

**Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Program, GEWEP II  
2016-2018**

**Burundi, Final Evaluation Report, March 2019**



Photo: William Hirtle/CARE



## Table of Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations	1
Executive Summary	1
I. Introduction	6
1.1. Geographic and Demographic Context	6
1.2. Brief description of GEWEP program	7
1.2.1 Theory of Change	7
1.2.2 Objectives of the Project	7
1.3. Objectives of GEWEP II Final Evaluation	8
1.4. Limitations of the Evaluation	8
II. Methodology	8
2.1. Sampling	8
2.1.1. Expected and Actual Sample size	8
2.1.2. Sample Selection Method	9
2.2. Data Collection	10
2.2.1. Data Collection Techniques	10
2.2.2. Data Collection Period	10
2.2.3. Difficulties Encountered	11
2.3. Ethical Consideration	11
III. Main Findings	11
3.1 The typical GEWEP II participant	11
3.2. Intervention Areas	13
3.1.1 Civil Society Reinforcement	13
3.2.2. Women's economic and entrepreneurial empowerment	15
3.2.3. Participation of women in decision-making processes	18
3.2.4. Engaging men in the promotion of gender equality	22
3.3. Intervention sub-themes	26
3.3.1. Reducing Gender- Based Violence	26
3.3.3 Reinforcement women in sexual and reproductive health rights	28
3.3.4. Capacities of women and girls to cope with economic shocks	29
3.4. Care International Indicators	31
3.4.1. Women participating in household financial decision	31
4. Discussion on the Findings	32
4.1. What are the key trends in women's rights?	32
4.2. Do the results confirm or contradict one another?	33
4.3. How does GEWEP II contribute to the achievement Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)?	33
5. Lessons Learned	34
6. Conclusion and Recommendations	35
APPENDICES	37

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABUBEF	: Burundian Association for Family Welfare
APDH	: Association for Peace and Human Rights
CDFC	: Center for Family and Community Development
CEDAW	: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COCAFEM/GL	: Coalition of Great Lakes Region Women's Associations' Networks
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
GBV	: Gender-Based Violence
GEWEP	: Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Program
GLID	: Great Lakes Inkingi Development
SG	: Solidarity Group
IDI	: In-Depth Interviews
ISTEEBU	: Burundi Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies
KII	: Key Informant Interviews
<i>NN</i>	: <i>Nawe Nuze</i>
SDGs	: Sustainable Development Goals
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
PARJE	: Young Entrepreneurs' Park
PNG	: National Gender Policy
DRC	: Democratic Republic of Congo
REJA	: Youth in Action Organizations Network
SACODE	: Community Health for Development
SAICO	: Safina Industry Company
SRH	: Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SRH	: Sexual and Reproductive Health
SGBV	: Sexual Gender-Based Violence
VSLA	: Village Savings and Loan Associations

## Executive Summary

The final evaluation of GEWEP II (a women's empowerment program implemented since 2016 in 7 provinces of Burundi and funded by NORAD via CARE Norway) set out to gauge the progress made but

also identify the gaps that remain to be filled for the impact group (women aged 15-64 in the intervention area) to enjoy effective economic, social and political empowerment. The evaluation allowed a comparative study of the baseline situation (just as presented in the report of the baseline study) and the final situation resulting from the analysis of data collected on the ground in January 2018. The final evaluation data collection was conducted on a quantitative sample representative of 774 people including 406 women and 368 men. In addition to these quantitative data, qualitative data were collected from target groups and other key informants. The overall results show that:

**Women and girls enjoy economic security, which has been improved significantly since 2016 (start of GEWEPII).** In fact, the quantitative and qualitative results confirm that (1) 99.2% of women say they have at least one asset against 84.4% in 2014, (2) 53.7% of women who possess an asset claim to have the control to sell it without asking for anyone's permission, 27.0% of whom do not even need to inform their husbands. This figure was only 41.8% in 2014. Households also better respond to shocks without having to sell assets (67.5%) in 2018 against (57.8%) in 2014. This is confirmed by the majority of focus group discussions we held with women and men during this study, VSLA women are well advanced in the acquisition of assets, the use of services, participation in household decision-making and resilience to shock.

The attitudes of women, men and communities towards gender equality and women's rights are improving and tend to favor the meaningful participation of women in decision-making. The evaluation notes that female SG members are increasingly enrolling in decision-making bodies at the community level (80.7% vs. 72.8% in 2014). Among women members of decision-making bodies, 88.4% feel that they have been able to influence decisions against 83.2% in 2014. The percentage of women members of political parties has increased from 45.0% in 2014 to 72.4% in 2018 even though the percentage of women committee members of these parties who are able to influence decisions has dropped from 94.2% in 2014 to 88.4% in 2018 This was probably influenced by the crisis of 2015.

**The quality of core services in relation to SRH and gender-based violence has significantly improved for those who solicited and used them. Hence,** 99,0% of women who benefited from SRH services were satisfied in 2018 compared to 92,1% in 2014. However, the use of these services(access) did not improve and much remains to be done as only 41,6% of women have utilized SRH in the course of the 12 last months against 54,8% in 2014. This is also true for the informed decision-making on the use of these services. The evaluation revealed that 33,5% of women had recourse on SRH services out of their own initiative in 2018 against 62,0% in 2014.

**The attitudes of women, men and the communities concerning gender equality and women's rights have improved and tend to be conducive to meaningful participation of women in decision-making. The evaluation reveals that women members of the SG** are increasingly enrolling in decision-making structures at the community level (80,7% against 72,8% in 2014). Among women members of the decision making bodies, 88,4% believe that they have been able to influence the decisions against 83,2% in 2014.The percentage of women members of political parties has increased, from 45,0% in 2014 to 72,4% in 2018 even though the percentage of women members of the political parties' committees that are able to influence decisions has decreased from 94,2% in 2014 to 88,4% in 2018. This was presumably influenced by the 2015 crisis. The attitudes of men have made little progress in the right direction for quite a bit (average score of 3.7 in 2016 to 3.9 in 2018 on a scale of 0 to 5), the majority men remain impervious to the idea that a woman can inherit the land in the same way as her brother, according to the women interviewed this is unfair "we share the mother's womb but not the inheritance".

**The organizations' capacity to become reliable partners in advocacy and women's rights promotion has improved during the project implementation period.** In fact, the mean score has passed from 2,6 in 2015 to 3,3 in 2018 on a scale of 0 (very mediocre) to 5 (very good). This represents an overall improvement

of 27% compared to 2015. Table 1 below globally summarises the measured indicators during the evaluation and the the results of the analyses of the collected data:

2018 Endline Indicators	Baseline 2014	Endline 2018
<b>Outcome 1: Women and girls benefit from increased economic security</b>		
% of women that own at least one asset	99,2%	84,40%
% of women that own assets and can sell without asking permission	41,8%	53,70%
% of households that have experienced shocks and did not have to sell household assets	57,80%	67,50%
Women's attitudes to their own economic security	3,4/5	3,9/5
Men's attitudes towards women's economic security	3,6/5	3,9/5
# and % of women with union, women's group or cooperative membership through which they can voice their labor rights		Not available
% of IGAs that are still operating one year after establishment		Not available
# and % of women who are active users of financial services (disaggregated by informal and formal services)		Not available
<b>Outcome 2: Improved quantity and quality of basic services related to SRHR and GBV.</b>		
% of women that have used SRHR services in the last 12 months and are satisfied with the services	92,10%	99,00%
% women that have used SRHR services the last 12 months	54,80%	41,60%
% of women that have used SRHR services in the last 12 months based on own decision	54,20%	39,90%
% of women making informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health	62,00%	33,50%
Attitude des femmes par rapport à la SRH (Sante sexuelle et reproductive)	3,6/5	4,1/5
Women perception on SGBV	2,5/5	3,9/5
Men's attitude towards the protection of women SRHR	3,6/5	4,2/5
Men's attitude towards GBV	3,9/5	4,0/5
Proportion of women aged 15-49 who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care		
<b>Outcome 3: Improved attitudes within households and communities towards women's rights and gender equality.</b>		
% of women reporting meaningful participation in decision-making	54,40%	90,00%
% of women who are member of any decision making body	72,80%	80,70%
% of women that are member of any decision-making body and state they are able to influence decisions	83,20%	88,40%
% of women that are member of a committee and state they are able to influence decisions	94,20%	88,40%
Women's perception of social inclusion in the community	4,0/5	4,2/5
Women's attitudes towards women's participation in decision making		
Men's attitude towards women's participation in decision making bodies	3,7/5	3,8/5

2018 Endline Indicators	Baseline 2014	Endline 2018
% of engaged men that have supported victims of domestic violence		Not available
% of people who reject intimate partner violence		74,70%
% of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner, in the last 12 months		10,80%
% of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner, in the last 12 months		3,00%
% of women who (report they) are able to equally participate in household financial decision-making		50,70%
<b>Outcome 4: Strengthened partnership between government and civil society in the area of women and girls' rights.</b>		
Capacity of GEWEP II implementing partner	2,6/5	3,3/5
Policy assessment		Page 26 in the report

The evaluation has allowed us to draw a certain number of lessons learned that need to be mentioned in this summary :

- **The establishment of VSLAs** responded to a badly felt need by women and girls and the choice to start by women's and girls' economic strengthening withdraws an enormous barrier to the attainment of other GEWEP II results, and to a certain extent women's participation in the decision making organs and the GBV reduction.
- **To better win men's and boys' adherence** (even the couple approach according to many key informants) to VSLA is more than a necessity mainly for the themes of economic empowerment, SRH rights, and the fight against GBV. This constitutes an innovation and a good strategy to develop the values of a positive masculinity for the future husbands.
- **Lack of access to inheritance**, and most particularly for land appears to be an injustice that is profoundly felt by the impact group women and girls.
- **The partnership with local NGOs** has been a multi-gain option (scaling up its action at the geographical level, fostering ownership by local actors in order to perpetuate the gains. Furthermore, the visibility and notoriety for CARE and its local, national and even international partners.

The findings achieved during the investigations related to the evaluation of GEWEP II led to the formulation of a number of recommendations:

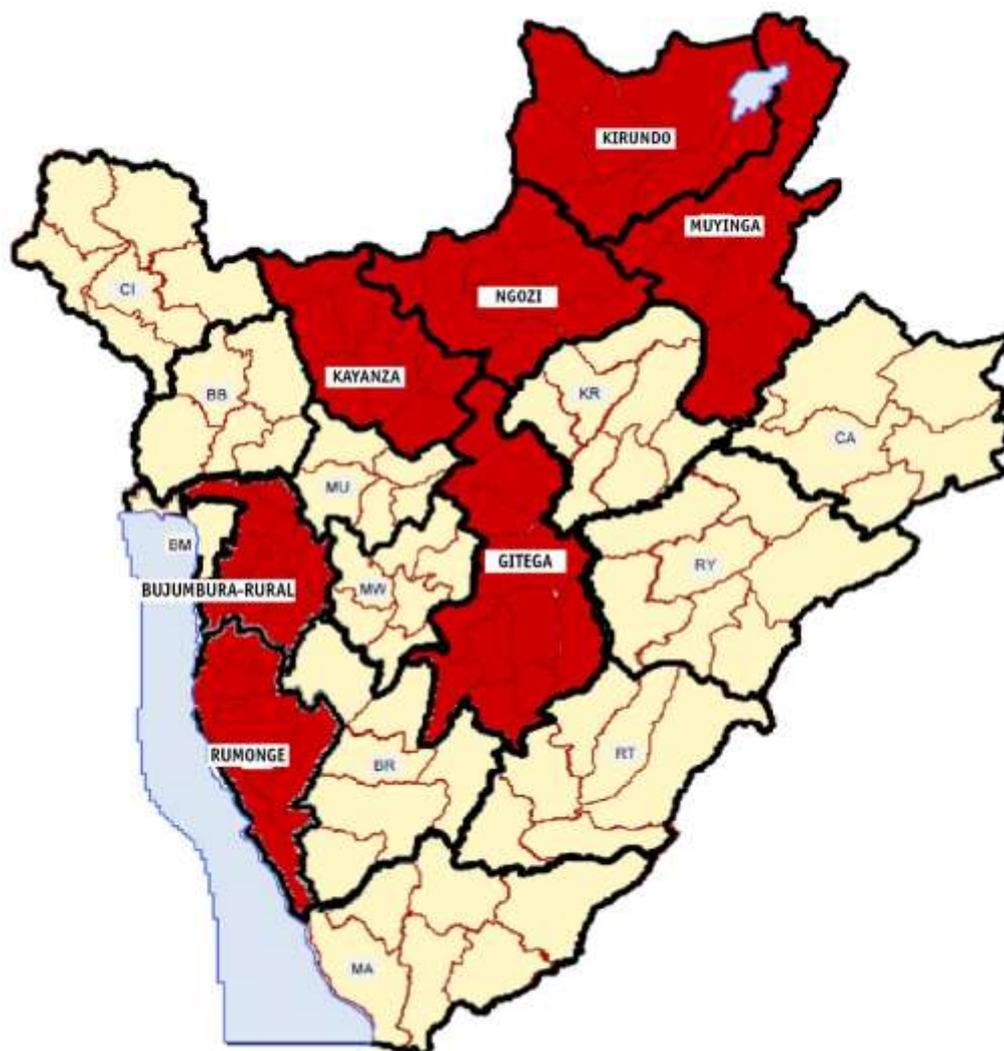
- ✓ *Women's empowerment must be achieved at the same time as the consolidation of couples* (some husbands tend to stop their contribution to household expenses as soon as their wives begin to bring some money home. Men's involvement in the project is therefore necessary, and the couples approach could be an effective strategy that can help to avoid these negative effects.

