduction in the incidence of conflict in the community... we have less cases of domestic violence, drunkards, theft (almost none), drug abuse-related crimes and other bad behaviour. There is not even a single reported case of conflict or indiscipline from this group...and they help us in resolving conflict. Please extend the programme to other communities because it mobilises people for development and this benefits the whole country. They come together, identify their issues of concern and come up with solutions to their problems. The members of this group appreciate that respecting God is the key to development. Just look at how smart they are!”

- Male Local Administration Leader, Gitaramuka community. Buhiga diocese

4.6.2 Building communities of hope: social inclusion, cohesion and peacebuilding

“ I have witnessed them changing day by day. I have seen women becoming lay readers in the church. I have seen mothers sending their children to school, and mainly daughters who used to remain behind. I have watched them start their businesses. I have witnessed them challenging all communities and advocating against gender-based violence. I have seen families rejoicing together as result of this programme. I can testify that the consultant’s conclusion of: ‘From a silent revolution to building communities of hope’ is true.

The programme participants worked towards a positive, silent and well-planned revolution. They were transformed individually...their families were transformed...the communities were transformed. Because their mothers participated in the Literacy and Financial Education Programme, we have female lawyers, female doctors, and the like.”

- His Grace, the Archbishop and Bishop of Buye

“ ...the programme is not about money...the participants received love...they built relationships...they got much more than they expected. The programme changed their mindset about several issues, including gender inequalities. They are no longer isolated...they belong to literacy circles...they belong to saving groups...”

- Programme Staff Member

An evaluation of the programme in 2009 concluded that the emerging impact was a silent revolution. A revolution founded in the participants’ membership to the literacy sessions, and thus social inclusion. A revolution driving a grass-root movement advocating for, and working towards social inclusion, cohesion and peacebuilding.

A major conclusions of this longitudinal impact study is that communities of hope have been born out of the silent revolution, supported by human values such as connection, social inclusion, cohesion, harmony and peace building. One of the programme partners commented that: “Social isolation is a companion to illiteracy.” The programme participants have become literate and are no longer socially isolated. This has been further reinforced by their sustained participation in SLAs. As indicated earlier, nearly all the “pioneer” participants of the literacy and development component belong to SLAs and have acquired financial literacy skills. By starting with literacy sessions, participants are by definition, disadvantaged. Additionally, the programme is open to all irrespective of gender, ability, age, ethnicity, denomination or religion. Many participants testified that the programme provided a safe space and multiple opportunities to come together, become literate, learn from each other, save together and build community connectedness.

“ We have many development programmes in the Church but this ones reaches the communities...it has a direct and deep impact on the communities...it is also immediate. Savings and literacy programme...even parenting education have been our tools for evangelism. The programme has been a tool for the communities, for the church and for peace and reconciliation. Programme implementation never stopped...it continued throughout all the turmoil and it brought people together. A community is a community...it does not focus on only Anglicans...all denominations and religions...this has been good for reconciliation.”

- Bishop, Bujumbura diocese

“ I am from the Batwa tribe, a minority ethnic group that typically experienced discrimination...even the boys were discriminated against. In 1993, during the crisis between the Hutu and Tutsi – I could not make any friends...I am now friends with everybody and all groups. I lost my husband during the crisis, but because of this programme, I was able to raise my children and my eldest son is in Kenya. I built a modern house with bricks, tin roof and metal doors. I also built a smaller house that I rent out as a café. I recently bought a plot of land at BIF 3.5 million (≈ USD 1,687). I also sold 6 goats and bought a cow...some community members come to me for loans...I encourage them to join the programme and borrow from groups. The programme changed me...I wish it could spread to all vulnerable communities...give them a chance to see that their lives can also be transformed.”

- Female programme participant, Mukungu community, Makamba diocese

“ I got married when I was very young. I used to be disrespectful of my mother-in-law. I was always in conflict with my neighbours. I have learnt to live peacefully...I get along better with everybody.”

- Female programme participant, Mukungu community, Makamba diocese

“ We used to spend all the family income on alcohol...husband and wife would quarrel...the husband would beat the wife to the point where she would require health care. Some men have stopped others have reduced drinking.”

- Male programme participant, Gitega diocese

The programme is designed to maximise the contact and bonds that participants have with each other. All the FGDs testified to the accrual of social capital attributed to the programme. At the individual level, nearly all participants reported having improved relationships with their families, friends and community. They pointed out that their participation in the programme had enabled them to be more trusting, to make new connections and friends and to build stronger networks. Adding that they discuss their faith more easily with others, find it easier to see gifts or abilities in other people and have thus changed the way they interact.

The FGDs revealed that the literacy sessions and the participants' membership to the SLAs resulted in the development of shared values, attitudes and beliefs, greater trust and openness, transparency, honesty and co-operation. Again, this emphasizes the uniqueness of the programme and the fact that no one component of the programme drives a specific impact. As indicated earlier, the programme contributed to the participants' resilience and their ability to cope with adverse shocks and stresses, and to adapt to uncertainties. All the SLAs under the programme have an emergency fund that benefits members experiencing adversities such as illness or death. All the SLAs indicated that this fund also assists the wider community experiencing unexpected hardship. The FGDs revealed that this, coupled with the fellowship of belonging to groups, has built community resilience.

The religious leaders pointed out that one of the greatest impacts of the programme was giving people hope. Adding that as the programme participants learnt to love themselves more, their relationships with family, friends and community greatly improved. Furthermore, they testified to improved relationships of trust in the community as well as improved character manifested through behaviour and morality. They also reported a reduction in practices such as witchcraft beliefs. As a result, the programme promoted peaceful families and contributed towards conflict resolution in the community.

Most non-participants of the programme indicated that the programme had promoted social inclusion in a very significant way. Some members of the minority Batwa ethnic group reported that the programme had greatly contributed to addressing their negative self-esteem leading to self-stigma, the major impact of discrimination and social exclusion. The participants of all the FGDs pointed out that by being inclusive of ethnic, religious and other socio-economic groupings, the programme had greatly contributed to peacebuilding. The community and religious leaders in particular greatly appreciated the programme for its contribution to the healing, nurturing and restoration of peace. Furthermore, the leaders acknowledged that the programme had promoted alternative dispute resolution which aims at settling injustice in non-violent ways.

The participants pointed out that the design of the programme, including the duration of the literacy education and the requirements for SLA members to meet on a weekly basis enhanced social confidence and engendered social cohesion, solidarity and mutual aid. During the FGDs, female participants reported feeling less isolated. Some of the SLAs have federated into networks and this has emboldened them to undertake collective action. The federations have enabled some of the participants to belong to more than one SLA, which has expanded their potential to save as well as their access to loans.

The programme instilled a sense of hope as the participant communities emerged from places of tension and conflict to vibrant communities. Some of the SLAs formed peace committees and, in some cases, they formed minimum standards among themselves with the aim of strengthening peace and security within their respective communities.

Table 15 presents the perceived impact of the programme on social inclusion, social cohesion and peacebuilding.

Table 15: Perceived Impact of the Programme on Social Inclusion, Cohesion and Peacebuilding

Impact	Reporting significant impact (%)	
	Female	Male
Self-reported spiritual outcomes at the individual level		
I am more open/transparent/honest	100	98.2
I have made new friends	99.6	99.1
I have begun to trust some community members that I did not trust before	98.7	94.5
Improved relations with my neighbours/community	98.1	98.2
Become more resilient	97.8	94.5
I find it easier to see abilities in other people	94.2	89.1
Perceived impact by religious leaders		
Increased hope	99.3	98.5
Improved relationships with family, friends, and community	99.3	99.3
Improved relationships of trust	97.8	96.3
Improving character: behaviour and morality	96.3	96.3
Promoted peaceful families/reduced conflict in families	96.3	95.6
Contributed towards conflict resolution in the community	96.3	93.3
Reduced witchcraft beliefs and practices	91.9	92.6
Perceived impact by key informants of the programme		
Promoted social inclusion	90.6	90.2
Promoted social cohesion	92.7	92.5
Promoted peacebuilding	92.8	93.2

Sources: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2021): Programme participants survey, 2022, Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2021): Spiritual impact survey, 2022, Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2021): Key informants survey, 2022

4.6.3 Proactive lifting and building other community members through advocacy

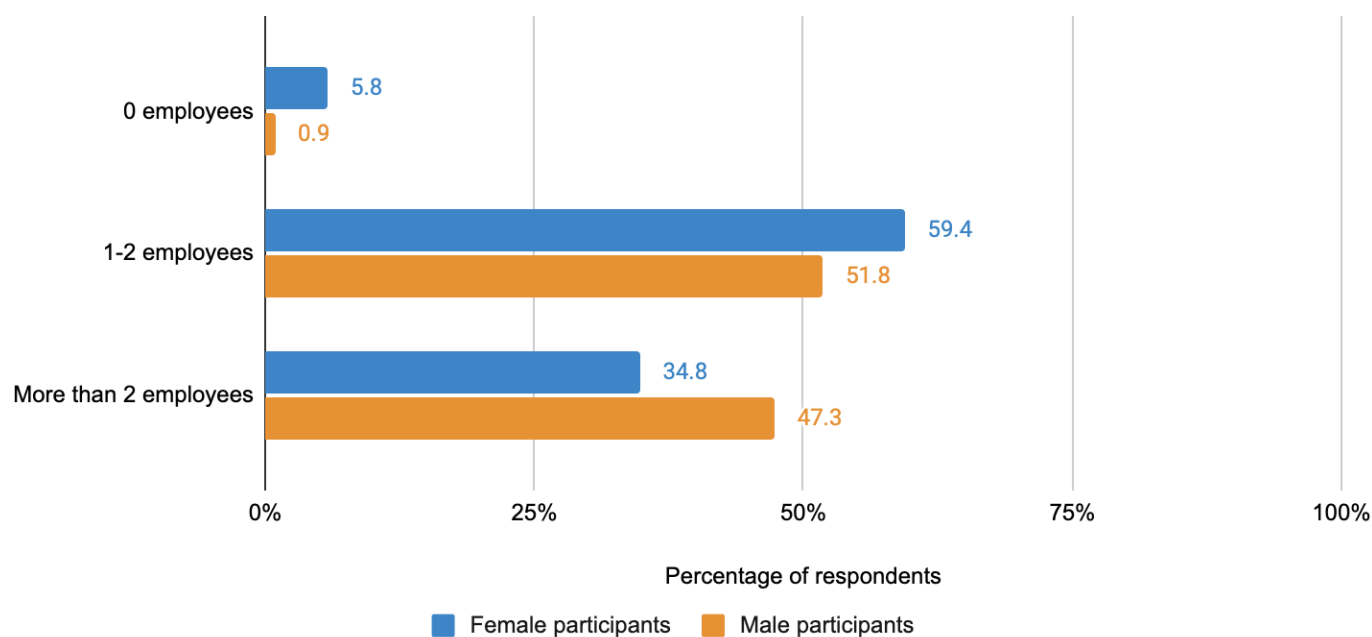
The programme has provided platforms for constructive activities, for positive interactions with peers and for building connections with other people. Moreover, it offered the participants with an opportunity to participate in new roles and to become more engaged in their community and church activities, thus further improving their confidence and self-esteem.

The programme participants serve as role models and disseminate empowering messages to other members of the community as a way of transforming mind-sets for gender equality, women's empowerment and transformation of families. In particular, the participants mentioned that they had actively advocated against GBV, including domestic violence, as well as conflict in the community. Moreover, many are involved in mission outreaches and fellowship that contributed to collective courage and support to community members in need.

The programme has contributed to the creation of new jobs. More than half of the female (59%) and male (52%) programme participants' businesses employ at least one to two people. Some female (35%) and male (47%) programme participants with slightly bigger businesses employ more than two people. One in five (22%) of the female participants pointed out that some of their employees are men. There is no significant difference in impact across the different waves of the programme.

Figure 23 presents a summary of the scale of businesses that programme participants are engaged in.

Figure 23: Programme Participants' Scale of Business



Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants' survey, 2022

“ There are people who have not participated in the programme, but they continue to learn from the beneficiaries. As a monitoring and evaluation officer, I sometimes visit these groups...they have developed themselves. They have also improved the environment around them. They have changed their church structures, their administration, community leadership...this is because of this programme. They are also engaged in other development activities... they have built health centres, schools and roads...on their own...as their solo initiative...through advocacy...and/or in collaboration with others.”

- Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Rumonge diocese

“ There is a lot of impact and achievement. When women become literate, they gain self-confidence and associate with others. The programme raises community awareness about GBV: what it is, how to respond when it happens and how to advocate against it. The participants are involved in development and charitable activities. For instance, they visit those who are sick or are in prison. They contribute from their emergency funds to others' needs.”

- MU President, Gitega diocese

“ I praise my Lord for He has blessed me to become literate. I am an older person but it has helped to broaden my mind. I have seven (7) children...I am able to take care of them. I employ others...many of them are family members... and I pay them. I sell my produce...my children are living well. I am also helping to raise three (3) orphans...I also help other children in the neighbourhood. It is because of this programme that I am able to provide for others. I use the knowledge acquired to create employment for others...I put the knowledge to use.”

- Female programme participants, Gatete community, Rumonge diocese

4.6.4 Contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This section assesses the outcomes of the programme against relevant SDGs for depth, spread and sustainability of impact. The impacts documented are at community level, as perceived by key informants. Considering that these are at population level, there are some notable differences with the individual and family level impacts reported by the participants.

Table 16 shows that the programme evidently delivered development aspects, for both women and men. It contributed to women's empowerment and financial empowerment. Participants saved, borrowed, invested and accumulated assets.

The programme contributed to eight out of the 17 SDGs, with varying levels of impact, namely: i) no poverty; ii) zero hunger; iii) good health and wellbeing; iv) quality education; v) gender equality and women's empowerment; vi) clean water and sanitation; vii) climate action; and viii) peace, justice and strong institutions. This suggests that the programme has not only benefitted the participants but their families and communities as well.

“ MU provides solutions to various women's problems. Women are expected to cook, give birth and to take care of children. Literacy is very important...teaching women to read and write...getting them together gets them out of poverty not only on Sundays but on other days as well...it is a very important and a key factor to their development.”

- Bishop, Matana diocese

“ This programme is an example of sustainable development...people improved their lives using the knowledge they acquired. Please extend this programme to other communities so that no one misses out and is left behind....”

- Male Local Administration Leader, Gitaramuka community, Buhiga Diocese

“ This programme has been very beneficial...it has had a great developmental impact on individuals, families and the church. However, some communities have not been reached...we would like to extend this programme to those places.”

- Bishop, Rumonge diocese

“ There is a clear demand for the programme...the programme evidently improves and saves people's lives. It feeds all church leaders...it impacts on solidarity. As a church leader, there is nothing more challenging than leading people who are not literate. The programme encourages people to join different ministries...this has made my work easier.”

- Bishop, Rumonge diocese

Nine out of 10 key informants report that the programme has had a significant impact with respect to promoting peace-building (93%), social cohesion (93%), improving community participation in income generating activities (91%), social inclusion (90%) and adult literacy (86%) as well as improved hygiene and sanitation (86%).

Section 4.2 demonstrated that the programme has made inroads with regards to improving gender relations and women's empowerment. The impacts of some of these are apparently not widespread and are yet to take root in the partner communities. For instance, whereas three out of four female programme participants reported that they participate in family decision-making, only 31 percent of the key informants indicated that this was a significant contribution by the programme. Further to that, while more than half of the female participants stated that the programme had greatly contributed to their ability to buy land, only 9 percent of the key informants believed that the programme had made a significant contribution to women claiming their land rights. This could be partly attributed to the persistence of discriminatory inheritance law and practice.

Table 16: Key informants Reporting a Significant Impact of the Programme in the Community

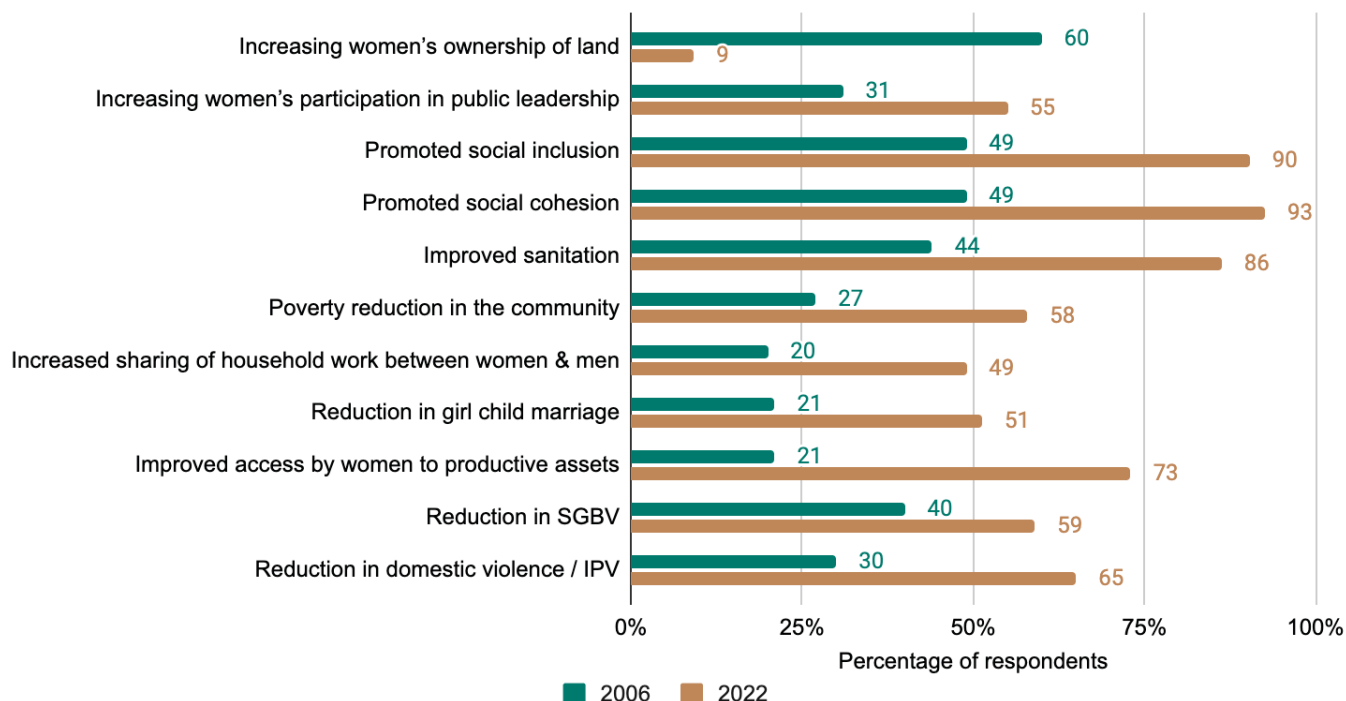
	%	
	Female	Male
SDG 1: No poverty		
Poverty reduction in the community	60.9	54.9
Improving community participation in income generating activities	91.3	91
Improved family income	55.1	55.6
Improved quality of housing	34	37.6
SDG 2: Zero hunger		
Household food security	55.8	53.4
Improved family nutrition	50.7	54.9
SDG 3: Good health and well-being		
Good health and well-being	61.6	64.7
Improved maternal health	74.6	78.9
Improved children's health	73.1	78.2
Improved use of modern family planning methods	39.9	38.3
Reduction in too early births	44.9	39.8
Reduction in substance abuse	42.8	46.7
SDG 4: Quality education		
Improved adult literacy	87.7	85
SDG 5: Gender equality and women's empowerment		
Reduction in sexual and gender-based violence	58	60.2
Reduced intimate partner violence (domestic violence/ conflict between wives and husbands)	59.4	70.7
Reduction in girl child marriage	52.2	50.4
Increased sharing of household work between women and men	43.5	54.9
Improved women's participation in public leadership	57.2	51.9
Improved women's participation in family decision-making	31.2	31.6
Improved women's ownership of land	6.5	12
Improved women's ownership of other productive assets such as livestock, farm implements/tools and mobile phones	69.6	75.9
SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation		
Community members using safe drinking water	73.9	72.9
Improved sanitation	85.5	87.2
Hand washing with soap and water	84.8	82.7
SDG 13: Climate action		
Community resilience: able to cope with adverse shocks and stresses and to adapt to uncertainties	57.2	65.4
SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions		
Promoted peace building	92.8	93.2
Promoted social cohesion	92.8	92.5
Promoted social inclusion	90.6	90.2

Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Key informants' survey, 2022

Figure 24 illustrates that several aspects of the impact of the programme have deepened and been sustained over the years. The most significant improvement in impact pertains to GBV. For instance, in 2006, only a handful of key informants reported that the programme had contributed to a reduction in SGBV in general, and intimate partner violence (IPV)/domestic violence in particular. In 2022, the proportion of key informants who reported that the programme had significantly contributed to a reduction in SGBV and IPV was 59 and 65 percent, respectively. This progress is attributed to the improvement in women’s financial autonomy and reduced dependence on their husbands.

The programme also greatly contributed to improving women’s purchasing power and their ability to access productive assets (21% in 2006 cf. with 73% in 2022). During the same period, the number of people reporting that the programme had made a significant impact on sharing of household work between women and men, a reduction in girl child marriage, as well as poverty in the community, more than doubled.

Figure 24: Illustrative Summary of Deepening and Sustainability of Selected²³ Aspects of Programme Impact



Sources: Mothers’ Union Literacy and Development Programme. Mid-Point Evaluation 2006/07. Burundi country report. Final report, August 2007 and Mothers’ Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Key informants survey, 2022

4.7 Amplified Faith in Action

As indicated earlier, while the programme is implemented under the Anglican Church, participants are not compelled to convert. Amongst others, Mothers’ Union Burundi aims to demonstrate the Christian faith in action. This section illustrates the extent to which the programme has contributed to this aim. The spiritual impact of the programme has been phenomenal and is manifested through:

- Improved self-worth
- Improved provision for the needs of others
- Improved community engagement
- Improved social cohesion
- Improved women’s participation in the church
- Promoted human dignity
- Enhanced capacity of the church to serve its foundational functions

²³ With comparable baseline data.

The impacts are as self-reported by the programme participants and observed by leaders of the Anglican Church including Bishops, diocesan secretaries, archdeacons, pastors, catechists, Mothers' Union Burundi leaders and youth leaders. Data was collected from all the dioceses using a combination of key informant interviews, focus group discussions and a spiritual impact survey involving 272 respondents.

It was important for Mothers' Union Burundi to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the spiritual impact of the programme.

“ People who used to be illiterate can read the Bible and lead prayers. Women...not only women but all the participants are empowered...the programme has opened up their world...they are no longer afraid. The women you met were praising the Lord...they were singing joyfully because their family incomes have improved and they can afford to take care of their families.”

- MU President, Buhiga diocese

“ Illiteracy leads us to darkness...the programme has lifted people from this darkness. The ability to read the Bible has transformed them...you read for yourself...you go to the exact verse and read it for yourself...you do not depend on others. We (parish leaders) are very happy with the programme.”

- Male pastor, Matana diocese

“ Because women are literate, they can read the Bible for their children. Because they are healthy, they can serve God. Because they earn an income, they can feed their children and contribute to the growth of the church. Because their behaviour has improved, they have become saved.”

- MU leader, Bujumbura diocese

4.7.1 Improved personal relationships with God irrespective of faith

Nearly all the female (99%) and male (96%) programme participants reported that they can read the Bible for themselves and that this has significantly transformed their faith and improved their personal relationships with God. Besides reading the Bible, they also gave testimonies of being able to sing from the hymn book. All the participants said that they feel loved by God and see him as a worker in their lives. Furthermore, most reported that they love themselves more and acknowledge that they are created in the image of God.

Additionally, they reported increased and more regular church attendance which greatly contributed to their feeling of love, acceptance and belonging. Moreover, they pointed out that they discuss faith more easily with others and have an improved awareness that faith is key to personal growth and development. Further to that, they reported improved provision for the needs of others. (Table 17) This was observed during all the FGDs where the participants welcomed the impact study team by singing with joy to the Lord.

Table 17: Self-Reported Improved Personal Relationships with God by Gender

Self-reported spiritual outcomes at the individual level	Reporting significant impact (%)	
	Female	Male
I feel loved by God	100.0	99.1
I see God as a worker in my life	100.0	99.1
Increased and more regular church attendance	100.0	99.3
Improved gratitude to God	99.3	99.3
Improved love of self	99.3	100.0
My feeling of belonging at church has improved	98.9	100.0
I discuss faith more easily with others	98.3	98.2
Reading the Bible has changed my relationship with God	98.1	97.3
Improving awareness that faith is key to personal growth and development	96.3	95.6

Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Spiritual impact survey, 2022

4.7.2 Promoted human dignity

Many of the self-reported spiritual impacts at the individual level point to the contribution of the programme to human dignity. Most participants testified that they acknowledge that they were made in the image of God and were thus worthy of respect. Others reported that because the programme was inclusive of all irrespective of religion, economic or social status, it promoted mutual human dignity as a cornerstone of relationships within the family and the community.