- ✓ *Strengthen the connection of SGs and their members with MFIs.* The diversification of IGAs is difficult for members who do not have access to consistent loan, and the connection with MFIs who need to explore the possibilities of making the products available accessible to SGs and their members.
- ✓ *Intensify activities aimed at contributing to the improvement of women's effective participation in decision-making bodies.*
- ✓ *Maximize the results of actions to promote women's rights in SRH .* We must resume dialogue with religious and community leaders. Messages from church leaders contradicting those of GEWEP on the field can compromise the achievement of results.
- ✓ *Some aspects of the partnership between Care and its partners could be improved in some aspects* (plans and budgets for capacity building, contracts ..) to enable the achievement of results
- ✓ *Improved coordination of CARE partner activities.* A number of actions should be undertaken to improve coordination of women's empowerment activities in the Action Area.

## I. Introduction

Burundi ranks 170th out of 209 countries in terms of Gross Domestic Product. 90% of the Burundian population lives on self-subsistence farming where muscular strength is the main factor of production. This requires a large area of arable land to meet primary needs.

### 1.1. Geographic and Demographic Context



According to population projections by ISTEERU, the Burundian population is estimated at 11,772,322 inhabitants, including 5,956,914 women (50.6%) for the year 2018, an overall density of 423 inhabitants and a density of 454 inhabitants at Km<sup>2</sup>. The average household size is 4.8 according to the report of the 2017 DHS (Demographic and Health Survey). The age structure shows that the population of Burundi is extremely young.

Two thirds of the population (65%) are under 25 years old. The total fertility rate, which stood at 6.4 children per woman in 2010, rose to 5.5 in 2016. With these rates, Burundi is ranked among the most fertile countries in the world. Mortality is still high and life expectancy at birth low (49.3 years at the



2008 census). There is a low number of infrastructures, health personnel and unequal health coverage between urban and rural areas.

Burundi's economy is precarious, mainly based on agriculture and livestock. This situation, coupled with attitudes and social norms that are detrimental to women's economic, social and political empowerment, significantly hinder the enjoyment of women's human rights. The economic growth of Burundi and the effective functioning of civil society in the development of women countries remain severely affected by the recurrence of socio-political crises.

## **1.2. Brief description of GEWEP program**

### **1.2.1 Theory of Change**

GEWEP II is anchored in CARE Burundi's long-term commitment to women's empowerment. CARE Burundi's theory of change, reaffirmed in its latest strategic plan for 2016-2020, postulates that if the knowledge, skills and individual capacities of poor and vulnerable women are improved and if the latter have access to social networks, legal and cultural barriers; women are economically, socially, and politically empowered taking into account three essential factors for women's ability to claim all their rights: their own knowledge, skills and aspirations; the relationships by which women negotiate their lives and; the environments and structures that influence or dictate the choices that women can make.

One of Care's discoveries through the implementation of women's empowerment activities in Burundi is that the strengthening of one of the three factors (agency, relationships, structures) is insufficient to enable women to realize their rights and their aspirations. The implementation of GEWEP II focused on the holistic development of women at the same time addressing these three factors (agency, relationship and structure). The evaluation found that Care's Theory of Change in GEWEP II enabled the achievement of the 4 expected outcomes to contribute to the expected impact of the program.

### **1.2.2 Objectives of the Project**

The Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Program (GEWEP II) is funded by Norad through CARE Norway. It is implemented in 6 countries: Burundi, DRC, Mali, Myanmar, Niger and Rwanda. In Burundi, GEWEP II follows the UMWIZERO I (2006-2009), UMWIZERO II (2009-2013) and GEWEP I (2014\_2016) projects. The GEWEP II program is implemented in 7 provinces namely: Ngozi, Kayanza, Muyinga, Kirundo, Gitega, Bujumbura and Rumonge

The objectives of GEWEP II in Burundi are:

- ✓ Women and girls benefit from increased economic security;
- ✓ Improving the quantity and quality of basic services related to sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence;
- ✓ Improved attitudes within households and communities towards women's rights and gender equality;
- ✓ Strengthening partnership between the government and civil society in the area of women's and girls' rights.

### 1.3. Objectives of GEWEP II Final Evaluation

The overall objective of GEWEP final evaluation is to measure progress achieved through the program for impact groups in the intervention area. This is done through a comparison of the starting situation and the final situation.

On the one hand, the final evaluation of the UMWIZERO II project in the 4 northern provinces, and on the other hand, the baseline study (GEWEP II) in the other additional provinces is considered as the reference situation of GEWEP II. The final evaluation aims to measure the same indicators that were measured during the baseline studies as well as the level of advocacy and capacity building of civil society organizations.

### 1.4. Limitations of the Evaluation

The methodologies between the baseline study, the final evaluation of UMWIZERO and the final evaluation of GEWEP are different in terms of both the sample size and the target population. The fact of having to combine three evaluations with slightly different methodologies to find the basic values made it difficult to compare the indicators. For the quantitative survey of this final evaluation, the draw of the survey areas was made from aggregated VSLA databases in the GEWEP II intervention area. Thus, only VSLA members were surveyed. This is not the case for the two others who used the household approach.

Overall indicator values are missing across the entire intervention area in terms of outcome indicators to be evaluated. These values are estimated here by the weighted average of the baseline GEWEP survey values and those of the final UMWIZERO assessment. In the absence of one of the values, we are obliged to retain the value available while the four provinces of UMWIZERO and those of the basic study of GEWEP were not at the same level in terms of evolution.

## II. Methodology

To conduct this evaluation, three research methods were used:

- The documentary review to refine the methodology and enrich the analysis;
- The quantitative survey to measure levels and structures;
- The qualitative survey (individualized interviews with key informants, in-depth interviews with beneficiaries and FGDs, change stories) to capture perceptions and attempts to explain and respond to them;

The study was conducted in 7 provinces of the project area: Kayanza, Kirundo, Muyinga, Ngozi, Gitega, Rumonge and Bujumbura.

The target group consisted of men and women aged 15 to 64 living in the project area. However, additional qualitative information was collected from project implementing partners (local NGOs) and other stakeholders (government, civil society, etc.).

### 2.1. Sampling

For the quantitative survey, the survey areas were drawn from the aggregated VSLA databases in the GEWEP II intervention area.

#### 2.1.1. Expected and Actual Sample size

For the quantitative aspect, a minimum sample of 375 women and 375 men were planned in total, out of the 7 provinces of the intervention zone. This sample was spread over 35 survey areas, that is 22

individuals surveyed by area, including 11 women and 11 men members of the VSLAs. In total, 406 women and 368 men were surveyed, that is, a total of 774 individuals. This difference was due to the fact that the number of 11 members by VLSA is not divisible by the number of investigators, it therefore follows that the selection of members exceeds the required minimum but that has no consequences. On the other hand, in some men's VSLAs, one could not reach the minimum of 11 to investigate on the meeting place despite the invitations that had been sent.

### 2.1.2. Sample Selection Method

#### Quantitative Phase

The sampling design adopted is that of a three-stage stratified random probability with unequal probabilities. The systematic method was used to select the units.

A stratification of the intervention area by new province and seniority of interventions was made (old and new communes of the project). At first, the hills were selected from the GEWEP database. In total, 35 hills were to be visited and on a hill, 1 VLSA of women and 1 VLSA of men. Nevertheless, it happened that on a hill we could not find, at the same time, a women VLSA and a men. VLSA In this case, the missing VLSA was investigated on the nearest hill. At the second level, 11 men and 11 women were surveyed by VLSA corresponding sample.

For the sake of qualitative representativeness of information in all provinces, a strictly proportional allocation of the sample could lead to very few units in some areas. This led to the preliminary calculation of the adjustment coefficients (weighing coefficients) to ensure the overall representativeness of the sample. Thus,  $22 * 35 = 770$  individuals (375 women and 375 men) were planned to be investigated.

#### Qualitative Phase

For the qualitative data, 7 interviews with key informants, 14 individualized interviews and 29 focus groups (FGD) were conducted simultaneously in all 7 provinces and in Bujumbura. Each FGD comprised at least 8 people of the same category. FGD participants and individual interviews were:

- ✓ Women and girls members of NAWU NUZE groups
- ✓ Husbands of SG members,
- ✓ Non-beneficiary women and girls for comparison purposes.

The key people targeted:

- ✓ Women elected at the communal level,
- ✓ Community and religious leaders,
- ✓ community-based organization leaders,
- ✓ CCDC managers,
- ✓ MFI managers.
- ✓ Care agents at the central level
- ✓ Area coordinators
- ✓ and Care partners on the ground.

Table2 : Sampling Summary

Type of investigation	Number of provinces selected	Total Hills	Total Sample	
			Planned	Actual
Quantitative	7	35	770	774
IDI	7		14	14
KII	3		5	5
FGD	7		29	29

Table 3: Distribution of women surveyed by province

PROVINCE	Women		Men	
	%	Number	%	Number
Bujumbura	13,5	55	14,9	55
Gitega	24,1	98	17,4	64
Kayanza	13,8	56	14,7	54
Kirundo	13,3	54	14,7	54
Muyinga	13,3	54	14,7	54
Ngozi	16,5	67	17,7	65
Rumonge	5,4	22	6,0	22
Total	100,0	406	100,0	368

## 2.2. Data Collection

### 2.2.1. Data Collection Techniques

#### ❖ Quantitative Phase

The quantitative data collection was conducted using two quantitative questionnaires (individual woman and man) used in the basic studies, programmed under KOBACOLLECT and installed on smartphones.

#### ❖ Qualitative Phase

For the qualitative part, **interview guides** for reminders were developed and used for each type of method and target population (IDI, KII and FGD). Stories of change were also collected to illustrate the progress made by the program. In order to avoid the memory holes of the qualitative agents as much as possible, **digital recorders** were used. II et FGD).

### 2.2.2. Data Collection Period

The collection of data was entrusted to 5 teams of investigators (including 4 quantitative and 1 qualitative) under the responsibility of the team leaders with a total of 30 agents. The FGDs were conducted in pairs, with a moderator (the team leader) and a note taker (the qualitative agent of the team). These teams had previously been trained, for 3 days, on the comprehension and the filling of the questionnaires as well as the use of the collection devices (Smartphones and Digital Recorders). The collection took place from 09th to 15th January 2019.

### 2.2.3. Difficulties Encountered

During field data collection:

- ✓ The main difficulty was the fuel that was a scarce commodity during this period. CARE's subsidiary offices in the survey areas have made arrangements to supply the vehicles with fuel and even to move the fuel from one province to another.
- ✓ A survey area had to be replaced in Gishubi commune of Gitega following the refusal of the communal administrator despite the intervention of the CARE coordination.