Additionally, they indicated that their membership to SLAs had contributed to their human dignity through enabling them to engage in income generating activities and providing for the needs of their respective families. Furthermore, many programme participants, and in particular the women, pointed out that their ability to earn and the subsequent financial independence had resulted in others treating them with respect and dignity. This suggests that, considering that the programme has contributed to its overall objective of reducing poverty, it has fostered human dignity.

“ We gained dignity in our households and in the community.”

- Female programme participant, Mukungu community, Makamba diocese.

“ The programme is life changing...it gives you a new (lease of) life. We have learnt to read and write so it has opened our eyes. We can read the Bible and give glory to God. We make money and can feed and clothe ourselves and our children. We have bought land and have built our own houses. We (women) have become the light of our families.”

- MU leader, Matana diocese

“ I am 36 years old. I started taking drugs when I was only 11 years old...I used to smoke weed (marijuana)...I used to wander the streets doing nothing. I used to lie, cheat and steal to get money for drugs and I would break into my parents' house and my neighbours' home to steal food. I was also addicted to gambling. I got married when I was 18 and I would exchange my wife's harvest for a drug supply. I was shameless...traded clothes off my back and would wear only a loincloth...and that is at a time when I was married.

My wife was miserable and my life was in a mess. One day, after stealing stuff and becoming high on drugs, I tried to escape by hanging on to the back of a fast-moving vehicle. I ended up in a military camp. My brain was so addled with drugs that I was mentally unstable...I had completely lost reason and control of my life...I was bad news. I remember a time when I was imprisoned, one of the officials made me feel like a complete waste of human life saying: 'you will die worthless...hopeless, spiritually empty, and alone'. If you are an addict, you tend to behave badly...your community treats you like an outcast...an animal. This strips you of your dignity. It stirs up feelings of shame and the need for continued use of drugs to numb the pain. I am now living a happy and fulfilled life. The turning point in my life was when I joined this programme in 2016. I was almost 30 years old...God transformed my life.

- Male programme participant, Gitaramuka community, Buhiga diocese

4.7.3 Improving women's participation in the church

According to most female (99%) and male (96%) religious leaders, the programme has made a significant contribution to improving women's active participation in church lay ministry. Most participants reported that they attend a church or other place of worship regularly. Many female participants shared that they have taken on a new role in their respective churches.

Most female (73%) and male (68%) participants reported that they had become choir members. Two out of five (42%) of the female participants also indicated that they had become Mothers' Union Burundi members with 15 percent stating that they had joined its leadership. Some female participants also indicated that they had become lay readers (21%), evangelists (14%), Sunday school teachers (10%) and catechists (3%).

“ Women who cannot read cannot participate in most church activities. Blue and white are the colours of MU...blue symbolizes darkness and white is the light. If you cannot read and write, you are forgotten. MU has given women a key...the key to open their minds...to organise themselves...to participate in everything...to lead others. It has brought women from darkness to light...it has shown them that they have dignity and value...that their role is not only about producing children.”

- Bishop, Matana diocese

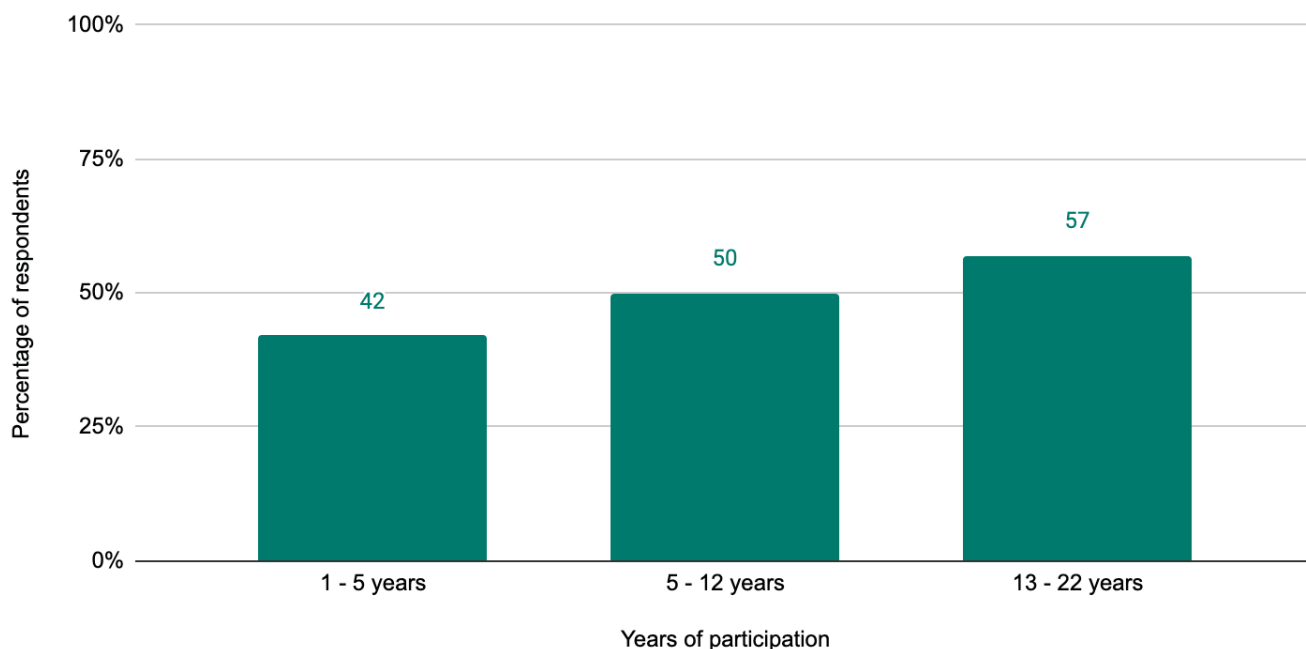
“ Women and men who were illiterate can now stand in front of us and preach...they can read the Bible! They contribute to the church as lay leaders. The woman leader in Ngozi was part of this programme...when you see her, you cannot tell that she used to be illiterate...that she used to be part of a literacy circle.”

- Male pastor, Matana diocese

While, in quantitative terms, the number of female clergy remains low, most religious leaders (74%), irrespective of gender, believe that the programme has contributed to increasing their number.

During the FGDs, female participants testified that they participate in activation of less-active members, teach the gospel and care for the poor and the needy. As **Figure 25** shows there is a notable (15%) difference in the number of participants reporting a significant increase between those who joined the first (2000-2009) and current (2018-2021) waves of the programme.

Figure 25: Female Participants Reporting a Significant Impact in their Church Leadership



Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants' survey, 2022

“ We support another sub-parish of the Anglican Church. We got a bank loan of BIF 56 million to build a church for the sub-parish. The repayment period is five years...we make a monthly payment...we have made payments for 34 months. Even this church was built with the contribution of the savings of the group members.”
 - Female programme participant, Gatumba community, Bujumbura diocese

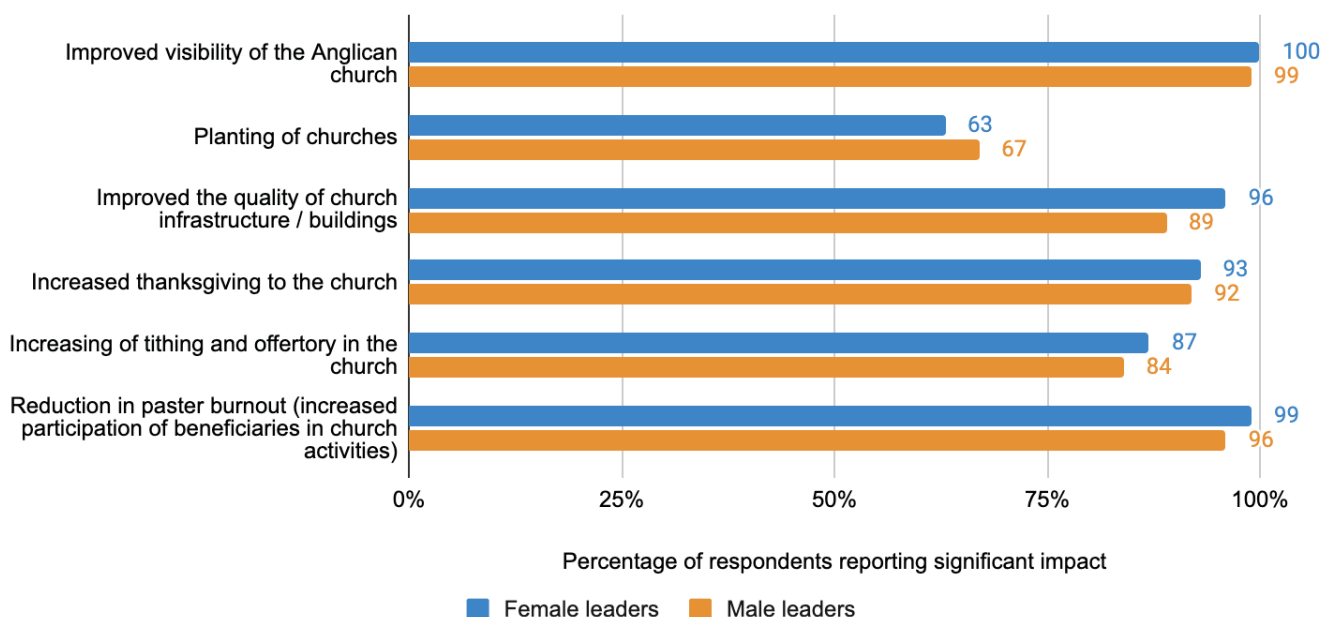
4.7.4 Enhanced capacity of the church

One of the most significant spiritual impacts of the programme was improving the visibility of the Anglican Church. The foregoing section shows that many programme participants got involved in church activities and as a result, this contributed to reduced pastor burnout. The literate participants support the pastors in the leadership and management of their respective churches. Additionally, the participants pointed out that worship had greatly improved, reflected through increased church attenders and attendance, salvations, baptisms, church marriages and Bible classes.

The programme participants also testified that they had contributed to constructing new churches or improving existing ones. Additionally, that they had increased tithing and giving. Some participants also reported that they had contributed to planting of churches.

Figure 26 presents the findings of the spiritual impact survey with regards to the contribution of the programme on the capacity of the Anglican Church. As indicated earlier, the data was collected from all the nine dioceses of the whole country.

Figure 26: Contribution of the Programme to Church Capacity to Deliver its Mandate



Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Spiritual impact survey, 2022

“ Literacy is the foundation of everything. It’s hard to preach to people who are illiterate. The programme addresses social issues...it has improved social cohesion...it has contributed to conflict resolution. Women sit with men to discuss family issues. Once there is peace in the family, there is peace in the community. It has also increased the visibility of the church in those areas where the Anglican Church was not well known.”

- Bishop, Gitega diocese

“ The programme feeds all church leaders...it impacts on solidarity. As a church leader, there is nothing more challenging than leading people who are not literate. The programme encourages people to join different ministries... this has made my work easier. There are more women and men in the church. We used to have low offerings but because of the programme, they are able to contribute financially. The total construction cost of the cathedral was USD 400,000...the church parishioners contributed an estimated 10 percent of the cost (USD 40,000) over an eight year period (2012 – 2020). They have also so far contributed a total of BIF 1,000,000 (≈ USD 485) to this his conference centre (a relatively imposing one).”

- Bishop, Rutana diocese

“ It has grown the church. You cannot spread the gospel, without knowing the scriptures...without being able to read.”

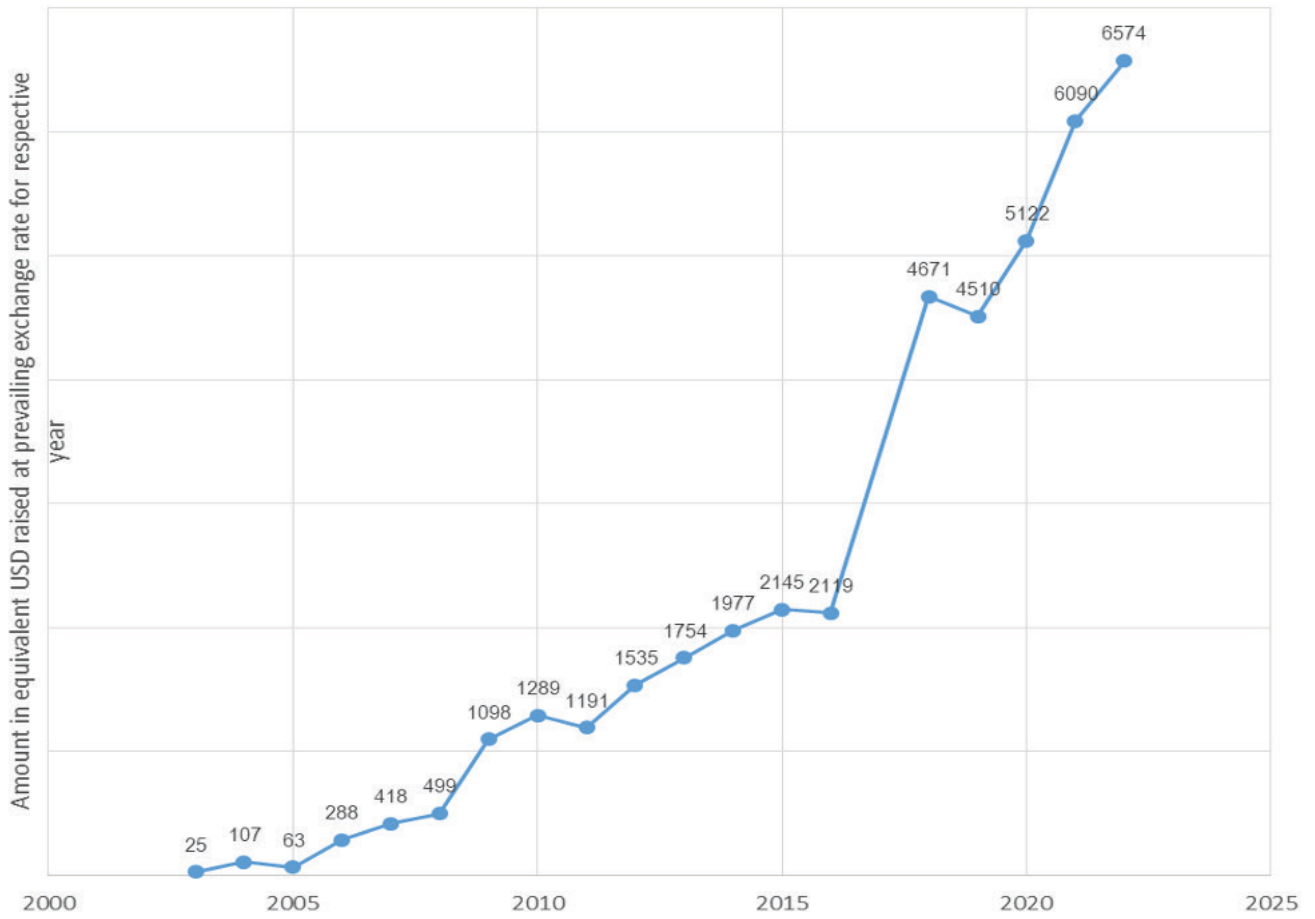
- Bishop, Rumonge diocese

“ They are knowledgeable about many things. They are problem solvers in the community and in the church. There is increased visibility of the Anglican Church.”

- Development Coordinator, Rutana diocese

All dioceses dedicate church collections on a Sunday around March 08, the International Women’s Day. All the dioceses report increased collections. Using the case of Makamba diocese, **Figure 27** is illustrative of this growth. The figure shows that the collections have increased exponentially from BIF 26,750 (USD 25.3) in 2003 to BIF 13,488,200 (USD 6,574) in 2022.

Figure 27: Collections to Celebrate International Women’s Day in Makamba Diocese



Source: Makamba diocese records

5. Sustainability of the Programme

“Our organisation is also involved in promoting savings and loans. This programme is different from others...most organisations give material things and when they leave, nothing is left behind. In this programme, people gain knowledge. So even if this programme ends tomorrow, we will continue being knowledgeable...we will continue benefitting because nobody can take away that knowledge. While other programmes give people fish, this one teaches them how to fish. It is truly empowering...it is sustainable.”

- Male Youth NGO worker, Gitaramuka community. Buhiga diocese

5.1 Literacy Creates Social Capital and SLAs Catalyse Sustainability of Collective Action

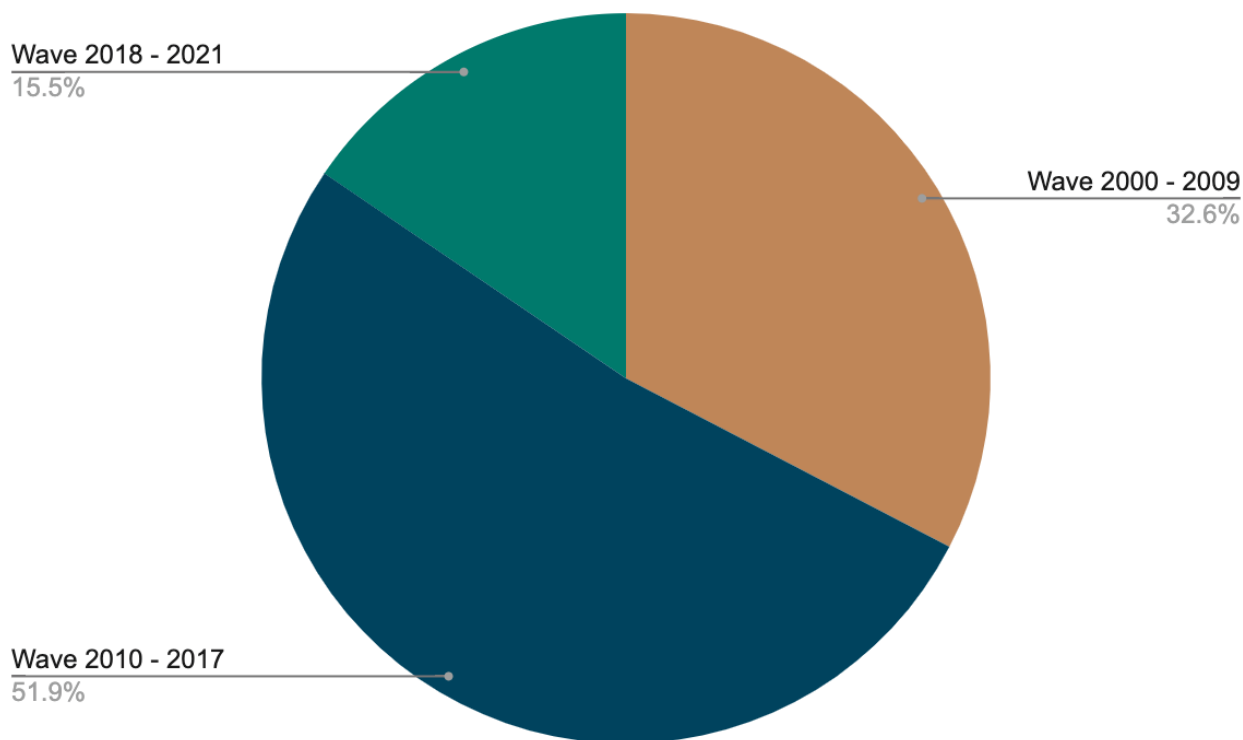
The programme started off with the formation of literacy circles using PLA tools, that resulted in accredited literate learners. This created a social capital of accredited literate learners who are change agents in their communities. The programme encouraged post-literacy activities including the formation of development groups for inter alia economic empowerment. The literacy circles transformed into self-selecting SLAs, which are consistent platforms of practicing PLA tools for continued learning and advocacy. The SLAs are established and registered entities in their communities. They promote financial inclusion and are a catalyst for social cohesion and agency for community development using the PLA methodology.

As one key informant indicated: “People were looking for grants from external sources...the programme created a local (people’s) bank. People learn together...save together...work together...earn their own money”. In other words, the programme created a bank of money, bank of ideas and a bank of knowledge.

5.2 Programme Participants are Still Active Members of their Groups

One of the key indicators of sustainability was the ease with which data collectors were able to reach participants who joined in the initial years of the different waves of the programme - because they are still active members of their groups. More than half of the respondents of the participants’ survey joined the programme during the second wave (2010-2017) and nearly one third from the initial wave of 2000-2009. (Figure 28)

Figure 28: Survey Respondents by Wave they Joined the Programme



Source: Mothers’ Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Programme participants’ survey, 2022

5.3 Sustainability of the Savings and Loans Associations

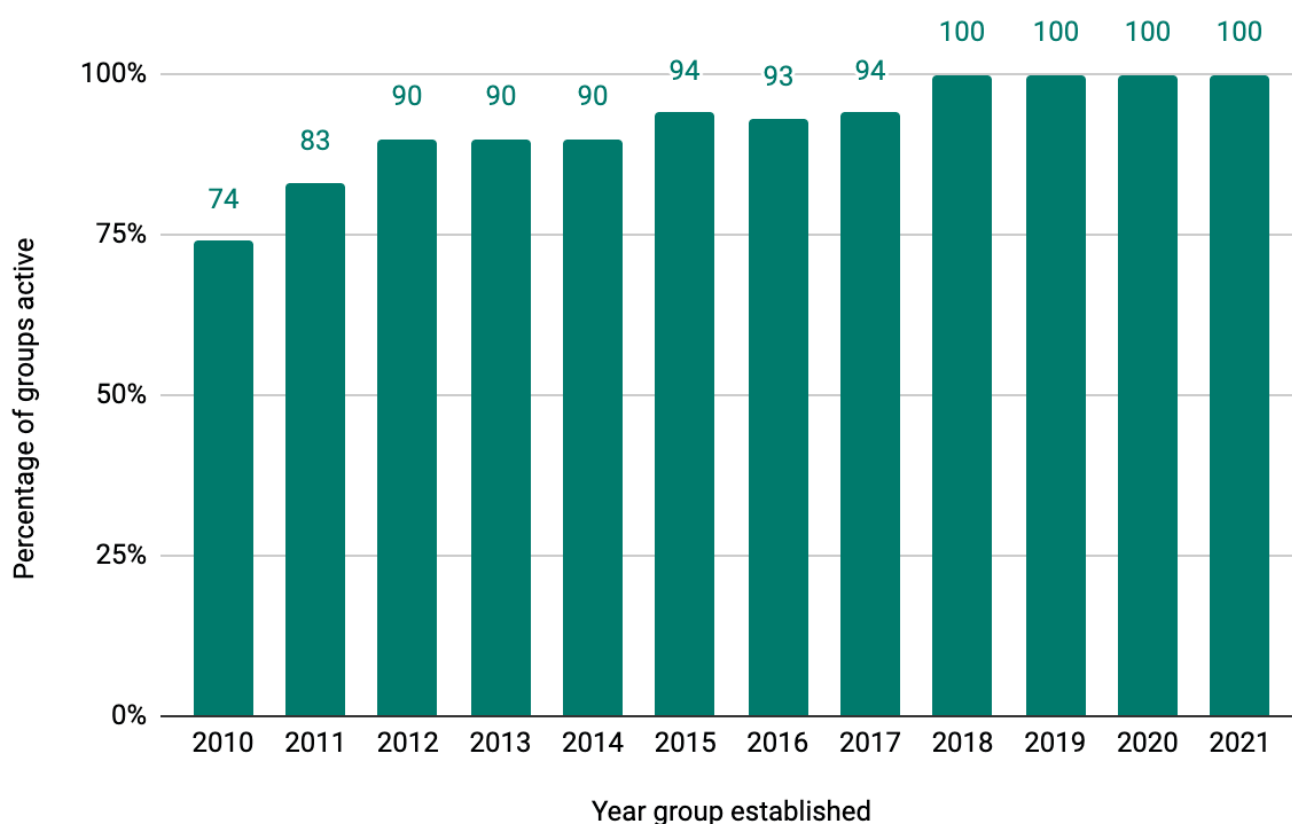
This section is based on a tracking of 589 facilitators who have formed over 2000 SLAs over a period of 12 years. It also tracks the data of the first SLA that each participant facilitator started. It assesses the sustainability of SLAs over time following the cessation of focused programme support. As Figure 29 shows, attrition rates are relatively low and an average of 84 percent of the SLAs formed under the programme are still actively saving and loaning together with minimal defaults. This is attributed to the following: i) members were previously together in the literacy circles, know each other well and are friends; ii) they self-selected each other for the respective SLA membership; iii) they are self-regulating; iv) loans are issued based on the confidence of the group in an individual to pay back; and v) they meet on a regular basis.

The 18 SLAs of Gatumba community, Bujumbura diocese, constituted themselves into a coalition. This expanded the participants' access to loans, both in terms of volume and frequency. Mothers' Union Burundi should consider promoting this as one of the options for addressing the issue of low loan volumes consistently identified as a key barrier to the growth of the participants' businesses from small to micro enterprises.