### 2.3. Ethical Consideration

All participants in this evaluation first gave their informed consent in accordance with the survey protocol before being interviewed. Instructions were given to investigators regarding confidentiality and statistical confidentiality. The names of the respondents were neither recorded in the database nor in the qualitative interviews and focus groups.

## III. Main Findings

### 3.1 The typical GEWEP II participant

The typical GEWEP II participant is a woman with a disadvantaged past, who has integrated NAWÉ NUZÉ SG, who is individually transformed and able to influence her relationships both in her household and in her community. She is economically, socially comfortable but still has to fight against social norms and try to take her voice further to be able to enjoy her rights, for example participation in decision-making bodies.

Thanks to the numerous training sessions on different modules that members have benefited from and the opportunities for mutual exchange and enrichment that they provide, GEWEP II women are gradually becoming advocates for the promotion of women's rights and gender equality, and their networking, which is being built up little by little, can strengthen their actions.

Apart from the fact that all the non-beneficiaries met after the focus group discussions or the individualized interviews know the NN groups, they consider the women members as role models both in their homes and in the community where they play leadership roles. For the majority of individuals interviewed, women in NN groups are good examples, they have changed the way they speak, they have knowledge that makes them good leaders, and know how to express themselves in public. Claudine, a woman who had nothing but her determination to change her life, tell us her story:

**STARTING FROM NEARLY NOTHING**



My name is BANKUNDIYE Claudine. I am a married woman of 33 years, mother of 2 little girls. My husband is a primary school teacher, but as is common in Burundi, it is difficult for a non-transformed man to bring money into his household. As far as I am concerned, I was a farmer and I was trying to make every effort so that we could live with better. With 10 women, we had joined together to contribute BIF 5000 per week that we would receive later as a loan. Even if it was poorly organized because we had no supervision, this money allowed me to have seeds for the fields.

In 2014, Care and its partners came to our community to start women's Nawe Nuze solidarity groups. I was among the first women who started the group and in a few days I had already set up 3 Nawe Nuze groups and I became their local supervisor (Community Agent). With the training on the Nawe Nuze module and the coaching we received from the GLID staff:

1. Our group Nawe Nuze was better organized with regulatory texts and commitments because we learned the management of an association, savings and loan, ...
2. I valued savings more, distinguishing wishes and priorities,
3. I learned to communicate better with my husband and engage him more for the development of our home,
4. We learned to diversify our income resources by creating small income-generating

activities.

We started these groups in 2014. During the 2015 crisis, people were so afraid to flee that we shared our savings one month before the end of the year. The following year, we doubled our contribution from BIF 2500 to 5000 per week. Some members, like me, started buying land plots and growing on a larger scale. With our advocacy, groups of men were set up and my husband was among the first to join. My husband was actively engaged and we were chosen as the model couple who would follow the training on transformative gender.

Now, we go hand in hand, my husband continues his teaching activity and continues to lend me a hand for the various activities of the house according to his availability (farming activities, monitoring of children and other household chores). Thanks to my husband's support, I have become more available and fit with:

- ✓ Working with the community (I have become a pillar: 5-group Nawe Nuze coach),
- ✓ I have developed more farming activities because we have acquired more fields and my husband does not find any problem that it is registered under my name, that of the children or his own name according to what we agree on.
- ✓ I started commercial activities, I make sambussa that I sell at the local market, every week I get about BIF 100 000 of profit while the children eat on these sambusa and the oil and charcoal we use at home are supported by this trade.
- ✓ We are building a large house in a strategic location with 2 large shops. My big project is to establish a big grocery shop in one of the shops and a charcoal stock for sale in the other.

When I look back, I am amazed at this development pace. The neighborhood says that we certainly get money from big donors like CARE, however much I explain to them that our progress comes from ourselves. CARE and partners have taught us to fish, it is our turn to use the lesson to catch the fish. My account at COOPEC is now almost empty because every penny we receive is used so that we can finish building our big house. As soon as we go there we will start the grocery shop. I believe that it will grow little by little, because I have learnt that big things always come out of small starts.

It should be noted, however, that this is a small minority of women and girls reinforced beside a large mass remaining under the weight of discriminatory social norms. While continuing to build on the achievements of GEWEP II targets, CARE will expand its outreach to more women and girls. Ultimately, it is an economically and socially fulfilled woman who will play a leading role in changing laws and policies for women's rights in a broader sense.

### 3.2. Intervention Areas

#### 3.1.1 Civil Society Reinforcement

The indicators to be measured at this level are as follows:

Civil Society Reinforcement	2015	2018
Partners Capacity	2,6/5	3,3/5
Women's networks' capacity		Not available

##### 3.1.1.1 Civil Society Involvement and Reinforcement during GEWEP implementation

If the Burundian woman has the status that is currently known to her, it is partly thanks to awareness-raising initiatives, the strengthening of women's capacities, as well as advocacy for their rights undertaken by local associations and NGOs engaged in promoting women's rights. This reality has led Care to use some of these organizations that it has strengthened to partner with them in its activities to promote women's rights.

Since 2012, CARE has changed its strategy for implementing these activities in Burundi to promote the expertise of local organizations in order to reduce the cost of implementing activities and promote the sustainability of the results of its activities after its departure. Since then, the majority of CARE International's activities in Burundi have been implemented by partners and more than 20 partners are currently involved in the delivery of its programs. GEWEP II works with 8 partners grouped according to their thematic contribution.

These local NGOs have been selected according to their abilities and experience in the areas of program intervention. Each of these partners was involved in the implementation of one of the 4 results of GEWEP II according to the following breakdowns:

Results 1: GLID, SAICO, PARJE

Result 2: ABUBEF, SACODE

Result 3: REJA, ABATANGAMUCO

Result 4: APDH and COCAFEM

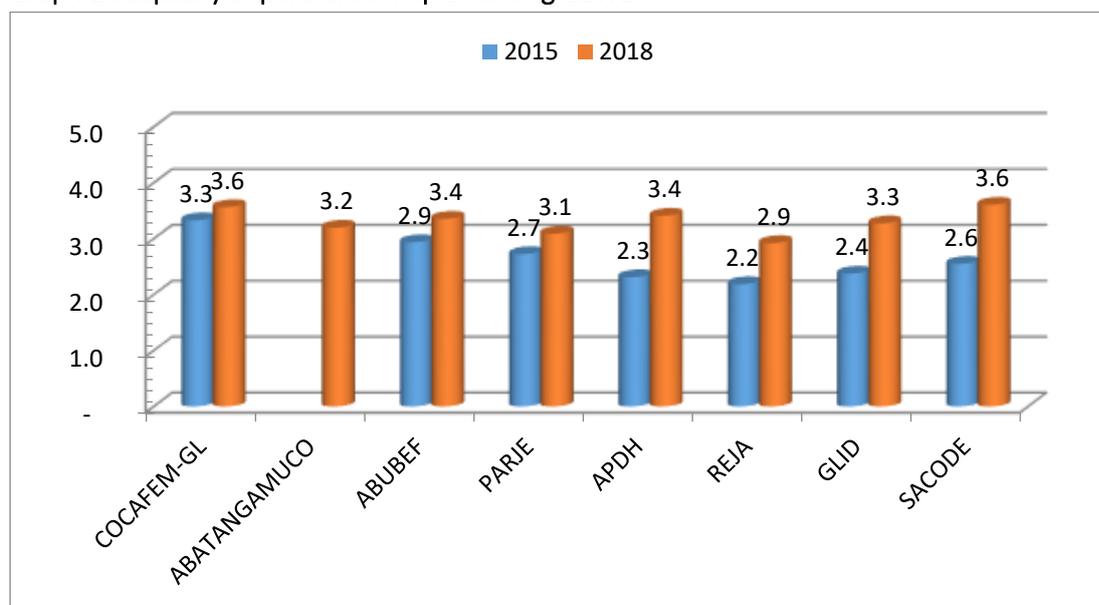
CARE is in charge of Capacity Building, Coordination and Impact Measurement and Advocacy with the technical support of COCAFEM / GL. The SAICO partner was relayed from GEWEP II's list of implementing partners after investigations that revealed cases of embezzlement

Partner capacity building is built around eight dimensions: leadership, strategic planning, financial management, governance, service delivery, advocacy, sustainability, and gender. These local organizations were evaluated in 2015 on the first 7 domains, the gender dimension just added this year. The results of this evaluation revealed the need for training and coaching to strengthen these partners

so that they are better able to implement activities related to their specific areas of expertise. The 2015 evaluation was to serve as the basis for this 2018 evaluation.

The graph below compares the capacity level of the partners in 2015 and 2018:

**Graph 1 : Capacity of partners in implementing GEWEP**



The overall capacity of all partners increased between 2015 and 2018. On average, the capacity score increased from 2.6 / 5 to 3.3 / 5 during this period. The associations COCAFEM-GL and SACODE record the highest scores in 2018 while the lowest score is observed at REJA. On the other hand, APDH, SACODE and GLID have made more progress compared to 2015.

Capacity building was done through training or support actions. However, as noted in the synthesis report of the evaluation of the partner organizations, it was not systematic because the capacity building plans developed as a result of the evaluation were not implemented as planned. In any case, as it can be seen through the comparative analysis between the capacities of these organizations as they present themselves in 2015 and in 2018 (see graphs), the observation is that, on the overall, they have improved. However, they still need to be strengthened and stabilized for some partners, particularly in terms of sustainability, advocacy and gender mainstreaming.

As part of GEWEP II, the entry point for all activities implemented by the partners is the establishment of NAWÉ NUZÉ SG. To these are added advocacy actions at the community, at the provincial, regional and national levels. The SG could also evolve into community-based associations, which also supports the sustainability of achievements.

Care appreciates the work of its partners who are according to the opinions of its field agents more and more professional. They take CARE's voice further, contribute to the geographical expansion of its interventions as well as its visibility.

Care partners also appreciate their involvement in the implementation of GEWEP II. According to a manager of one of these local NGOs, Care is the only partner that involves its partners from the design to the execution of the programs, it values the dialogue. This partnership has strengthened them institutionally, professionally and has increased their opportunity to have other funding. Fieldworkers from these organizations say that the Care model promotes ownership and sustainability of results. As a result, some of these organizations are already integrating the Care model into some of their projects funded by other donors. In addition, the partnership with Care increases their visibility and reputation among donors, the community and the administration.

Nevertheless, both of them pinpoint some points that deserve to be considered for improvement. Partner actions converge on the same impact groups, and meetings or other coordination activities are considered insufficient. Some discrepancies have been noted among some agents of partner organizations on the field who have not sufficiently integrated CARE's ethics: cases of malpractice (cheating on the number of participants in training sessions for example), agents having benefited from their field work to advance their political agenda, etc. But this has been corrected and these people have been replaced. The assessment of the partners' capacities also shows that some of these organizations do not take sufficient ownership of the activities carried out, highlight the contribution of funds they represent and do not put in place any sustainability strategy.

The partner organizations' agents, for their part, note two other essential points that would require improvement in addition to the approach that was taken for capacity building:

- The agreements are for 3 years whereas the contracts are annual. Delays of up to 3 months are observed in the signing of contracts, and these are months lost in the duration of implementation of activities, which has an impact on the latter.
- Delays in disbursement of funds have also been observed, and they also have an impact on the progress of activities. In addition, they are sometimes underestimated in relation to needs.