The few groups that are not functional stopped meeting because the SLAs no longer met their needs. Eight percent (8%) of the surveyed groups that had stopped meeting said it was due to lack of time. Nearly one out of two (45%) of the SLAs that had stopped meeting specified it was due to lack of time and 3 percent because they became too small. This was the case in Makamba where nearly half of the associations became inactive after many of the members went to Tanzania and in Rutana and Muyinga where some group members decided to join programmes implemented by other non-profits. Additional reasons for attrition were lack of interest (38%), and very few stated conflict between members, fraud or theft and bad performance or management.

Figure 29 further demonstrates that all the SLAs that were established between 2018 and 2022 are still functional. Even more remarkable is that an average of more than four out of five groups that were formed more than a decade ago have survived and still meet and save together with no input from the programme facilitators. Additionally, more than half (53%) of the members of the surveyed groups reported that they had taken out loans during their most recently completed cycle. Furthermore, most (94%) of the SLAs have a repayment rate of above 90 percent.

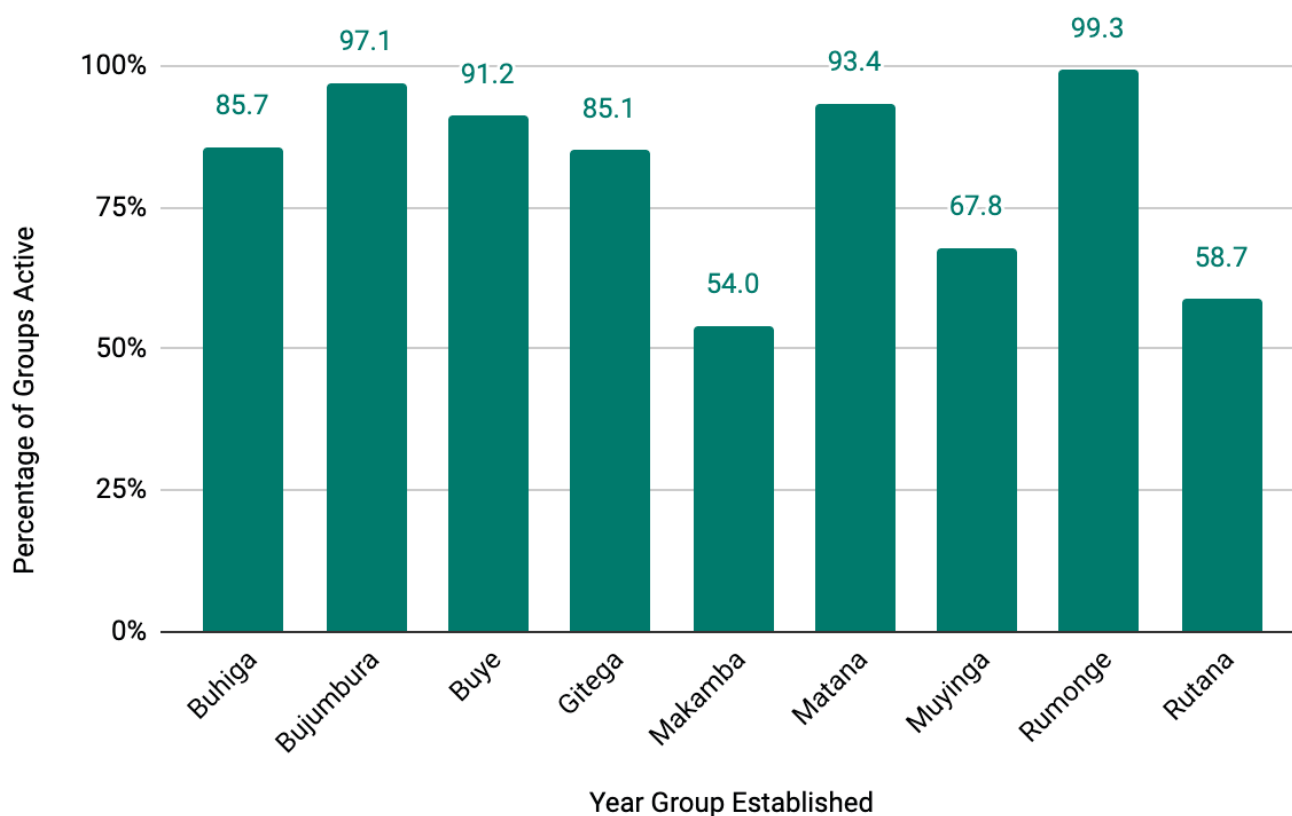
Figure 29: Proportion of Functional SLAs by Year they were Formed



Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022). Sustainability of savings and loans associations' survey, 2022

Figure 30 shows the proportion of functional SLAs by programme area (diocese).

Figure 30: Functional SLAs by Programme Area



Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022). Sustainability of savings and loans associations' survey, 2022

5.4 Best Practices that Enhanced Programme Spread and Sustainability

There were multiple measures, as set out below, put in place to ensure programme spread and sustainability, in order to maximise impact. These comprise best practices that underlie the success of the programme.

“Regarding the sustainability of the programme, we have decided to incorporate it in our Bible schools training. That way, all catechists will be able to facilitate training in their communities.”
- Bishop, Rutana diocese

5.4.1 Programme implemented under the Anglican Church

The programme is delivered under the Anglican Church whose structures and reach minimised the costs of administration, monitoring and follow-up. Accordingly, the programme was able to reach more people and to partner with some of the most disadvantaged communities. The church not only provides the structure, but it also ensures continuity. This is because it is trusted by the community. The church is thus a key ingredient of success and so is the fact that Mothers' Union Burundi and its partners are faith-based organisations.

5.4.2 Programme underpinned by faith in action

Over the years, Mothers' Union Burundi became more intentional with regards to incorporating a spiritual dimension in the programme, which, as this impact study has demonstrated, has been a key success factor. Programme participants and key informants alike testified as to how spiritual empowerment unlocked most of the documented impacts. As indicated earlier, the programme participants are not obliged to convert.

The formation and operations of SLAs are all underpinned by faith. As indicated earlier, the SLA members freely express their gifts, talents and uniqueness and take focused action inspired by God. The impact study established that nearly all SLAs formed under the programme are characterised as strong and thus sustainable. Nearly all the facilitators interviewed pointed out good leadership, trust, and love as the most important factors for sustainability.

In addition, they indicated that poor loan repayment, low savings rates, and dependence on external support, represented the greatest challenges to sustainability. As reported earlier, nearly all the SLAs formed under the programme are still active without external support.

Table 18 presents the participants' and facilitators' perceptions about the characteristics of strong and weak SLAs.

Table 18: Perceived Indicators of Strong and Weak SLAs

Strong Performers	Weak Performers
Multiply and create groups following the model	Do not grow others (no new groups created)
Network with other community-based organisations	No growth and poor survival rates
Good leadership	Poor governance
Members are active and attend meetings regularly	Irregular attendance of meetings
Save regularly	Low savings rates
Loan out regularly	Poor loan repayment/bad loans...members flee without paying
Timely loan repayment	Members did not participate in literacy and numeracy education
Follow rules and regulations	Dropouts especially those without literacy programme
Have a social/emergency fund	Members belong to, and save with many groups
Registered in the commune, account, social cohesion, reporting regularly	Small group size
Espouse love, trust and unity ...close knit and support each other.	Lack of trust between members
Can potentially access other financial services	Lack of follow-up support
Engage in collective activities beyond saving and lending e.g. income generation	Dependence on external support

Sources: Focus Group Discussions with Participants and Interviews with Facilitators

5.4.3 Effective leadership and consistency

Claudette Kigeme, the Mothers' Union Burundi Provincial Coordinator has provided very strong leadership to the programme over the past two decades. The programme has been consistently implemented within the Church structure with a devoted Mothers' Union Burundi Provincial and Diocesan team whose work puts their faith in action.

5.4.4 Programme implementers in close proximity to the communities

The facilitators and the local steering group members who support them, are members of the participant communities. The trainers who monitor the programme and provide supervisory support to the facilitators are diocese-based. Accordingly, they (programme team) are well-positioned to identify participants and partner communities that are truly in need of the programme.

5.4.5 Sustained capacity building for trainers and facilitators

The programme design incorporates sustained capacity building of the trainers and facilitators. This enabled them to develop relevant competencies and skills to effectively deliver the programme.

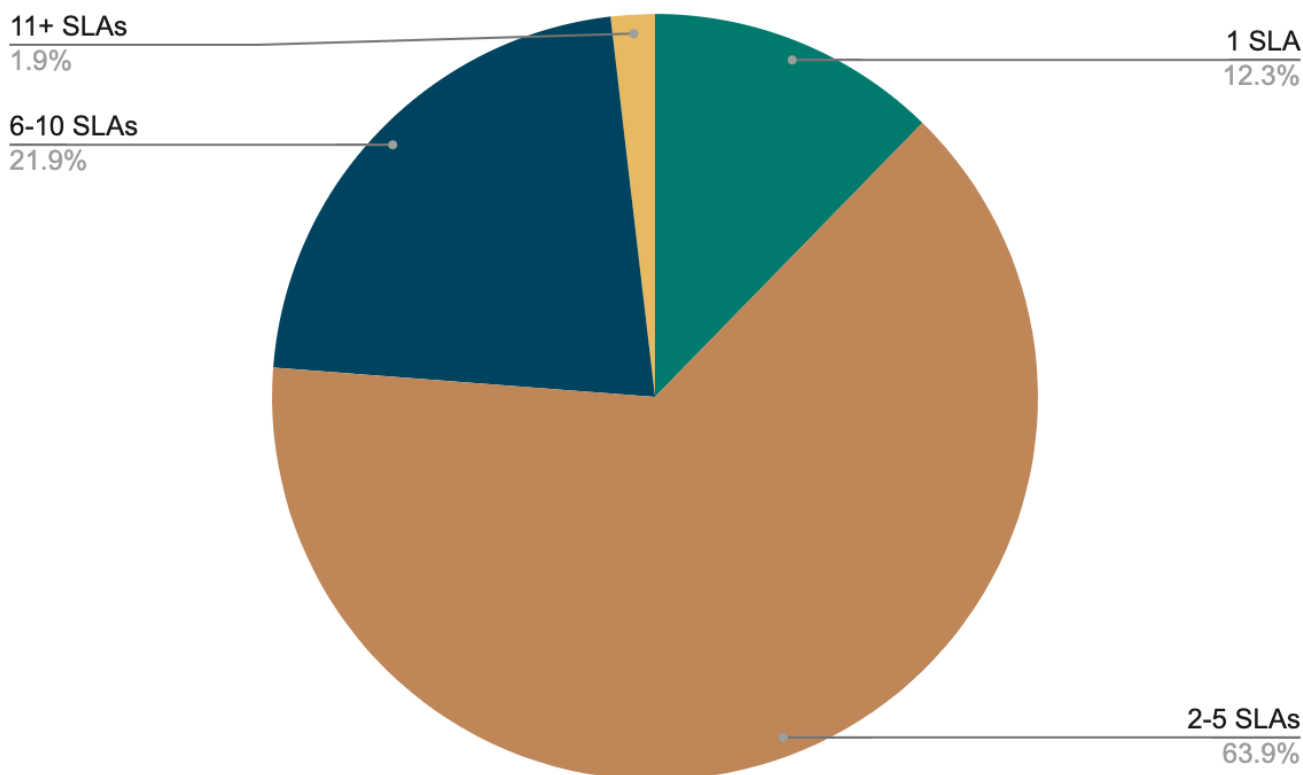
5.4.6 Spirit of volunteerism

The facilitators are volunteers, and the trainers are paid less than the market rate. Despite this, most trainers and volunteers have provided dedicated support to the programme and the participants over the years. The intrinsic motivation for both is the opportunity to serve God. In addition, both the trainers and facilitators are highly valued and esteemed in their respective communities. **See section 2.3.1.**

The volunteer facilitators are greatly appreciated by the programme participants. Almost invariably during the FGDs, the participants appreciated the facilitators first, then Mothers' Union Burundi and then the Anglican Church.

Figure 31 is illustrative of the commitment the facilitators have to the programme. The programme has supported the training, mentoring and monitoring of about 2,900 SLAs. The facilitators replicated additional SLAs on their own initiative. One out of five (21%) of the facilitators reported that they had formed between 6-15 SLAs. The total number of SLAs formed by the facilitators under the programme is over 6,200. This means that the spirit of volunteerism has contributed to doubling the impact of SLAs.

Figure 31: Number of SLAs Formed by the Facilitators



Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022). Sustainability of savings and loans associations' survey, 2022

5.4.7 Standardisation of the PLA programme methodology

“The programme’s participatory approach opened their eyes.”