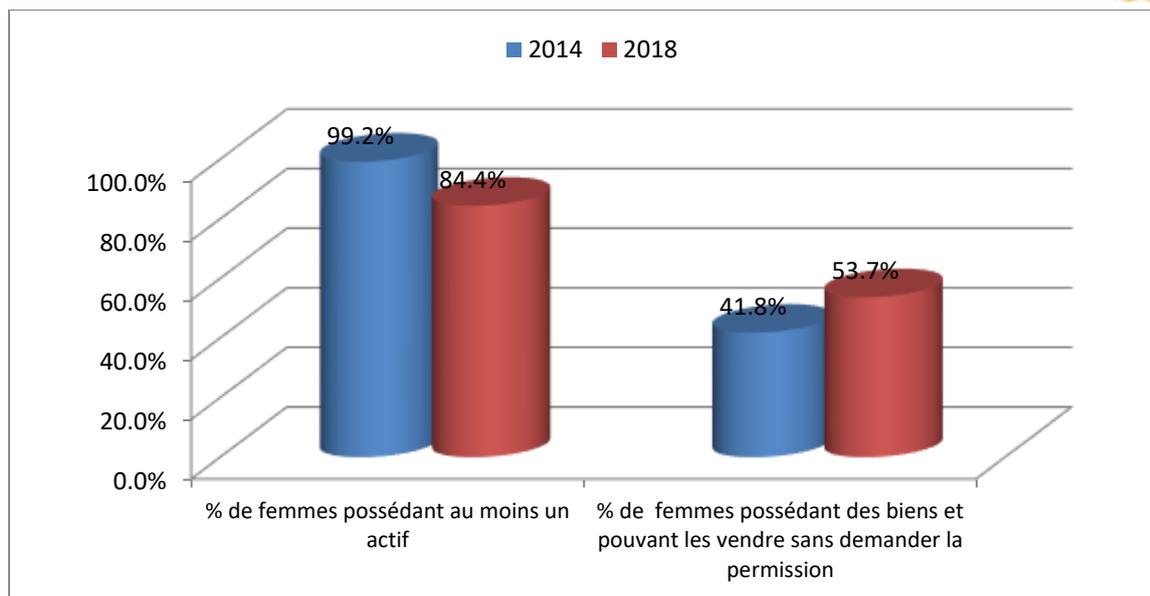
### ***3.1.1.2 Women's Network Reinforcement***

Women's networks other than VSLAs (Women's National Forum, Elected Women) have been integrated into various capacity building activities in leadership, coaching with elected representatives at the national level (parliamentarians, ...), there has not been specific action dedicated to this group. And the final evaluation consulted with these women as key informants, not as project beneficiaries.

## **3.2.2. Women's economic and entrepreneurial empowerment**

### ***3.2.2.1. Ownership of assets and freedom to sell***

Graph 2: Women who own assets and who can sell them without asking for permission



The graph above shows a nuanced evolution of women's economic advancement indicators. Indeed, for women with at least one asset, the proportion decreases from 99.2% in 2014 to 84.4% in 2018. On the other hand, the other two indicators increased: 53.7% of women reported that they own assets and can sell them without permission compared to 41.8% in 2014. The base value (from the 2014 GEWEP II baseline assessment report) may be overestimated if this is not an error. Indeed, 99.2% of women already had assets before the project began. It therefore becomes difficult to record a better score and the veracity of this rate is very unlikely, according to information from FGDs.

According to FGDs and qualitative interviews conducted, women beneficiaries of GEWEP II acknowledge that they have acquired the capacity to influence decision-making in relation to household and property management.

These women have learned to save in SGs, and can, when sharing the funds saved or from IGAs they have initiated, contribute to household expenses that were previously the sole responsibility of husbands. The fact that they contribute to the financial revenue of households and the fact that they have learned to communicate better with their husbands thanks to training courses contained in the NN training module, they are more and more involved in family decision-making.

#### **Gain of esteem from our husbands**

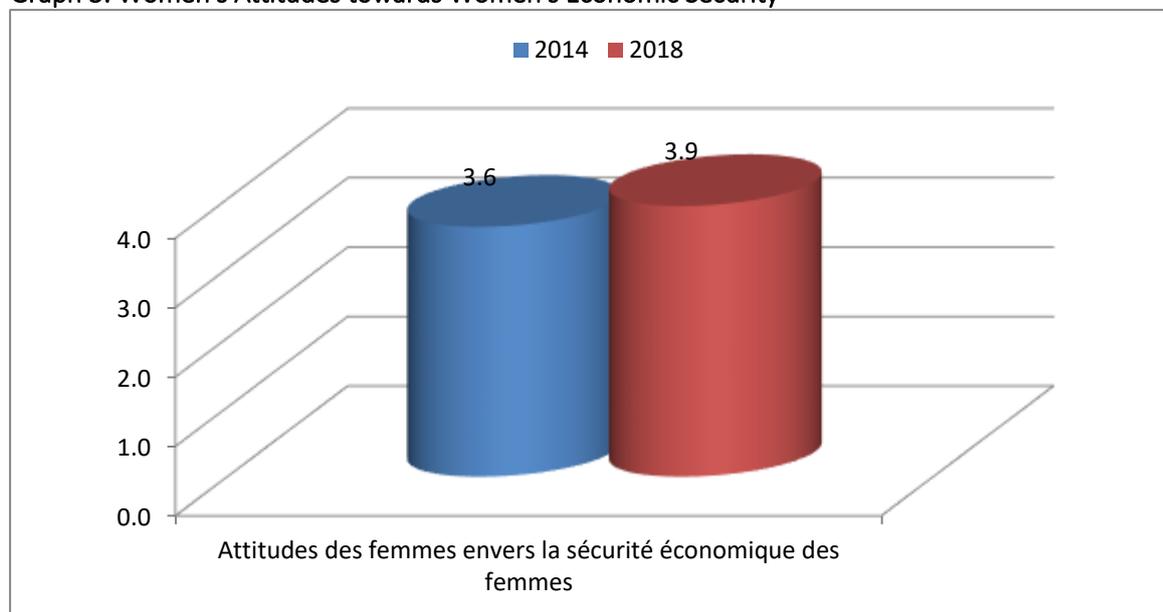
*«Being a SG member allows you to show your husband that you have value and if you succeed in solving financial problems to which he could not find a solution, you are even more valuable»,* says a woman in a focus group of non-beneficiary women at Mutoyi hillside, Bugendana commune, Gitega province.

*«Before, it was inconceivable that a woman could buy students' notebooks, offer to buy seeds or fertilizers needed for fields. Our husbands are very happy to be relieved of some expenses».* This was said during focus group discussions at Gisabazuba hillside (Gahombo commune, Kayanza): *«We can*

also intervene at home if there is a lack of salt, palm oil, or even the daily food ration if necessary». And another woman said during focus group discussions in Kayanza (Gahombo commune): «When a woman brings home a goat that she has bought with her own money, her husband sees her with a different eye».

### 3.2.2.2. Women's attitudes towards women's economic security

Graph 3: Women's Attitudes towards Women's Economic Security



Women's attitudes towards their own economic security have not changed significantly. Indeed, the 2014 average is 3.6 while the final evaluation found 3.9. That is 8% of relative increase.

Thanks to skills and economic power they have developed within NN groups, women are generally gaining the respect and trust of their husbands who no longer see them as beggars («*bama bateze amaboko*»: which means literally, they are begging all the time). They are gradually beginning to involve them in decision-making about the management of households and its assets. In addition, women themselves are learning to skillfully claim this involvement. Thus, women empowerment raises their self-esteem, awakens awareness of their importance and empowers them to participate in their households' decisions.

### 3.2.2.3. Changes in policies, laws and practices related to the promotion of women's economic rights

Among the women's rights violated, non beneficiary women or women who do not participate in FGDs mention in a fairly generalized way the right to inheritance and land property, and deplore the fact that they are treated differently from their brothers. A woman member of NN participating in a focus group in Gahombo says bitterly, supported by her friends: «*Musazawe musangira ibere nti musangira ibisigi*'' (you share the maternal breastmilk with your brother, but you do not share the inheritance left by your

*father). You can be born into a family with extensive land properties and have difficulty feeding your children because you are married to a man who has only a small portion of land».*

The Burundian legal system is dependent on traditional norms that deprive women of some of these rights, including the right to inheritance and property, especially land property, which is one of their economic insecurity causes. The field of inheritance, matrimonial property and legacies is still, as already noted above, governed by customary law, which discriminates against and inferiorizes women, making them economically dependent on men. Only men have the right to inheritance and can enjoy and offer legacies .

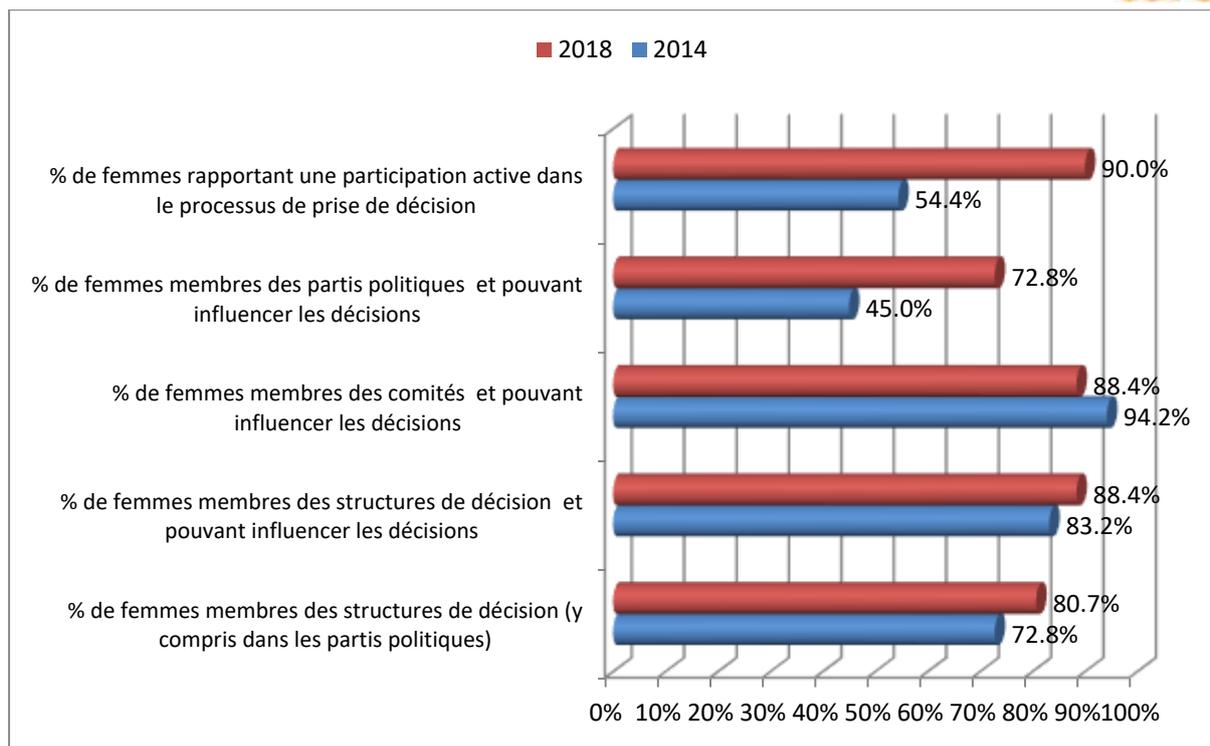
Despite the unfavourable legal system and social norms, GEWEP II has enabled beneficiary women and girls to acquire (purchased) land properties, which gives them an improved level of control over resources and benefits. A woman who has some economic autonomy acquires the ability to influence decisions in her home and in the community. Women beneficiaries of GEWEP II can certainly change the inheritance situation of their children, girls and boys, just as they can also influence the community in favour of more equitable treatment of women and girls. Ultimately, it is only women empowered economically and socially who will play a key role in changing laws and policies to improve women's economic security.

### **3.2.3. Participation of women in decision-making processes**

#### ***3.2.3.1. Effective participation of women in decision-making structures in the community***

The promotion of women must involve their active participation in the public life of their community. GEWEP II activities also aim to strengthen women's leadership and participation.

**Graph 4: Effective participation of women in decision-making structures in the community**



Women's participation in decision-making changed significantly between 2014 and 2018. Indeed, 90% of women report significant participation in decision-making in the final evaluation in 2018, compared to 54.4% in 2014. 72.8% of women in political parties report that they are members of a political party and that they can influence decisions; this proportion was 45% in 2014.

Participants in FGDs or individualized interviews acknowledge that women are poorly represented in local community management mechanisms and in decision-making bodies of political parties. The discussions reveal that women beneficiaries of GEWEP II have a higher level of participation than those who are not beneficiaries. First, they reveal that women and girls who are beneficiaries of GEWEP II know more decision-making structures in their communities than those who are not beneficiaries. On the other hand, in each of FGDs run for the benefit of women members of NN groups, women testify that they are part of at least one decision-making structure, whereas this occurs in only one of the 5 focus groups organized for non recipient women- there is only one woman member of a hillside council. Indeed, both recognize that being part of NN groups is a factor that promotes member leadership... Women members point out that the training they have received through GEWEP helps to strengthen their knowledge of their rights and self-confidence necessary to get them to apply for leadership positions.