- Development Coordinator, Rutana diocese

“The programme does not only get people literate, but the participatory approach used gives power to the people to discuss issues relevant to their lives and to come up with solutions to address them”

- Bishop, Gitega diocese

Mothers' Union Burundi recognised PLA, and in particular REFLECT, as an effective methodology with the potential to catalyse transformational change. Accordingly, the methodology was standardised, scaled up and replicated, and this ensured consistency in programme implementation over time. The methodology was utilised across all the different waves of the programme. The adoption of PLA approaches resulted in participants' thinking for and solving problems by themselves. That way the programme put development into the hands of the grass root communities, which is a key sustainability factor. This is in addition to improved community ownership of the programme.

5.4.8 Collaborative partnership

The partners, and in particular Mothers' Union, Five Talents, Läkarmissionen and DSI, contributed dedicated and long-term support to the programme. They complement each other, work together, and have adopted harmonised approaches to planning, resource mobilisation and reporting. While the different partners funded different components of the programme, the support collectively contributed to the vision of Mothers' Union Burundi and to the impacts elaborated in this report. In collaboration with the existing structures, and complementing the resources of the Anglican Church and Mothers' Union Burundi, the partners have greatly contributed to the success and sustainability of the programme.

5.4.9 Adoption of gender transformative approaches

The programme incorporated a gender dimension including male engagement to raise awareness and to support women's empowerment. Moreover, through the use of PLA tools, the programme promoted sustainable mindset and behaviour change that challenges dominant narratives that disadvantage women relative to men. That way, unlike other programmes designed to empower women, there was no reported backlash to gender equality.

5.4.10 Systematic monitoring, evaluation, accountability, learning and documentation

The programme was monitored and evaluated systematically and the effective approaches and innovations were scaled up and replicated. In that way, the programme was responsive to current prioritised needs as well opportunities in the local context, aligned to the participants' aspirations. This is besides making it easy to spread the programme. The routine monitoring and evaluation and the sharing of the learning contributed to the visibility of the programme and its continued demand.

“As an outsider, I appreciate the work they are doing...I award them 100%. My organisation is also involved in similar activities but after the training, we do not do any follow-up. MU continues monitoring the groups and that is the big difference.”

- Female representative of community-based organisation, Bujumbura diocese

5.5 Sustainability of Results: Documented Cumulative Impact of the Programme over the Years

The foregoing sections have shown that the programme has delivered some amazing results. This section presents a summary of the documented cumulative impact of the programme over the years with the aim of assessing spread, depth and sustainability.

5.5.1 Summary of documented emerging impacts: 2006 mid-point evaluation

1. Disadvantaged women and men are becoming literate.
2. Partnerships and cooperation between women and men are being promoted and gender relations are being transformed, as a result.
3. Improved gender awareness and growing commitment to the promotion of gender equality and girl child and women's advancement.
4. Women's participation in household decision-making is improving.
5. Women's profile in the community is improving and increasingly more women are accessing positions of influence in their communities and wider society.
6. Community ownership of the programme and increasing acceptability by the men.
7. Improved agricultural production.
8. Learners have been empowered to develop personal and community initiatives related to issues such as health and hygiene, gender inequality, women's rights, income generation and HIV/AIDS.
9. Women are being equipped to challenge the attitudes and practices of society and men that lead to their marginalisation and subordination.

5.5.2 Summary of documented impacts: 2009 evaluation

1. Contributed substantially to changing the social relationships between women and men which create and reproduce conflict, separation, competition, difference and inequality. It has resulted into improved co-operation, connection, and mutual support amongst women and men as well as community members. Partnerships and cooperation between women and men are being promoted and gender relations are being transformed, as a result.
2. Improving literacy and numeracy and in the process creating post literacy groups that are increasingly becoming the centres of potency, promoting development in their communities.
3. Enhanced the participants' capacity to undertake action to improve choices in life, and to access information, training, skills, services, rights and resources. Disadvantaged people, specifically women, people living with HIV/AIDS and PWDs, have been given an opportunity to participate in local decision making and rights-based action.
4. Due to the hands-off approach adopted by Mothers' Union in implementing the programme, the capacity of the diocese, the trainers, as well as the communities, to manage the programme locally, has been strengthened. In addition, it has created a cadre of committed and well trained facilitators.
5. It continues to contend with issues that disadvantage women and girls. As a result, negative cultural practices and beliefs are increasingly changing to the benefit of women and the girl child.

6. The accredited learners are engaged in a wide range of development activities, many of which are undertaken collectively and are agro-based. These activities have contributed to securing household food security and improving family nutrition. Further, they have contributed to the learners', specifically the women, gaining greater economic freedom.
7. It continues to contribute to the increasing number of female leaders drawn from the learners as well as the facilitators. Both female learners and facilitators have become role models in their communities and their status in the society has been elevated.
8. Empowering women to participate in household decision making.
9. It is fostering male champions of gender equality and has contributed to the creation of more tolerant communities where citizenry are more understanding of disadvantaged groups.
10. Improving family life as well as personal and household sanitation and health.
11. Strengthening community structures and reinforcing church activities.

5.5.3 Summary documented impacts: 2011 review and 2013 evaluation

1. The programme participants have formalised SLAs, 80 percent of which are registered with local authorities.
2. Programme participants save collectively, and 80 percent of the SLAs have given loans to their members, none of whom had previously accessed a loan or had a savings account in any institution.
3. Promoted peacebuilding through inclusion of participants of different religions and ethnicity.
4. Improved unity, co-operation and mutual support among SLA members both within group activities as well as in community interactions.
5. Support from the Church leadership, community and traditional leaders.
6. Actively seeks male participation to foster improved gender relations and be inclusive of the participants' families.
7. Improved family harmony and relationships due to women's ability to financially contribute to household upkeep and a lack of dependence on the often-insufficient income of their husbands to provide for basic needs.
8. Community development through participants' engagement in development activities such as orphan care, improving sanitation and health in their communities, HIV/AIDS awareness and promotion of women's rights (including mobilization of communities on issues such as domestic and GBV).
9. Mobilised funds to support members with healthcare, education and burial expenses regularly.

5.5.4 Summary of documented impacts: 2017 evaluation

1. Improved women's self-esteem, confidence and dignity, and the positive results of these being recognised by men.
2. A higher degree of awareness of the value and importance of becoming literate.
3. Increased women's participation in family decision making.
4. Women elected leaders are able to express their ideas/views and actively participate in community decision making.
5. Reduction of conflict between husbands and wives / reduction in household violence against women due to the improvement in women's financial status.
6. Small business development.
7. Prioritisation of children's education.
8. Legal recognition and access to services such as free under 5 health care, primary education and inheriting their father's land through birth registration and marriage legalisation.
9. Improved social integration and social cohesion.
10. Peacebuilding: Men and women participate in the resolution of other people's household conflicts.
11. Improved gender activism and awareness of gender justice i.e. higher consciousness regarding the importance of sending the girl-child to school, women's contribution and the punitive impact of women's high workloads.

5.5.5 Summary of documented impacts: 2020 evaluation

1. Improved family income.
2. Improved women's participation in household and public decision-making.
3. Increased men's participation in household work such as cooking food, fetching water and cleaning the house, contributing to a reduction in women's work burden.
4. Mindset change about women's socially ascribed role as a financially dependent housewife and men's as a provider.
5. Increased utilisation of health care services (including reproductive health services).
6. Reduction in wife beating and improved harmony between spouses.
7. Increased activism against GBV and the non-stigmatization of people living with HIV / AIDS.
8. Harmony among different ethnic groups and religions.
9. Legalisation of marriage.
10. Challenging socio-cultural norms that underlie gender inequalities and promoting women's rights as well as men's support of women's empowerment.

Table 19 shows that all the impacts that emerged during the first evaluation in 2006 were sustained over the years and are thus more visible. The table summarises the impacts of the programme as documented in the evaluations. The table illustrates that the impact of the programme has been spread, deepened and sustained over the years.

Table 19: Sustainability of Programme Impacts over the Years

Documented Impacts of the Programme	Year of Evaluation						
	2006	2009	2011	2013	2016	2020	2022
Promoted gender equality and women's empowerment							
Improved self-esteem, confidence and aspirations							
Enhanced women's voice, participation and agency							
Expanded women's access to opportunities and their control over productive resources such as land							
Improved sexual and reproductive health and rights							
Fostered a supportive social environment that promotes women's rights							
Financial empowerment							
Contribution to financial inclusion							
Expanded entrepreneurship (small and micro businesses)							
Improved household income and promoted women's financial stability							
Spiritual empowerment							
Improved personal relationships with God.							
Promoted human dignity							
Improved women's participation in the church							
Enhanced the capacity of the Anglican Church							
Transformation of families							
Fostered reconnections in family relationships							
Promoted positive parenting							
Nurtured intergenerational impacts of the programme							
Promoted positive parenting stereotypes							
Enhanced capacity of Mothers' Union Burundi to deliver its mandate							
Contributed to the literacy of Mothers' Union members							
Delivering the aims of Mothers' Union							
Strengthened the capacity of the programme frontline workers							
Contribution to community development and nation building							
Supported implementation of Government policy							
Building communities of hope that promote social inclusion, cohesion and peacebuilding							
Contribution to Africa 2063 Agenda: Aspiration 6							
Contribution to the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the previous MDGs							

Sources: Programme Evaluation Reports- 2006, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2017, 2020

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This longitudinal impact study documented a body of solid qualitative and quantitative evidence of the phenomenal impact of the programme. The programme is unique and innovative and is underpinned by faith in action.

6.1 From a Silent Revolution...

1. The programme has evolved from a 'silent revolution' (term used in the first 2006 evaluation) to building communities of hope with voice, power and resources for women in a safe and supportive social environment. The revolution was founded in the programme participants' membership to the literacy sessions, and thus social inclusion. A revolution driving a grass-root movement advocating for, and working towards, social inclusion, cohesion and peacebuilding. The programme's sustained engagement with the communities enabled the participants to continuously grow themselves and lift and build others.

6.2 A Growing Movement...

2. The 2017 evaluation referred to the programme as follows: "It has been more than a programme - a movement, given the very high levels of community ownership and alignment with women's and community priorities. This was clearly a programme designed with the "grain" of the vision for change that people have for themselves. It has taken on a "life of its own" as women and men whose lives have been improved, spread the word to others about the positive changes in their lives."²⁴

6.3 An Evolving and Dynamic Programme

3. The programme adopted a rolling wave planning approach. This flexible approach allowed the programme to evolve and adapt to emerging participants' needs, build on lessons learnt as well as global best practices.
4. Additional components were progressively incorporated largely designed to implement recommendations that motivated transformation and direction and gave hope to families and communities, while promoting women's rights.
5. To ensure inclusion of all faiths, the programme initially excluded spiritual empowerment. However, it was realised later that the PLA/reflective methodology adopted by the programme ensured inclusion as well as faith in action. The programme continuously incorporated aspects that added value and benefits to the participants. Over the years, it became more intentional in making the spiritual engagement dimension more explicit without compelling the participants to convert.
6. The programme has thus been a 20-year learning journey for Mothers' Union Burundi during which approaches were piloted and stories of change were documented. This ensured continued learning and relevance in that it initiated various activities intended to address the current prioritised needs of the participants.
7. The programme has clearly walked a long and impactful journey with the participants, from literacy education to savings, access to loans and the establishment of small businesses, some of which have grown to micro and medium enterprises.

6.4 Implemented during Periods of Political Instability but with High Impact

8. The programme was implemented during periods of political instability and wide-ranging sanctions. Road travel was unsafe and fuel was scarce. This is in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic that hindered progress of implementation of development projects globally.²⁵ Nonetheless, programme implementation never stopped, and the programme delivered high impact outcomes over the 20 years. Implementation continued throughout the turmoil and the programme brought people together, gave them hope and thus contributed to peacebuilding.

6.5 Staying True to Mission and Collaborative Partnership

9. The programme implemented activities charted out in its theory of change and stayed true to the mission of Mothers' Union Burundi.
10. The long-term, diverse and harmonised partnership was key to the success of the programme.

“ We work together and provide long-term support to the programme. The financial education component builds on the literacy component. So does the parenting education component. We have adopted harmonised approaches... we do not work in silos but as one programme designed to deliver a shared goal. For instance, we (partners) make a joint application for funding. In addition, we all receive one report from MU Burundi. That way, we are all aware of what the different partners are doing. This is a great practice. We also respond to needs on the ground. Our support is informed by recommendations from routine monitoring and evaluations.”