To be truly effective, women's participation in decision-making bodies must go beyond their mere presence in these structures. Their opinions must be considered and they must succeed in influencing the decisions that are made.

In FGs, women members of SGs testify that they are fully involved in decisions that are taken and that their opinions and considerations are taken into account. Some of them hold leadership positions on either committee or in hillside councils. In addition, they are often called upon to resolve conflicts that arise in the community. This reality is also recognized by almost all key informants targeted for interview in intervention areas. The majority of these people knows NN groups and considers the women and girls who are members of those groups as role models in the community. NN groups provide a framework for promoting women's leadership and effective participation in decision-making bodies, although some barriers prevent women from participating as much as they would like. Some of these barriers are related to the weight of marital authority, others to domestic duties that are too heavy and difficult to reconcile with the holding of decision-making positions.

#### **From Banana plantations to the public square**

In a focus group at Gisabazuba hillside, in Gashohoho commune, Muyinga province, a woman supported by her friends testifies: «*Before GEWP project, women stayed at home, in banana plantations*». But with GEWEP, they have left their enclosure (unknown place) and emerged to the public place. This was possible because they had benefited from capacity building in SGs that led them to flourish, to no longer be afraid to speak out and to express themselves in front of an assembly of many people

#### **3.2.3.2. Changes in policies, laws and practices related to the promotion of women's civil and political rights**

The Government of Burundi has taken a number of measures to implement its accession to international instruments for the promotion and protection of women's rights that it ratified. Among the latter is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In terms of participation, the Convention covers all areas in which women are denied equality with men. With regard to participation, article 7 of the Constitution guarantees women the right to vote, to hold a public office and to do public jobs, as well as the right to be elected «to all publicly elected bodies».

Equality between men and women is recognized through national policies and laws, in particular the National Gender Policy 2017-2021 (as those that preceded it) and the Burundian Constitution. However, the principle of affirmed equality is contradicted by certain discriminatory legal provisions that are one of the causes of women's under-representation in decision-making bodies and leadership positions. Thus, although the quota of at least 30% of women introduced by the Constitution in 2005 at the level of Parliament and Government and extended to the level of communes since 2009 (Electoral Code) has been a major step forward, it is nevertheless unfair for two main reasons: (i) the fact that the representation of women is not legally guaranteed at the hillside level, in non-elected positions and mechanisms and in the governing bodies of political parties, and (ii) the unfairness of a 30% quota to ensure the representation of more than 51% of the population. Thus, the legal system for women's participation is still incomplete, leaving prevalence to traditional norms and practices that are not conducive to women leadership.

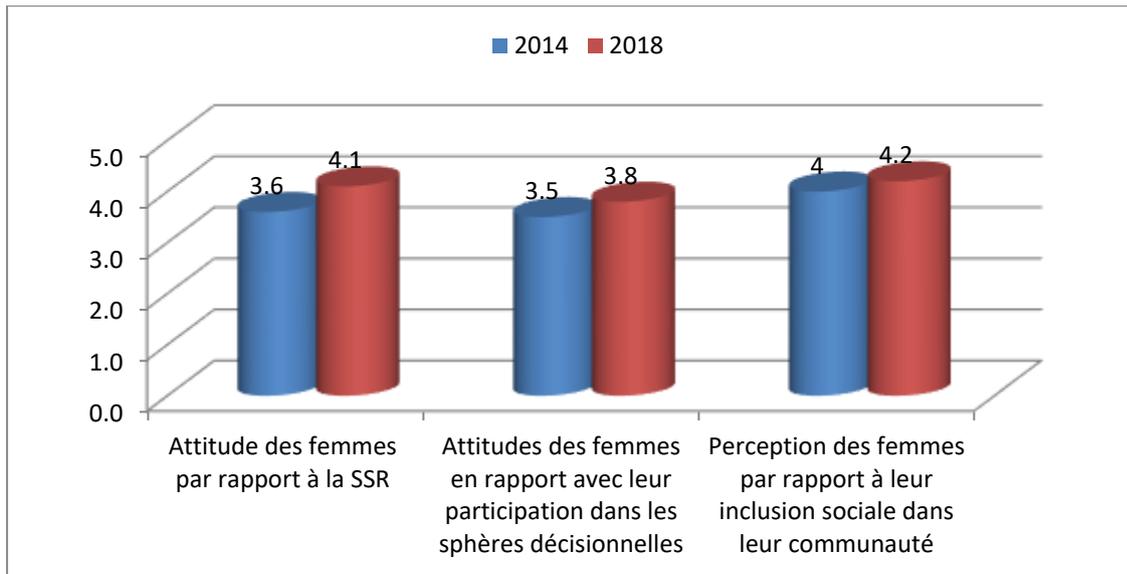
To influence the legal system for improving women's participation, particularly at the community level, Care included evidence-based advocacy in GEWEP II actions, which were mainly conducted by COCAFEM/GL. Analyses have been carried out on laws in this area to identify gaps and discriminatory provisions. Studies have been conducted in intervention areas on the level of women's representation in decision-making positions, the factors that negatively affect them, and the possibilities for solutions. The reports of these studies were shared with decision-makers and other actors involved in the promotion of women's rights. Annual data sharing and advocacy meetings are held with key decision-makers including state institutions, CSO representatives, political parties and religious denominations, as well as technical and financial partners. And in order to maximize the outcomes of outreach activities, COCAFEM/GL advocacy body made individual visits to key decision-makers at both the central and provincial levels. Spaces for exchange have been created between women elected and in leadership positions at the central level and women elected at the community level to engage the former in promoting women's participation at all levels, including the community level.

To strengthen advocacy at the community level, COCAFEM/GL and APDH have organized some training to strengthen community advocacy networks (formed by Nawe Nuze SGs), elected women,... in lobbying and advocacy, so that they are better equipped to advocate for women's rights, including participation in local and provincial decision-taking bodies.

### ***3.2.3.3. Women's attitudes towards women's rights and empowerment***

Although the weight of cultural norms is a barrier to women's social inclusion, a major step forward has been taken, especially thanks to the combined efforts of various actors who want to encourage the community to give women the place they deserve for their self-fulfilment and the development of the entire community. Care is one of these actors and also tries to raise women's awareness of their importance and their essential role, with a view to better inclusion in the community.

**Graph 5: Women's attitudes towards women's rights and empowerment**



Women's attitudes towards their rights and self-fulfilment have not substantially changed. Indeed, the average score of attitudes towards women's rights increased from 3.6/5 to 4.1/5, while for attitudes towards their SRH rights increased from 3.5/5 to 3.8/5. Women's attitudes towards their participation in the public decision-making sphere increased from 4.0/5 to 4.2/5.

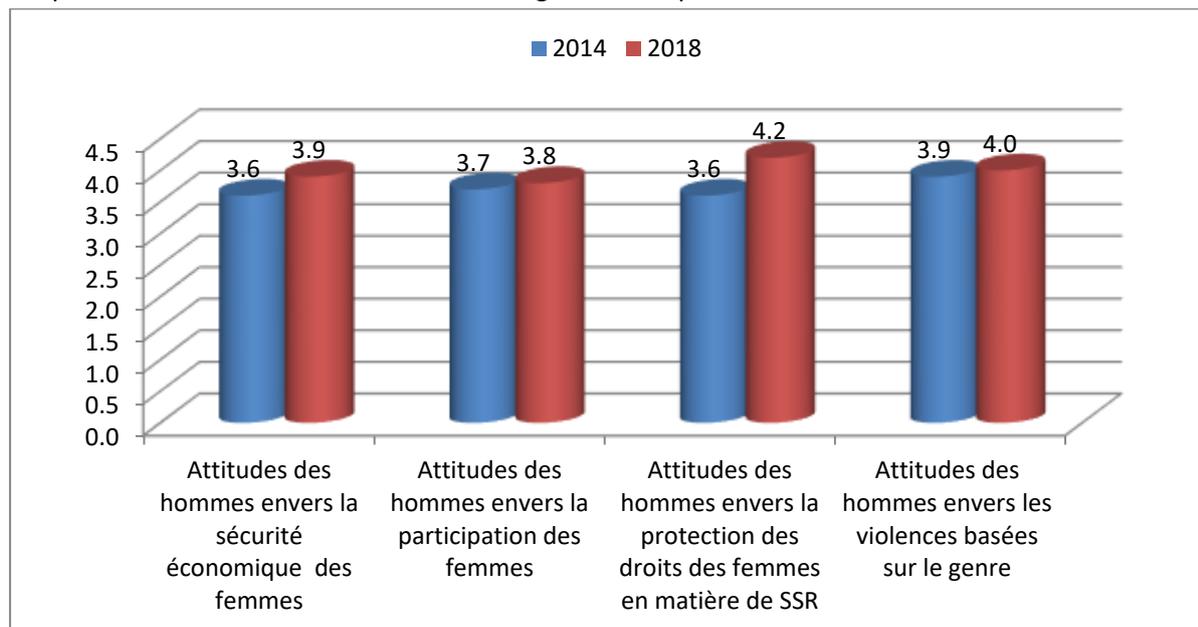
Through focus group discussions, women members of NN groups acknowledge that CARE has taken them out of their isolation and thus made it possible for them to be included in wider spaces. Thanks to GEWEP II, and through SGs, these women acknowledge that they have developed their solidarity, their ability to assist each other, as well as the awareness of being confronted with a common fate that they must try to change in solidarity. At the end of FGs organized for nonbeneficiary women and girls, they point out the lack of solidarity between women and the lack of mutual trust as obstacles to their participation. This obstacle has been overcome within NN groups and it is a major step forward.

The economic empowerment of SG women and girls has been added to this solidarity and mutual trust to give them the strength and assets to integrate themselves into their communities by claiming the same rights as men. The evaluation showed that their economic development facilitates their social inclusion as actors who can contribute to the management of their community and its development on an equal footing with men. Indeed, by demonstrating strength (showing what they are capable of) they have gained more consideration in their households and in the community.

### 3.2.4. Engaging men in the promotion of gender equality

CARE wanted to involve men and youths in the promotion of women's rights, because it noted that their involvement is essential if we want to improve women's level of enjoyment of their rights. This is because the patriarchal system and cultural norms make women dependent on men for the realization of some of these rights, and it is largely men who are responsible for their violation. Thus, with a view to improving men's attitudes towards women's rights, men were targeted to benefit from GEWEP II through SGs. Abatangamuco couples were involved in GEWEP II for community awareness and mobilization in favor of women's rights

Graph 6: Men's attitudes towards women's rights and empowerment



On the whole, men's commitment to women's rights has improved, and men involved in focus groups explained that some men who abuse their wives or who illtreat them are not aware of their misbehaviour. They think that it's a way of asserting themselves and that a normal man should behave like them. That is why, when faced with the behaviour of ABATANGAMUCO or other husbands who behave properly towards their wives, these men will say that their wives have cast witchcraft («baramuroze») on them.

### 3.2.4.1. Men's attitudes towards women's economic security

At the end of FGs facilitated in favour of husbands of women members of SGs and men members of SGs, it was found that men generally think that it is men who have primary responsibility in taking care of their households. They mention, for example, family care as one of the qualities of a good man. However, both appreciate that their wives are able to support them in relation to household expenses, and to participate in the expansion of family assets.

But some husbands are afraid of a woman who is too economically independent. In a focus group in Rango commune in Ngozi, a man supported by his friends said: «Men are afraid to be on an equal footing with their wives, because a woman who has a lot of money no longer respects her husband». Thus, some men will support the economic empowerment of their women as long as they do not feel that they are likely to equal them or, even worse, to surpass them.

Women's right to property and especially to inheritance emerged during FGDs as one of the rights that highly encounters men's resistance, and the most liberal are not spared.

The right to share one's parents' heritage is one of the most violated and least supported rights of women by men during evaluation discussions. In FGDs, it appears that even men who are in favour of women's right to inheritance have reservations: they exclude the inheritance of the land that actually threatens the patriarchal system that they believe is compromised. In a focus group with women members of SGs in Burengwa in Bugarama commune, Rumonge district, participants stated that even if

they are in favour of changing this practice, the sharing of land plots should only concern the ones the father has bought or acquired with his own means («*itongo ry'umuheto*») and not those inherited from the father and from the grandparents. It is mainly this men's resistance observed in governing bodies and particularly in parliament and the Government, that the unheritance law which has been available for years, has not yet been promulgated.