- Programme funding and technical support partner

²⁴ O'Hagan Paul, 2017. Mothers' Union Literacy & Financial Education Programme (MULFEP) Burundi evaluation

²⁵ COVID-19 was not raised as an issue that constrained implementation of the programme

6.6 Direct Results of the Programme

11. The programme has created a pool of nearly 1,300 facilitators, a community resource that is drawn upon by other development programmes. Many of these facilitators leverage the spaces they occupy to promote positive messages about the programme and its benefits to the communities.
12. It directly benefitted over 165,000 participants, 77 percent of whom are women. Most of the participants (87%) are accredited as literate and numerate, a contribution of 2.9 percent to the estimated 5,030,955 adult population in Burundi who can read and write²⁶.
13. More than 6,200 SLAs were formed under the programme, comprising close to 144,000 self-selected members, 78 percent of whom are women.
14. More than half of the female (59%) and male (52%) programme participants' businesses employ at least one to two people. Some female (35%) and male (47%) programme participants with slightly bigger businesses employ more than two people.
15. The parenting education component, a relatively recent addition to the programme, has so far reached close to 7,500 participants.

“*I thank all who supported the programme over the past 20 years. “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few” (Luke 10:2). We thank you for having been in the vineyards, and we command you to go and invite as many labourers as possible so that we can extend the Kingdom of God. The Anglican Church will continue to support the good work that MU is doing to empower communities, especially the most disadvantaged.”*

- His Grace, the Archbishop

“*The programme is a case of good international practice that can potentially be replicated. From nothing to something...this is great progress...participants are literate. Joy cannot be measured...the joy of togetherness. They received financial education...seed money could potentially add value. What we can offer is spirituality and moral character.*

- Bishop, Matana diocese

6.7 Delivered Six Interrelated Impacts at Individual, Family and Community Levels

16. The six key impacts of the programme are interrelated with none directly attributed to a specific component. Whereas all components are mutually reinforcing, according to discussions with the programme participants, faith in action significantly unlocked many of the documented impacts.
17. This was greatly complemented by the participatory and agency-building approach to literacy as well as the financial education.

6.7.1 Gender equality and women's empowerment

18. The programme contributed to multiple dimensions of gender equality and women's empowerment. It improved women's self-esteem, confidence and aspirations. Additionally, it brought women's voices and skills to the forefront, increased their participation in the productive economy and their access to credit, largely through loans from the SLAs. It also contributed to breaking down mindsets and challenging dominant narratives that underlie gender inequalities. Further to that, it demonstrated that deeply ingrained norms can change, and it promoted a social environment that is relatively free from the threat of GBV and where women's rights are intrinsically recognised, realised and safeguarded.
19. Following the validation meeting of this longitudinal impact study, programme management put in place measures to ensure that the programme purposively promotes women's empowerment and that it does not disproportionately benefit men.

6.7.2 Financial empowerment

20. The programme contributed to financial inclusion, expanded entrepreneurship, improved household income and promoted financial stability. The SLAs are a registered entity within communities that also continue to be a catalyst for social cohesion and agency for development
21. Due to women's financial autonomy, there was a reported reduction in domestic violence that arises out of household economic stress.
22. Most of the enterprises established are small and agro-based. For instance, the most popular enterprise for 92 percent of female and male programme participants is primary crop production followed by livestock farming (81%) and marketing of agricultural products (67%).
23. The programme has evidently contributed to improving the participant's situation from dire levels of poverty. However, many continue being poor. Many of the key informants and programme participants indicated that insufficient resources, in terms of loan volumes, was the major reason for low profits and the restricted growth and development of their businesses from micro to small and even medium enterprises.

²⁶ Sources: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?locations=BI>; <https://apiportal.uis.unesco.org/bdds> (extracted data from 2021)

6.7.3 Transformation of families

24. The programme fostered reconnections in family relationships and encouraged positive parenting. In addition, it nurtured intergenerational impacts of the programme that not only benefitted the participants but their families and communities as well.
25. The literacy component enhanced the participants' appreciation of their children's education, their membership of SLAs improved their financial capacity to cater for their children and the parenting skills sharpened their reflective practices, including listening.

6.7.4 Enhanced capacity of Mothers' Union to sustainably deliver its mandate

26. The programme contributed to literacy and numeracy of Mothers' Union Burundi members and improved their financial inclusion. Additionally, it strengthened the capacity of the programme frontline workers and contributed to the achievement of the aims of Mothers' Union.

6.7.5 Contribution to community development and nation building

27. The programme supported implementation of government policy. Furthermore, it built communities of hope that espouse values of social inclusion and cohesion, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It also contributed to the achievement of the eight of the SDGs. The programme participants lifted and built others through community outreach, support to those in need, advocacy, role modelling, and disseminating empowerment messages.

6.7.6 Faith in action / Spiritual empowerment

28. The programme had a transformative impact on the participants' personal relationship with God and women's participation in the church. Further to that, it promoted human dignity and enhanced the capacity of the Anglican Church. Most of the SLAs formed under the programme are still functional and the members have fellowship and commitment to remain together. This whole programme is underpinned by faith in action, as the Mothers' Union Burundi exemplify their motto "I can do everything through Jesus Christ, who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).

6.8 Replicability of the Programme

29. Nearly all the female and male participants (99%) of the spiritual impact study indicated that Mothers' Union Burundi/Anglican Church has the capacity to expand the programme. Moreover, findings of this impact study show that the programme is scalable and has already been replicated with great success.
30. The evaluation uncovered the statistic that approximately half of the new 6,200 SLAs formed during wave 2 and wave 3 were formed independently, without any support from the programme. This level of 'spontaneous replication' of the programme shows that the reach of the programme and the extent of its impact goes far beyond the immediate participants.

6.9 Sustainability of the Programme

31. The programme was implemented over 20 years. Successive evaluations, including this longitudinal impact study, have demonstrated that the programme achieved consistent participant outcomes throughout this period, with several outcomes deepening over time.
32. Moreover, the impact of the programme is not limited to the participants but is diffused to other community members, through spontaneous replication of groups, through community members being employed in participants' businesses, and through challenging dominant narratives that underlie gender inequalities – leading to longer term changes such as more women in leadership positions and reduced GBV, and nurturing intergenerational impacts of the programme – leading to, for example, more girls attending school and stronger parenting skills benefitting families.
33. The attrition rate of the SLAs is relatively low. An average of 84 percent of the SLAs formed under the programme are still actively saving and loaning together with no ongoing financial support or programme oversight.
34. Mothers' Union Burundi put in place multiple measures, many of them inbuilt in the design, to enhance programme spread and to ensure sustainability. The success factors include implementation through the Anglican Church, underpinned by faith in action; programme implementers being in close proximity to participant communities; the spirit of volunteerism; and the literacy circles and SLAs' participatory methodology that builds the social capital to catalyse collective action by participants and communities as agents of sustainable change themselves.

6.10 Recommendations

35. The following recommendations recognise the unique, participatory approach developed by the programme combining literacy, PLAs and SLAs, delivered through the Church and communities themselves with strong local leadership, resulting in deep, wide and sustained impact over time. The recommendations therefore propose that the methodology should be better documented in other language than the vernacular, and signposted to other non-profits and funders, and that the programme should be scaled up and replicated. The programme should also consider evolving dynamically, and the capacity of Mothers Union Burundi to deliver it should be enhanced.

6.10.1 Increased investment to scale up and replicate the programme:

36. The programme was evidentially relevant and beneficial, with impressive impacts which deepened over time and high sustainability many years after programme support ended. All the programme participants, government, community and religious leaders and peer non-profit organisations expressed a need for its continuation. It is thus recommended that Mothers' Union Burundi continues investing in the menu of activities that contribute to adult literacy, formation of SLAs, financial education, business development and parenting skills in other communities.
37. Replicate the programme in other communities to maximise its potential contribution to community development, nation building and the achievement of SDGs.
38. Continued partnership for SLAs to expand to unreached areas.
39. The partnership should consider further research into the drivers of "spontaneous replication." Approximately half of all groups formed in the programme were formed without any direct monitoring from the programme; understanding how this happens could help make future investment even more effective.
40. The findings from this evaluation should be widely shared across the sector. Its unique approach has secured a long term, sustainable impact which will be of interest to other non-profits and funders.

6.10.2 Improved documentation of the methodology:

41. Recognising the unique approach of this programme and the tremendous impact of combining literacy, PLAs and SLAs delivered through the Church and a strong local leadership team to secure sustainable transformation led and owned by communities themselves, Mothers' Union Burundi should document its tested and proven methodology in other languages than the vernacular in a more systematic manner and share it as a case of excellent practice.
42. The partnership should consider further research and documenting of best practices and lessons learned, to aid replication of the programme within Burundi and also beyond. The methodology and success factors of this programme which enabled it to serve communities and people who have been marginalised, should be a source of learning for the partners and should be signposted as significant to other non-profits and funders in the sector.
43. Faith in action underpins most of the positive and great impacts of the programme. The programme should thus boldly and explicitly incorporate spiritual empowerment strategies as integral aspects of its design, implementation and monitoring.
44. Working through the Anglican Church (which has a constant and trusted presence in the communities) helps to ensure the programme is sustainable. This, and the importance of strong, consistent local leadership team (embodied in Claudette Kigeme and her team), should both be documented as a key success factor in the methodology.

6.10.3 Continued evolution of the programme

45. Deepen the impact of the programme through extending this beneficial component of parenting education to all participants.
46. Explore viable low risk and cost-effective options for improving the programme participants' access to more substantial financing.
47. Informed by a detailed analysis, consider promoting SLA coalitions as an option for expanding the participants' access to loans, both in terms of volume and frequency.
48. Promote gender-sensitive climate-smart agriculture feeding into their agro-businesses including: i) Value addition and engagement in strategic nodes of the value chain and; ii) Bulking of participants' agricultural commodities.²⁷
49. The programme design should include a strategy to leverage SLAs to mentor, lift and build others in a more strategic and systematic way.
50. Engage the members of Mothers' Union Burundi in the programme in a more challenging and systematic manner to foster a social environment that upholds women's empowerment and promotes positive transformation in the families.

6.10.4 Continued capacity building of the Mothers' Union Burundi:

51. As with spiritual empowerment, the programme should include an explicit focus on strengthening the capacity of Mothers' Union Burundi.
52. Considering the scale of the programme and the importance of capturing results, the programme should strengthen internal monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning capacity. This is besides the need to invest in digital data platforms and design appropriate monitoring data collection tools.

²⁷ See UN Women 'Buy from women' digital platform and E-CARE ABCD approach

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Annex 1 Theory of Change: Mothers' Union Burundi Literacy and Financial Education Programme

Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of female illiteracy • Deteriorating moral values • High incidences of GBV • High population growth • High levels of poverty • 75% of the population experiences multi-dimensional poverty • Disrupted family relationships
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy education (70% women) rights • Savings Group formation (70% women) • Financial literacy education (70% women) • Parenting education (70% women)
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme participants become literate and numerate • Programme participants become more aware of women's rights, GBV, human rights, reproductive health, climate change, faith in action, peace-building etc. • Savings and loans associations (SLAs) formed comprising of accredited learners • SLA members gain business skills • Programme participants gain parenting skills
Outcomes I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women with self-esteem and self-confidence • Recognition of women's rights • Mindset change • Hard-working/good work ethic • Parents send children to school • Programme participants read the Bible • Participate in church activities • Peace-building in communities • Have a safe place to save • Improved access to loans • Start business • Expand/improve business • Improved business planning / decision-making • Improved financial record keeping • Improved communication between parents and children • Improved parenting • Improved behaviour
Outcomes II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased women's participation in household decision-making • Increased women's participation in community decision-making • Advocacy for gender-equitable rights • Reduction of gender injustice and GBV • Improve sexual and reproductive health and rights (family planning) • Security of access to assets for women • Reduction in child marriage • Women and men share domestic work • Improved faith • Increased evangelism • Increased spirituality • Improved relationship with God • Improved tithing, offering and service • Reduced workload for pastors • Improved (household) income • Asset accumulation • Improve shelter/housing • Afford health care • Afford school fees • Improved agriculture/livestock • Reduction of conflict • Improved unity • Improved social cohesion • Improved relationship with creation/environment • Transformed families and relationships • Improve trust and respect between parents and children • More secure families • Increase in legalized marriages • Reduction in divorce • Improved nutrition • Improved sanitation
Outcomes III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality and women's empowerment • Amplified faith in action • Economic empowerment • Resilient communities • Dignified life
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty reduction