The FGs facilitated in favor of women members of SGs revealed a certain deplorable trend observed among some men: a certain progressive desertion of their family responsibilities in terms of expenses as their wives become able to meet certain financial needs of the household.

#### **3.2.4.2. Men's attitudes towards women's participation in public life and in the community**

Traditional Burundian norms and values are at SDGs with women's leadership, and are especially supported by men. GEWEP II activities also aimed to change the attitudes of community members, especially men, towards active participation of women in public life of their community.

All participants in focus groups and individual interviews agree that for many people, especially men, managing external affairs is the prerogative of men. As stated in many focus groups, it is a tradition for women to stay at home or in the surrounding area and take care of household chores or farm work. Community management is considered to be a matter for men. Women are discriminated against because many people see men as the «head» of the household, so men must represent their families outside the home.

Women's participation in the decision-making process leads women to speak in public, whereas according to Burundian cultural saying, «the hen does not crow when the cock is there» (*Nta nkokokazi ibika isake iriho*). To say that women have nothing to say as long as men are there to represent them and express themselves in their place. This proverb has been repeated in most focus groups in the intervention area. In one of the FGDs facilitated in favour of husbands of women members of SGs, a man states (without being contradicted by his comrades): «*It is not bad that women participate in decision-making bodies. But there can be negative consequences in the household if she neglect her family obligations too much. If the man works outside and the woman does the same, what will happen to that home?*» Thus, according to many men, women should not be employed in positions that reduce their availability in relation to their family obligations.

#### **3.2.4.3. Men's attitudes towards women's decision-making power over their SRH rights**

Some of men interviewed after FGDs believe that SRH issues should be addressed by both men and women; but women should be more concerned about such issues than men, because they get pregnant and bear children.

According to women's opinion interviewed after FGs, it is women who take the initiative to go for pregnancy consultations and ask men to accompany them. Men are now beginning to understand the importance of accompanying their wives for prenatal consultations, as health facilities require that husbands have to accompany their wives to hospital/health centre, at least for the first prenatal consultation. But many men only accompany their wives this time only because it is mandatory.

During FGDs, everyone was unanimous in saying that family planning is a family matter, not an issue for women alone. But the discussions revealed that some husbands still have very negative attitudes towards contraceptive services. Some people don't even want to hear about family planning, and they don't see its value at all. Others decide at some point to stop bearing children and order their wives to arrange not to get pregnant again, without helping out their wives in any way. «*They tell you that if you get pregnant again, you have to decide for yourself where to take this baby to, because it won't be theirs. And at the same time, they continue to behave in bed as if they did not know that sexual intercourse is the source of bearing babies. They want to stop bearing children without depriving themselves of their sexual pleasure and they leave their wives to fend for themselves*» (focus group in Gahombo commune, Kayanza province).

Care's field officers are aware of these kinds of attitudes, and the problem is that these men do not approach the places where they can have information about the usefulness of SRH services. They advise wives in this situation as well as those whose husbands do not want to hear about family planning, not to give up and approach appropriate services, because their health may be at risk.

#### **3.2.4.4. Men's attitudes towards gender-based violence**

The men participating in FGs believe that certain culturally related customs and practices that put women in a position of inferiority and dependence are the root causes of GBV:

- The culture and patriarchal system that give women a lower status.
- The girl's lack of access to inheritance, which means that once married, she will depend on her husband economically while she has nothing in her family of origin.
- As it is the woman who leaves her family to live with her husband without bringing any assets, this situation places her in a begging position, whose survival depends on the good will of the person who makes her live.
- The payment of dowry that puts the woman in a position of a purchased property.

The men and youths who participated in discussions believe that GBV cannot be completely eradicated if these customs do not change.

However, they are generally in favor of this eradication. They mention the fact of not committing violence (physical, economic and even sexual violence) against his wife as one of the qualities of a good man. But even if they admit that women are the main GBV victims, some men interviewed believe that men also suffer from GBV. However, many male victims remain silent because they are ashamed. They quote a Kirundi proverb: "*Amosozu y'umugabo atemba aja mu nda*", which literally means "a man's tears flow into his belly" meaning that a man is not supposed to cry. They also add that men are sometimes wrongly accused of rape by women and girls who are believed while they are lying.

#### **From sleep to leadership**

My name is MANIRAKIZA Mediatrice I am a 45-year-old woman mother of 8 children member of ABATANGAMUCO network.

I was a woman who was not considered at all in her home, my husband thought I had nothing to say, that my role was just to give birth. He checked me every minute because he considered me a child: When I went to work, he came to check if I was working seriously. He wouldn't allow me to talk to people, even to his family or to my own family, and I had nothing to say about our sexual life or

contraception, as in a few years I had 6 children. My pain was growing because even if he didn't beat me, he was making my life so hard that I started to be insolent. I couldn't work well anymore because when I went to fields with my children, I fell asleep because my heart was so bruised.

In 2002 CARE initiated groups in our community and I was so eager to join them. Although my husband didn't want me to join them, I started visiting one of these groups. The teaching of Nawe Nuze module on non-violent communication enlightened me and I began to understand that I was sinking into my own pain through my revolt. When I started changing, my husband was so surprised that he also joined a men's group. Although my husband had not yet changed, I had more consideration in my home and I was more aware of my rights and was claiming them quietly and gently.

ABATANGAMUCO came to our community, when I had just born my 8<sup>th</sup> child. When they made their presentation, my husband began to realize that even though he didn't beat me, he was committing other forms of GBV that even hurt more than hitting. After this presentation, we committed ourselves to be among model couples and we attended a coaching and learning process to firstly join ABAGANAMUCO and then we became ABATANGAMUCO.

Since then, dialogue has been restored between me and my husband. Children who were once considered fearful of their father, are now talking freely with their father and the home has become a pleasant place where family members develop themselves. The children have grown up and are continuing their studies very well. The eldest is in 2<sup>nd</sup> University cademic year, the 2 others will finish high school education this year. The others are progressing very well and the last one is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade in high school. We have all the means we need to pay for their studies and allow them to study comfortably. The elder child is studying in a private university, and we pay for his school fees without any problems.

When we started the journey to become ABATANGAMUCO, my husband, who recognized my gift as a leader, encouraged me to be elected among the 5 elected hillside leaders, and I was chosen as the 2<sup>nd</sup> leader. After 5 years, when there was another election, in addition to my husband, my neighbors encouraged me to get elected and this time I was elected as Bwoga hillside Chief, in Gitega commune, Gitega province. As ABATANGAMUCO we do a lot of work to contribute to the fight against GBV and to changing behavior in households of our community. Now, we have prospered in our own activities, my husband in business and I in some commercial activities (Kiosks, agriculture, sale of land plots,...) and my husband gets some opportunities as community member and I also get some opportunities as a community woman leader. From the sleepy woman who had an incredible pain, I became the one who carries the voice of my community far away.

### **3.3. Intervention sub-themes**

#### **3.3.1. Reducing Gender- Based Violence**

Nearly 3 in 4 women interviewed reject SGBV for women or girls (74.7%). We also note that most of the violence is committed by the intimate partner or the husband (10.8%) against 3.0% for another perpetrator. The women and girls members of the SG participating in the focus groups reveal situations that in the long run contribute to increased violence, including cases of domestic rape in homes. The most cited are the desertion of men from their family obligations, the overload of women and alcoholism.

From this point on, it is easy to understand that women and girls who become economically more independent are gradually becoming less exposed to GBV, which they also accept with greater difficulty.

As already noted above, this leads them to be better considered by their husbands who can no longer take their economic dependency as a pretext to abuse them with impunity.

#### NOONE CAN DANCE WITH AN EMPTY STOMACH

“Some men let their wives take care of all household expenses alone without meeting their needs. They spend their time getting drunk, and when they come home, they demand that their wife fulfill her conjugal duty while she is exhausted and angry. This will make her even angrier and she will refuse, because for her, “noone can dance with empty stomach” . This refusal will cause blows, rape and sometimes repudiation (focus group in Mageyo village, Mageyo commune, Bujumbura province).

### 3.3.2. Change in policies, laws and practices relating to the fight against all forms of gender-based violence

The Government of Burundi has ratified the majority of international and regional instruments protecting women against GBV, including CEDEF, UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the (2011) Kampala Declaration adopted by the ICGLR. 2011. The latter is articulated around 3 themes related to the fight against SGBV: to prevent SGBV, to put an end to the impunity of the perpetrators, and finally, to help the victims and survivors of SGBV. Commendable efforts have been made by the Government to integrate these instruments into the Burundian legal framework in order to facilitate the implementation of the provisions they contain. The revision of certain laws such as the Penal Code (in 2009 and 2017) and the Criminal Procedure Code (in 2014) have brought positive changes by removing some discriminatory clauses and introducing provisions more favorable to the repression of perpetrators.

The promulgation in 2016 of a specific law on SGBV is a major step forward, as it corrects certain shortcomings in the Penal Code and introduces clauses that consider married men and women as equal. Article 7 states that "spouses enjoy equal rights, particularly in matters of health, family planning and household property". It also states that parents must ensure “equal treatment of boys and girls in all aspects of life from an early age”.

However, shortcomings remain, and the improvement of the legal framework as well as the application of the equitable provisions available are highly handicapped by the weight of the cultural norms that subject the woman to the goodwill of the man, even if that poses a threat to her dignity, her integrity and even her life.

The same type of lobbying and advocacy actions that have been carried out in the area of governance and women’s participation have been carried out in relation to GBV: carrying out studies and sharing results, organization of advocacy meetings with decision-makers and key actors, at central and provincial level, capacity building of Civil Society Organizations engaged in advocacy, etc. Advocacy and lobbying at the highest level focused in this area on the implementation of the Kampala Declaration, which emphasizes the prevention of GBV, the repression of perpetrators and assistance to victims. Field work in provinces was also done by teams composed by members of the COCAFEM advocacy network and members of the Gender Committee of the National Assembly to monitor the law on the prevention of SGBV, the repression authors and the protection of victims. A report on how the law is applied and difficulties related to this application has been produced, and it reveals the need for creating an implementation text.

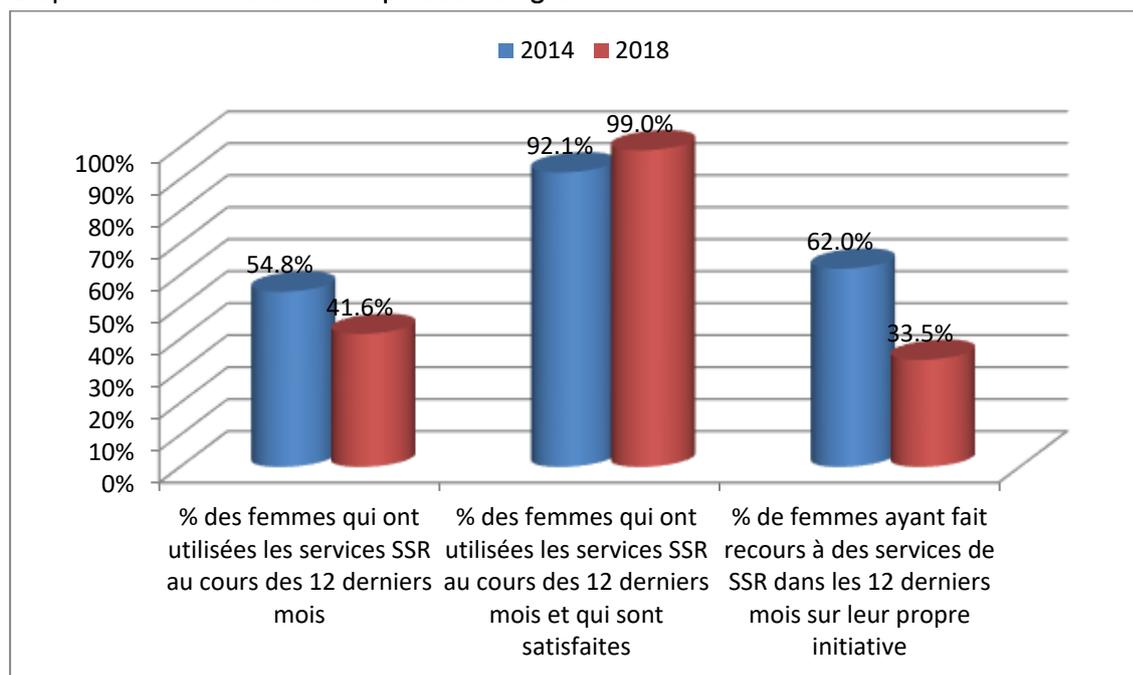
At the community level, the strengthening of the legal framework involves activities to strengthen community advocacy networks and the actions of men and women involved in the fight against GBV (abatangamuco couples). Giving men and boys a vital role in the fight against GBV is a good way to reach out to those who see the application of certain laws as a threat to the position of men in society. As evidenced by the engaged men participating in an animated focus group in Butaganzwa Commune in Kayanza Province, “the sensitization work done by male activists has contributed to the change in attitudes of individuals, as the advice related to the poor attitudes of men are well understood when they are given by another man, especially when he testifies from his own experience”

The collaboration of these actors with the administration is another element that reinforces the applicability of the legal framework, as it gives to their activities and messages a certain legitimacy.

### 3.3.3 Reinforcement women in sexual and reproductive health rights

The promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health necessarily involves the quality of these services provision. Thus, in addition to the availability of services, the demand must be analyzed taking into account satisfaction with the quality of the services provided but also reasons for dissatisfaction and refusal to seek the services.

Graph7: Women’s sexual and reproductive rights



According to the graph above, the percentage of women making informed decisions, that is, who decided alone or with their husbands on their use and having previously been given information about these services in relation to sexual and reproductive health has decreased from 62% in 2014 to 33.5% in the final evaluation in 2018. The same is true of the proportion of women who have used SRH services in the past 12 months shifting from 54.8% in 2014 to 41.6% in 2018. On the other hand, the level of satisfaction among women users has increased from 92.1% in 2014 to 99% in 2018.

Through the various discussions facilitated as part of this evaluation, it was found out that women are generally aware of the benefits of SRH services offered in health facilities. According to ABUBEF staff working on the SRH component of GEWEP II, people who adhere to contraceptive patterns offered by these facilities have increased and home deliveries have decreased. However, the FGD reveal a certain difference in the mastery of issues related to this area between women and girls members of SG and non-members. At the end of the discussions in focus groups, it was noted that the first ones speak very spontaneously and without hesitation of the available services which are mentioned in greater numbers and described in a detailed way. Some women and girls in the group of non-beneficiaries say that they do not know them, others are talkative, but talk about health services in general and not about SRH.

The qualitative survey reveals that SG women and girls are more likely to report being satisfied than non-member women and girls. They talk about slow services and high costs and the fact that you do not get treatment if you do not pay the deposit. We feel that they are actually talking about health care in general and not services related to SRH. SG women and girls, for their part, say they appreciate the welcome they receive and the quality of the advice and services they receive. As they have received a lot of information from the GEWEP II training SG, they can make an informed choice about the type of service which is adequate for them.

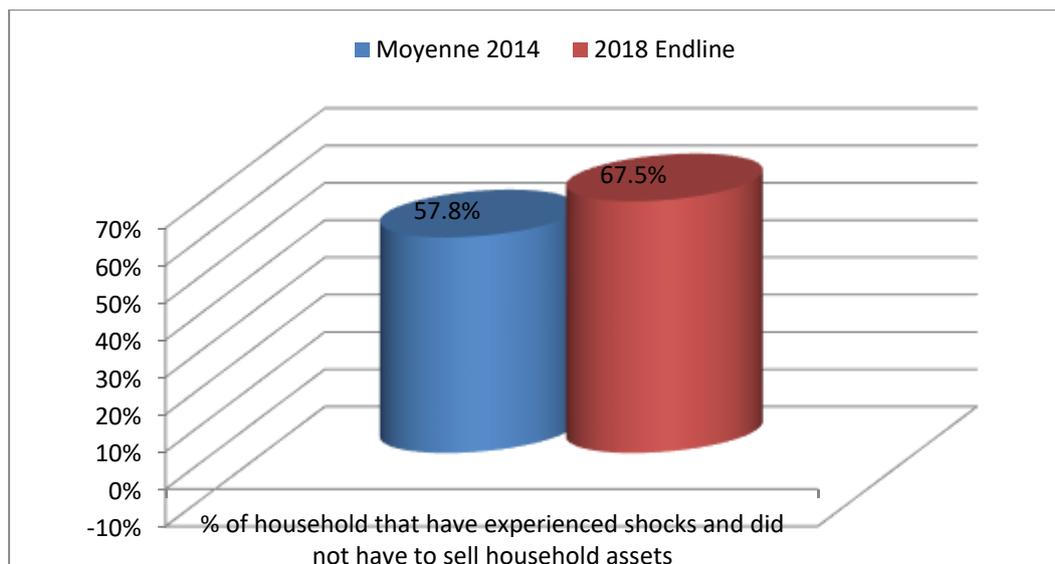
Some problems are however raised even by SG members. In some localities, they mention the remoteness of health structures. Others complain that they do not always have access to contraceptive methods they want, and sometimes they give up because the available methods do not please them, do not please their husbands, or have already caused problems. Elsewhere, they regret the fact that they do not practice a caesarean surgery and that they must be transferred elsewhere, which may endanger the health of the mother and / or child.

Another problem raised is related to the fact that, if contraception is free, care related to the complications that may arise are paying off. Finally, the messages from the field agents of CARE which overlap with the advice the beneficiaries receive at the hospital or health center do not agree with the messages of some religious leaders. This confuses some of those who seek SRH services who sometimes do not know what choices to make against these conflicting messages. Most believers give it up altogether, preferring to try the “natural” methods authorized and taught by the ecclesial authorities, methods that sometimes do not always give the desired results.

### **3.3.4. Capacities of women and girls to cope with economic shocks**

One of the manifestations of economic empowerment is the ability to cope with economic shocks that occur without having to go through ways that make you even more vulnerable.

#### **Graph8: Women's resilience to economic shocks**



Women’s statements about households’ ability to cope with shocks show some improvement over in comparison to the situation in 2014. In fact, 57.8% had declared that their households had managed to respond to shocks without having to sell their shares compared to 67.5% in 2018.

Women and girls who develop self-help skills in the SG, contribute to household income and become economically self-reliant also develop the ability to cope with economic shocks. Among the examples of economic emergencies that may occur, FGD participants cite cases of expensive hospitalization or illness, the destruction of crops by rains or drought, the destruction of the house by rain (roof torn off) or by fire, etc.

The majority of women members of SG say that in order to cope with emergencies, they mainly use loans in their SG, which also have a solidarity fund to support members in difficulty through interest-free loans. They first evoke the social cohesion that characterize the NN groups and that makes the first reflex of the members is to come jointly in aid to the “stricken” person , who often will have to ask the credit only to complete the help received. In all cases, loan is preferred to other strategies such as selling or mortgaging a property from home, selling the crop before the harvest or borrowing with difficult repayment terms.

Non-beneficiary women and girls also say they would prefer to use a loan in case of economic shock. But the majority of them say they cannot do it because they do not meet the conditions for applying for loans in money-lending institutions. In a focus group on Bigwa village, Kanyosha Commune, Bujumbura Province, non-beneficiary women declared: “When you are really poor, you have nothing to do in banks and cooperatives because they do not give loans to the poor”. Many non-beneficiary women / girls are therefore forced to resort to the strategies mentioned above which are rejected by SG members.

#### We preserve dignity

A participant at a FG in Nyabikere, Isare commune, Rural Bujumbura, supported by her classmates: “We prefer to apply for a loan because it is faster, more dignity-preserving and confidential. By teaching us how to save and showing us the benefit of loans, GEWEP has allowed us to no longer despair when facing an unforeseen problem or emergency, because we know which door to knock at without wasting our time and sometimes in vain”.

### 3.4. Care International Indicators

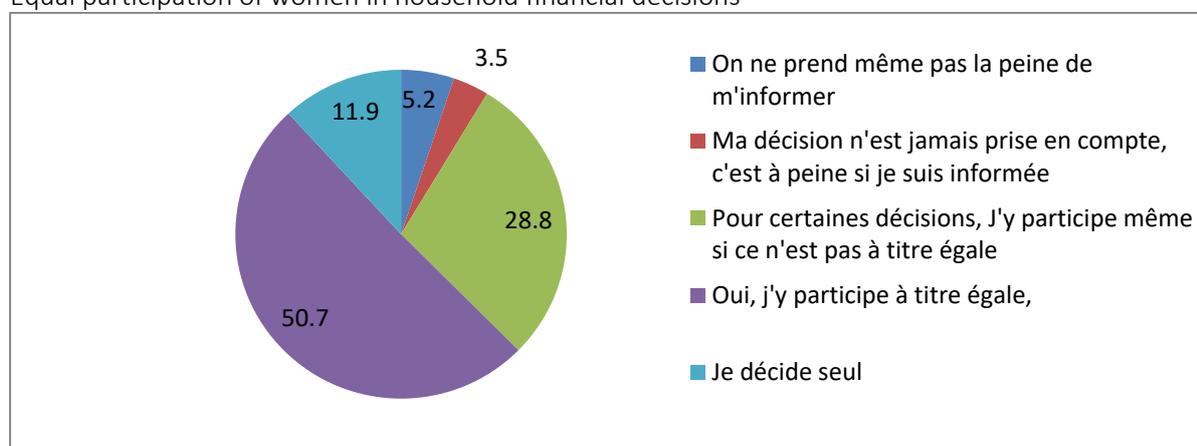
#### 3.4.1. Women participating in household financial decision

Women who participate in household financial decisions	2018
CI INDICATOR 17: # and % of women who report they are able to equally participate in household financial decision-making. (See guidance here: <a href="http://careglobalmel.care2share.wikispaces.net/Indicator+17">http://careglobalmel.care2share.wikispaces.net/Indicator+17</a> )	50,7%

GEWEP project seeks to ensure that women participate in their household various financial decisions, such as the sale or purchase of common or individual assets.

The following table analyzes the level of women’s participation in financial decisions made by the household.

Equal participation of women in household financial decisions



Half of the surveyed women (50.7%) reported that they participate equally in household financial decisions, 11.9% say they decide alone, 28.8% participate in some decisions, but on an equal basis while, for 3,5% their decision is never taken into account or still 5,2% are not even informed of the decisions taken. Based on exchanges in FGD with women and girls and even men and young people beneficiaries, GEWEP II has made significant changes in the participation of women in decision-making in household financial management. SG women and girls also earn money, have acquired skills in the management of household assets, and contribute to household expenses that were previously incumbent on the husband alone.

Examples were often mentioned: “Before, it was unbelievable that the woman buys student notebooks, offers to buy the seeds or fertilizers needed for the fields. Our husbands are happy to be relieved of certain expenses”, or, during a focus group discussion on Gisabazuba village (Gahombo commune, Kayanza): “We can also intervene at home if there is a lack of salt, palm oil, or even the daily food ration, if necessary”.

Thus, women are no longer seen by their husbands as people living like beggars and they gradually begin to involve them in decision-making on household finances and assets management. Moreover, women themselves learn to skillfully claim this involvement. In this way, women's empowerment raises their

self-esteem, awakens their awareness of their importance, and enables them to participate in their household management.

As far as young girls are concerned, they are usually involved in household chores, but very little in the decision-making on the management of the household and its heritage. Girls members of NN groups recognize that this vision changes a little also when their parents find that they have an income and can contribute to the school fees of their siblings or the purchase of agricultural inputs. They begin to involve them in decision-making and to better respect them.

Even women who are not beneficiaries of GEWEP II recognize that women and girls who are SG members have the capacity to influence decision-making in relation to the management of the household and its assets: “Being a member of the SG allows you to show your husband that you have value and if you succeed in solving problems that he did not find a solution, he estimates you even more”, says a woman in a focus group of non-beneficiaries women on Mutoyi village , commune Bugendana in Gitega province.