Annex 2 Evaluation Participants

Name	Gender	Position
Most Rev. Sixbert Macumi	M	Archbishop and Bishop of Buye diocese
Most Rev. Martin Blaise Nyaboho	M	Former Archbishop and Bishop of Makamba diocese
Archbishop Emeritus: Bernard Ntahoturi	M	Former Archbishop and former Bishop Matana diocese
Rt. Rev. Eraste Bigirimana	M	Bishop of Bujumbura diocese
Rt. Rev. Aimé Joseph Kimararungu	M	Bishop of Gitega diocese
Rt. Rev. Seth Ndayirukiye	M	Bishop of Matana diocese
Rt. Rev. Evariste Nijimbere	M	Bishop of Buhiga diocese
Rt. Rev. Pedaculi Birakengana	M	Bishop of Rumonge diocese
Rt. Rev. Pontien Ribakare	M	Bishop of Rutana diocese
Mme Clotilde Muhimpundu	F	Mothers' Union Burundi President, Buye diocese
Mme Bénigne Barendegere	F	Mothers' Union Burundi President, Gitega diocese
Rev. Yvette Inamahoro	F	Mothers' Union Burundi President, Matana diocese
Mme Phoebe Nibizi	F	Mothers' Union Burundi President, Buhiga diocese
Mme Anatolie Dusabe	F	Mothers' Union Burundi President, Rumonge diocese
Mme Euralie Ndayirorere	F	Mothers' Union Burundi President, Rutana diocese
Rev. Fabien Niyomwungere	M	Provincial Secretary
Rev. Israël Ndikumana	M	Diocesan Secretary, Bujumbura
Rev. Dominique Ciza	M	Diocesan Secretary, Buye
Rev. Médard Irutingabo	M	Diocesan Secretary, Gitega
Rev. Etienne Niyokindi	M	Diocesan Secretary, Buhiga
Rev Gilbert Ndabashinze	M	Diocesan Secretary, Rumonge
Rev. Jean Nisubire	M	Diocesan Secretary, Rutana

Annex 3 Self-Reported Individual Level Programme Outcomes

Self-reported programme outcomes	A lot		A little		Not at all		Not applicable	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Improved self-esteem	98.7	99.1	0.9	0.9	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Became church leaders	48.6	60.9	3.9	2.7	44.5	36.4	3.0	0.0
Stood for an elective leadership position	56.8	68.3	2.6	0.0	39.7	31.7	0.9	0.0
Became elected leaders	53.4	64.4	3.2	1.0	42.7	34.7	0.7	0.0
Became community leaders	48.2	59.1	3.2	3.6	46.7	37.3	1.9	0.0
Joined a savings and loans association	99.6	99.1	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.0
Joined other community-based organisations and networks	68.3	67.3	3.0	2.7	28.5	30.0	0.2	0.0
Started saving	98.9	96.4	0.2	2.7	0.9	0.9	0.0	0.0
Opened an individual account at a bank or cooperative	33.5	49.1	2.8	1.8	62.0	49.1	1.7	0.0
Started a business	89.8	84.5	5.6	6.4	4.5	9.1	0.0	0.0
Expanded my business	75.8	71.8	19.4	19.1	3.9	5.5	0.9	3.6
Diversified livelihoods / businesses	87.3	86.4	12.1	13.6	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.0
Improved ability to manage my resources/assets	95.7	94.5	3.9	5.5	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0
Increased personal income	87.5	89.1	12.3	10.9	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
Became financially independent	80.6	67.3	1.7	1.8	4.1	10.9	13.6	20.0
Send daughters and girl dependents to school	91.4	93.6	0.6	0.0	1.1	1.8	6.9	4.5
Ensure that their children complete school	92.2	90.9	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.8	5.8	6.4
Afford tuition for children's higher education	78.0	80.0	6.7	7.3	1.3	2.7	14.0	10.0
Improved personal hygiene	99.6	100.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved family nutrition	96.8	95.5	1.1	3.6	0.2	0.0	1.9	0.9
Better quality housing	78.8	84.5	20.3	15.5	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0
Afford health insurance for the family	95.7	100.0	2.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	1.5	0.0
Improved use of reproductive health services	62.4	70.9	2.2	4.5	0.2	0.9	24.2	11.8
Shared domestic work with spouses	72.4	86.4	2.6	1.8	0.9	0.0	24.2	11.8
Buy mobile telephone	71.3	90.0	1.9	2.7	26.3	7.3	0.4	0.0
Use a mobile telephone to make payments	53.3	78.2	10.2	4.5	32.6	17.3	3.9	0.0
Buy land	51.8	70.9	10.4	4.5	35.0	24.5	2.8	0.0
Bought cows	33.0	41.8	7.1	5.5	55.3	52.7	4.5	0.0
Bought other livestock: goats, pigs	91.1	90.9	5.0	8.2	2.4	0.9	1.5	0.0
Take part in family decision-making	74.7	85.5	0.9	2.7	0.2	0.0	24.2	11.8
Advocate against gender-based violence	98.3	98.2	1.3	1.8	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0
Become more resilient: able to cope with adverse shocks and stresses and to adapt to uncertainties	97.8	94.5	2.2	5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved relations with my children and other dependents	93.7	95.5	1.3	0.0	0.0	1.8	5.0	2.7
Improved communication with my children and other dependents	93.5	94.5	0.9	0.9	0.4	0.9	5.2	3.6
Reduced intimate partner violence	65.2	79.1	1.9	5.5	0.0	0.0	24.2	11.8
Improved relations with my spouse	66.1	83.7	2.8	1.8	0.0	0.0	24.2	11.8
Improved relations with my neighbours/ community	98.1	98.2	1.9	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Annex 4 Spiritual Impact of the Programme

Perceived impact	Significant		Insignificant		Do not know		No response	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Strengthening personal relationship with God (because participants can read the Bible)	100	95.6	0.0	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improving glory to God	99.3	99.3	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved love of self (acknowledgement that you are created in the image of God)	99.3	100	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increased hope	99.3	98.5	0.7	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved self-confidence/self-esteem	100	97.8	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved relationships with family, friends, and community	99.3	99.3	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved relationships of trust	97.8	96.3	2.2	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improving character: behaviour and morality	96.3	96.3	3.7	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Promoting peaceful families/reducing conflict in families	96.3	95.6	3.0	4.4	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contributing towards conflict resolution in the community	96.3	93.3	3.0	5.9	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.7
Increased and more regular church attendance	100	99.3	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improving evangelism	97.8	89.6	1.5	10.4	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improving awareness that faith is key to personal growth and development	96.3	95.6	3.7	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Increasing the number of male clergy	58.5	61.5	38.5	37.8	1.5	0.0	1.5	0.7
Increasing the number of female clergy	77.8	70.4	21.5	29.6	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0
Increasing the participation of women in church lay ministry	99.3	96.3	0.7	3.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
Reduction in pastor burnout (increased participation of participants sharing in church activities)	99.3	95.6	0.7	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved fellowship in prayer, worship and service	99.3	99.3	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increasing of tithing and offertory in the church	86.7	84.4	11.1	14.1	1.5	1.5	0.7	0.0
Increased thanksgiving to the church	93.3	91.9	5.9	8.1	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved the quality of church infrastructures/buildings	95.6	88.9	4.4	10.4	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
Planting of churches	63.0	66.7	32.6	31.9	3.7	0.0	0.7	1.5
Reduced witchcraft beliefs and practices	91.9	92.6	8.1	6.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
Promoted Christ's teaching on the nature of marriage in church	99.3	98.5	0.7	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Promoted parenting of children in the faith and life of the church	100	99.3	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Promoted the protection of children	98.5	98.5	1.5	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increased compassion (helping those whose family life has met with adversity)	98.5	97.0	1.5	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Open to all irrespective of denomination or religion	98.5	97.8	1.5	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved the visibility of the Anglican church	100	99.3	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mothers' Union Burundi/Church has the capacity to expand and sustain the programme	99.3	98.5	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0

Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Spiritual impact survey, 2022

Annex 5 Mothers' Union Burundi Team

Name	Gender	Position and Diocese
Provincial Level Staff		
1. Claudette Kigeme	F	Provincial Mothers' Union Coordinator/Programme Team Leader
2. Francine Munezero	F	Assistant Provincial Coordinator
3. Zelda Kohinoor Ruhuna	F	Accountant
4. Agnés Niyonizigiye	F	Cashier
5. Guy Nasasagare	M	Provincial Communications Officer
Diocesan Level Staff (Trainers)		
6. Frédiane Nkunzimana	F	Buhiga Diocese
7. Eugénie Ntihakose	F	Bujumbura Diocese
8. Claudette Vyizigiro	F	
9. Joséphine Kezakimana	F	Buye Diocese
10. Clémentine Ujeneza	F	
11. Rév Bibiane Nsengiyumva	F	
12. Claudette Niyonizigiye	F	Gitega Diocese
13. Azéle Nzeyimana	F	
14. Mathilde Ndayisenga	F	
15. Annonciate Kwizera	F	Makamba Diocese
16. Joselyne Ngabirano	F	
17. Annonciate Minani	F	
18. Jacqueline Kageni	F	Matana Diocese
19. Odile Niyonsaba	F	
20. Schola Harushimana	F	
21. Joséphine Kaneza	F	Muyinga Diocese
22. Laetitia Ndereyimana	F	
23. Chantal Kamariza	F	
24. Joséphine Bayubahe	F	Rumonge Diocese
25. Alice Muhorakeye	F	Rutana Diocese

Annex 6 Impact of the Programme on Community Development & Nation Building

Perceived impact	Very Significant		Significant		Insignificant		Do not know		No response	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Poverty reduction in your community	2.9	4.5	58.0	50.4	39.1	45.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improving community participation in IGAs	23.9	26.3	67.4	64.7	8.7	9.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved family income	2.2	3.8	52.9	51.9	43.5	43.6	1.4	0.8	0.0	0.0
Improved quality of housing	0.7	3.0	33.3	34.6	62.3	60.2	1.4	2.3	2.2	0.0
Household food security	0.7	3.0	55.1	50.4	43.5	46.6	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved family nutrition	5.8	6.8	44.9	48.1	48.6	43.6	0.7	1.5	0.0	0.0
Community members using safe drinking water	5.8	6.8	68.1	66.2	26.1	27.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved sanitation	10.9	12.8	74.6	74.4	13.8	12.8	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hand washing with soap and water	11.6	12.0	73.2	70.7	14.5	15.8	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.5
Good health and wellbeing	4.3	4.5	57.2	60.2	37.7	35.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved maternal health	14.5	13.5	60.1	65.4	23.9	20.3	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.0
Improved children's health	15.9	13.5	57.2	64.7	26.8	21.1	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0
Improved use of modern family planning methods	2.2	0.0	37.7	38.3	55.1	55.6	4.3	6.0	0.7	0.0
Reduction in too early births	1.4	3.0	43.5	36.8	50.0	57.1	3.6	0.8	1.4	2.3
Reduction in substance abuse	2.2	5.3	40.6	41.4	50.0	51.1	6.5	1.5	0.7	0.8
Improved adult literacy	29.0	23.3	58.7	61.7	12.3	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reduction in sexual and gender-based violence	8.7	6.0	49.3	54.1	42.0	39.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reducing intimate partner violence (domestic violence/ conflict between wives and husbands)	7.2	6.0	52.2	64.7	38.4	28.6	2.2	0.8	0.0	0.0
Reduction in girl child marriage	11.6	1.5	40.6	48.9	46.4	49.6	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0
Increased sharing of household work between women and men	2.9	2.3	40.6	52.6	55.8	44.4	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.8
Improved women's participation in public leadership	6.5	6.0	50.7	45.9	42.0	45.9	0.0	1.5	0.7	0.8
Improved women's participation in family decision-making	0.0	1.5	31.2	30.1	66.7	63.9	2.2	3.8	0.0	0.8
Improved women's ownership of land	0.0	1.5	6.5	10.5	82.6	75.2	9.4	8.3	1.4	4.5
Improved women's ownership of other productive assets such as livestock, farm implements/tools and mobile phone	5.8	10.5	63.8	65.4	29.7	20.3	0.7	3.0	0.0	0.8
Community resilience: able to cope with adverse shocks and stresses and to adapt to uncertainties	7.2	4.5	50.0	60.9	39.9	33.1	2.2	1.5	0.7	0.0
Promoted peace building	16.7	13.5	76.1	79.7	7.2	6.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Promoted social cohesion	21.7	11.3	71.0	81.2	7.2	7.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Promoted social inclusion	63.8	68.4	26.8	21.8	8.7	9.8	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increased registration of marriages	31.2	31.6	54.3	55.6	14.5	12.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved registration of births	34.8	35.3	52.9	52.6	12.3	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved relationships between children and their parents	10.9	7.5	67.4	74.4	21.7	18.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Improved community spiritual engagement	15.9	14.3	57.2	66.9	19.6	10.5	7.2	7.5	0.0	0.8

Source: Mothers' Union Burundi. Longitudinal Impact Study (2001-2022): Survey of key informants of the programme, 2022