#### **4. Discussion on the Findings**

##### **4.1. What are the key trends in women's rights?**

As already noted above, the majority of female SG members, far more than girls, have revealed in FGD a high awareness of their rights. The most cited rights among the rights that need to be promoted in their community are the right to choose a husband, the right to participate in the management of the family patrimony, the right to be elected, the right to inherit especially the land, the last two being the most cited. In fact, these two areas are very crucial in improving the enjoyment of women's rights.

The introduction of the quota of at least 30% of women in certain decision-making bodies has boosted women’s participation, even in spheres where this quota is not foreseen, even if to a lesser extent. Thus, women were elected in the village councils despite the absence of the support of the law at this level. And as already noted, in the GEWEP II intervention zones, the women members of the NN groups are the most numerous to have been elected, both at the municipal level and at the village level. Some are administrators or village chiefs.

Women's access to decision-making bodies and positions contributes immensely to the socio-cultural transformation needed to create norms and attitudes conducive to equitable gender relations and the promotion of women's rights. And the fact is that the communes and village led by women are for example characterized by a lower tolerance of GBV and a greater consideration of the needs of women. The challenges at this level are first and foremost the management of the 30% quota which is rather considered as a ceiling instead of being taken as a minimum, as well as this lack of provision guaranteeing the participation of women at the village level and in non-elective positions.

It is hoped that advances in women's participation will also contribute to the improvement of attitudes and practices related to the issue of inheritance at the community and family level, as well as to the legal framework in this area. The lack of access to the inheritance is indeed considered by the women and girls participating in the exchanges in the focus groups or in the interviews as a great injustice. This is an area that still needs a lot of sensitization and advocacy work.

Shortcoming in the enjoyment of economic rights are factors limiting the enjoyment of other rights, such as the right to participation and rights in SRH . They also promote gender-based violence. The

activities of GEWEP II initially focused on economic recovery, and this helped to improve the level of enjoyment of these rights and the reduction of GBV in the areas of intervention.

#### 4.2. Do the results confirm or contradict one another?

Different groups are involved as impact groups or target groups in the project and with different results for each of them. Achieving the goal of GEWEP II requires complementarity of these results, all of which must converge towards the goal of the program. And the results of the evaluation reveal that they mutually confirm each other. So:

- Women and girls in the intervention areas have been economically, socially and politically strengthened and are better able to claim and enjoy their rights,
- Men and young people are changing their visions and attitudes about gender roles and relationships, and some of them have even begun to contribute to the change of their peers in favor of women's rights ,
- We have seen more women, especially in the impact group, get elected locally and nationally,
- Young people are initiating changes in favor of women's rights in their families and among the people of their generation,
- Abatangamuco have contributed a lot to the observed changes in men's attitudes and behaviors, especially in their respective homes.

All of these results confirm and complement one another, converging towards a better realization of the rights of women and girls at the family and community levels.

#### 4.3. How does GEWEP II contribute to the achievement Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)?

The implementation of GEWEP II undoubtedly contributes to the achievement, at the level of the zones of intervention, of the achievement of SDG at least with respect to 5 objectives hereafter:



The first goal is the eradication of poverty in all its forms around the world, including by allowing all men and women, especially the most vulnerable, to have “the same rights to economic resources” and equitable access to basic services, ownership and control of land and other forms of property, inheritance (...) and adequate financial services, including microfinance (1.4) ). It also targets the resilience of the poor persons in vulnerable situations and the reduction of “their exposure and vulnerability to extreme weather phenomena and other economic, social or environmental shocks and disasters” (1.5).

These aspects are targeted at outcome level 1 of GEWEP II. Their implementation is concretized by the establishment and strengthening of VSLAs which are frameworks for the economic development of women and girls, and which allow them to have access to basic social services, and even if it still needs strengthened, ownership and financial services, including microfinance. The evaluation also revealed that VSLAs have strengthened the resilience of the households of beneficiary women and girls to various shocks to their economic security. VSLAs also contribute to Goal 8 of the SDG, which is “supported, shared and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. They enable women and girls to develop IGAs that give them a gainful occupation and allow them to develop themselves economically.

Goal 5 of the SDG seeks to promote “equal opportunities for men and women in economic development, to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls (... ..), as well as to promote equitable participation opportunities at all levels”. This should include “women’s full and effective participation and equal access to leadership at all levels of decision-making, in political, economic and public life” (SDG5), as well as access to SRH services (SDG 5.6). These aspects are taken into account in outcomes 2 and 3 of GEWEP II. Women’s empowerment, particularly in leadership, has opened them access to the management mechanisms of their community, sometimes to management positions. It has also helped reduce their vulnerability to GBV and improved their access to SRH services. The reduction of GBV in the GEWEP II intervention areas is also contributing to the implementation of Goal 16 of SDG which aims at a community where everyone lives in peace, including the reduction of “all forms of violence and associated mortality rates” (SDG16.1).

Goal 17 of the SDG is to “strengthen the means to implement the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development”. This includes promoting “public partnerships, public-private partnerships, partnerships with civil society, building on the experience and financing strategies applied in this area”. GEWEP II is implemented with the technical partnership of civil society organizations that Care has strengthened by building on their experience in areas related to program results, and in collaboration with different ministries as well as provincial and local provincial government’s targets.

## 5. Lessons Learned



The evaluation identified a number of lessons learned:

- The partnership with local NGOs has been a multi-gain option: The partnership approach has been a good option. It has enabled Care not only to broaden its action at a geographical level, but also to encourage ownership by local actors in order to perpetuate the gains. In addition, Care and its implementing partners have all gained visibility and prominence locally, nationally and even internationally.
- **The establishment of VSLAs was a good entry point:** the promotion of savings-based SG has been an answer to a serious problem women and girls were facing due to the limitations resulting from the lack of equity in terms of access to and control over the resources and benefits. This boosted women and girls’enthusiasm and, at the same time, provided the actors responsible for carrying out the activities with frameworks allowing them to easily reach their targets. Starting with women and girls’economic empowerment has also had the benefit of targeting one of the issues that may be a constraint to achieving the results of GEWEP II on women’s participation in decision-making and reducing GBV: economic dependence.
- **Earning more men's membership is a necessity:** The NN approach has sometimes been difficult to apply in its early days due to men’s resistance. The involvement of men from the beginning,

just to explain the project, would be beneficial. But the implementing partners' agents, some of the beneficiaries as well as the administration agents we met with even go further and recommend a couple approach, especially for the themes of economic empowerment, SRH rights and the fight against GBV.

- The involvement of young people / boys is a good innovation to be continued. It is a good strategy to develop the values of positive masculinity in future husbands. In addition, it has an impact on parents in that their male child's advice leads to improving their own couple relationships and treating their children- girls and boys- in a fair way.
- The lack of access to inheritance, especially that of land: an injustice deeply felt by the women and girls members of the impact group. They feel it is a profound injustice that those who shared the same breast are not treated in the same way by those who gave them birth. Their desire to see the law change in favor of girls' inheritance and women is unequivocal for all GEWEP II beneficiaries.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The final evaluation of GEWEP II leads us to a number of findings which, to a large extent, indicate that the expected results have been broadly achieved in all action provinces. SGs which have contributed to the economic empowerment of women have over time become more and more efficient and autonomous. During the focus group discussions, the women and girls in GEWEP II impact group, both from the old and newly added provinces, said that their economic situation has improved since they joined the NN groups.

These VSLAs also established frameworks in which women and girls had their needs met in many other aspects thanks to the training they received. In particular, they have increased their leadership abilities. SG members who have had access to decision-making bodies or positions, including in local community management mechanisms, claim to have gained access to these positions through the capacity building they have benefited from under GEWEP.

FGD participants also reveal that their economic development and the training received have generally contributed to reducing the GBV they were facing, improved their relations with their husbands and their level of decision-making and in household and family assets management. The introduction of gender relations among couples that are more egalitarian and less subject to GBV has also led to a better achievement of their SRH rights, especially in family planning. Women and girls have become more aware of their rights, and husbands are more open to dialogue in this area because they are more aware of the issues involved. Thus, the number of women seeking health facilities for SRH-related services and the number of men who accompany their wives to family planning facilities has increased in the intervention areas.

The moral well-being of direct and indirect beneficiary women and girls has also been enhanced by interventions with target groups including men and boys in NN groups. The men in these groups were led to change their attitudes in their homes and to give examples to other men in the community. As for the young people who are SG members, they contributed to improving their mothers and sisters' living conditions in their own families and to changing their comrades' attitudes and behaviors in their localities for the promotion of women's rights once they understood the rights of women.

In fact, progress in promoting women's rights through GEWEP II goes beyond impact groups or even target groups. Transformation is also real within communities, as some activities, such as SRH-related interventions, Abatangamuco couples and committed young people reach communities in the intervention area as a whole. The administrative authorities in the action area have understood the ideal of gender equity and equality conveyed by GEWEP II and support actions aimed at achieving this ideal. They call upon women's groups, especially NN groups to help them integrate this ideal into their own activities. On the whole, GEWEP II actions have been successful not only in terms of individual transformation of impact groups and target groups but in terms of relationships in households and communities, structures and institutions, as well as social norms on which these are built.

The findings of GEWEP II evaluation investigations led to the formulation of a number of recommendations:

**Women's empowerment should be conducted in parallel with couple consolidation.** Care should make sure that women's empowerment does not jeopardise couples' internal relationships or lead some husbands to stop their contribution to household expenses as soon as their wives begin to bring some money home. The involvement of men in the project is therefore necessary, and the couple approach could be an effective strategy that can help to avoid negative effects of women's empowerment.

***It is necessary to reach more women and in an effective way.*** This will be facilitated through capacity building of selected leaders and monitoring of their activities, VSLA implementation extension to all villages in the target provinces, including village-level elected women among beneficiaries, as well as effective ownership of the NN approach by the Government as the Ministry of Gender has already started. The success of this appropriation on a larger scale requires Care support.

***Reinforce SGs and their members connection with IMFs.*** Achieving financial inclusion is challenging. The SG and their members should be able to diversify and develop their IGAs and at the best move towards the development of value chains allowing them to be competitive and complementary. This is not possible if SGs or their members do not have access to consistent loans, and connection with IMF, which has only just started, is the best solution. It is therefore essential to explore the possibilities of making products of interest offered by IMFs accessible to SGs and their members.

***Contribute to improving women's participation in decision-making bodies.*** Training and supervision received within the SG allows effective participation, but access to positions and especially decision-making positions remains dependent on discriminatory legal provisions or exploited in this sense. Advocacy activities should focus on improving the legal framework to ensure women's representation in decision-making bodies and positions in all sectors and at all levels, including the village level. These activities should aim to increase the sensitization of the involved actors, including women, in the sense of exceeding the minimal quota of 30% and even exceeding this number by investing in quality.

**Maximize the intervention results promoting women's SRH rights.** Dialogue with religious leaders and community leaders should resume by the end of 2018. Messages from church leaders contradicting those of GEWEP's field agents may jeopardise the achievement of results. Moreover, the strategic visits that are conducted once a year are insufficient while they are highly appreciated by the population. If possible, they should be rescheduled on a quarterly basis.

***Some aspects of the partnership between Care and its partners could be improved:*** There should be:  
i) capacity building plans arising from partner assessment in each organization's project should be included; ii) manage the partnership agreements and implementing partners' staff contracts in a way susceptible to make it possible to avoid delays that are detrimental to the achievement of results as they lead to delays in the starting of activities; (iii) avoid delays in funds disbursement likely to have the same effects, and better ensure that actual needs are matched with the funds allocated;



iv) provide for the documentation and dissemination of the results of partners' activities by the organizations themselves, which would increase their visibility, but also Care's; v) include state bodies that will be involved in supporting the project achievements sustainability in the planning of stakeholder capacity building.

**A number of actions should be conducted with a view to improving coordination of women's empowerment activities in the action area:** (i) include the coordination aspect in the programming of implementing partners' activities; (ii) coordinate the activities of Care and those of the Government, including through supporting the ownership process of NN approach by the Ministry of Gender, which should be done by ensuring consistency between NN approach and Women's Empowerment Action Plan under development; (iii) support the development by the Government of a mapping of stakeholders working in the area of women's empowerment and approaches used by each of them; and (iv) support the capacity building of administration officials (governors, advisors responsible for NGO coordination and CDFCs) on NN approach and coordination.

## APPENDICES